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**Thank You!**

It is hard to believe that we have arrived at the end of the school year. When the doors first opened this past September there was a lot of uncertainty. We did not know if we could remain open for the full year. We did not know if the precautions put in place would be enough to stop the spread. We did not know what the impact would be on our students or on ourselves.

There have been challenges for sure. The reality of working in person and remotely at the same time has taken its toll. The fear that our students, our family members, and ourselves would become sick was ever present. Not knowing how this would play out in terms of APPR or Regents exams added to the stress, as did what seemed to be an endless addition of new responsibilities. The backdrop to all of this of course has been the chatter in some circles criticizing schools' handling of the reopening and the implication that teachers were somehow manipulating the situation, as if we were not working harder than ever!

The fact that we have managed to remain in person five days a week for the duration of the 2020/2021 school year is a testament to the hard work of all of us. We have struggled to provide the same quality education to all students that we would provide any other year. We have provided counseling, speech, OT/PT, and other services remotely or in various modified ways to meet IEP requirements. We have modified the lab and hands-on portion of our CTE curriculum so that it could be done safely in person or by students learning remotely. We have done all of this and more while also prioritizing community and connection with our students to ensure that they were able to navigate these extraordinary times in the healthiest possible way.

I have made a point to watch the recordings of our end of the year celebrations across Questar as they are posted online. They are a reminder of the good work that we do. Many of the students in our programs have struggled in other settings. It is in part because of the programs that we offer that so many of them succeed.

As I write this I am preparing for the graduation ceremony at Sackett this Friday. 11 of our students will be able to be in person sharing in the celebration of that day. I am proud to have been part of their journey. In a year that has had more than its share of challenges, these celebrations of success are more important than ever. May they serve to remind us of the importance of our work and the impact that it has on the lives of our students.

Thank you for all that you do to support our students, our programs and our Association.

In Solidarity,

Joal Bova

President, RCG BOCES Teachers' Association

**Union Updates**

- **For NYSUT Coronavirus Updates**  
Visit: <https://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/coronavirus-toolkit>

**The Importance of Teaching Juneteenth**

The Juneteenth celebration marks a day in 1865 when enslaved Texans learned they'd be free—two months after Robert E. Lee surrendered and ended the Civil War and two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Initially a uniquely Texan observance, Juneteenth has now been recognized in some form in every corner of the country.

There are many ways to teach students about this celebration. Lessons about Juneteenth need to recognize the challenges those who fight injustice have always faced, but they shouldn't be marked only by the tragedy of enslavement. Students, particularly Black students, can find empowerment in the jubilant celebrations of culture, activism and the humanity of a people.

Read the full article here:

<https://sharemylesson.com/blog/juneteenth>

Join us for a discussion with educators statewide about the history of Juneteenth and why it's important for us to celebrate.

**'Juneteenth: We Need to Celebrate!'**  
Friday, June 18, 4-5:30 p.m. (EDT)

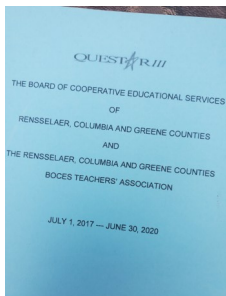
**#ManyThreadsNYSUT**

To register, go to:

<https://www.nysut.org/news/2021/june/many-threads-juneteenth>



## Know Your Contract



### Article 7: Insurance

#### 7.1 Eligibility for Benefits

An employee who is employed half time or more shall be entitled to receive the benefits provided by this article pro rata, provided, however, that teachers who are employed for the full school day in a facility shall be deemed to work full time based upon the full school day in the facility in which he or she is assigned. Effective July 1, 2018 all newly hired employees will be

subject to a waiting period. Such newly hired employees will be eligible for benefits on the next first of the month following thirty (30) days from date of hire. For example, employee hired effective July 15 will be eligible for health insurance September 1.

#### 7.5 Dental Insurance

During the term of this agreement, the Agency will continue to pay:

- A. The full cost of individual Dental Insurance under a plan provided by Blue Cross/Blue Shield (Basic

Plan plus Rider A) which reimburses 80% of the cost of dental expenses, or

- B. A mutually agreeable plan and percentage.
- C. Blue Cross/Blue Shield (Basic Plan plus Rider A) family dental option is available to an employee who chooses to pay the entire additional cost of the differential in premium.



### Congratulations to the CLASS OF 2021!

As we come to the end of the 2020-2021 school year, we celebrate the commencement of students across Questar III, in a variety of programs.

#### Congratulations to students in:

- **Columbia High School**
- **The Academy at Rensselaer Educational Center**
- **New Visions**
- **Robin Sobol Transition Academy**

- **Columbia Greene Education Center ALP and Career Academy**
- **Rensselaer Education Center**
- **Sackett**
- **Heavy Equipment Operation and Maintenance**

Congratulations to all the graduates and we look forward to your continued success and future endeavors!

Graduation is a time for new beginnings and reflections on years past. This is also a time for teachers to reflect and look forward to the future. As we continue to support these students throughout their educational

with. We can say goodbye and good luck and hope we did all we could, while we could!

-Emily Bluhm-Allen

Please find the full list of graduates on facebook and at:

[www.questar.org/news/](http://www.questar.org/news/)

### Shared Success

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” -Eleanor Roosevelt



## A call for school reopening and reimagining public education

AFT President Randi Weingarten delivered a landmark address May 13 outlining her vision for reopening schools, helping students recover and reimagining public education, as the country emerges from the COVID-19 crisis. Amid a polarized national education debate and lingering fears among parents over school safety, Weingarten backed the Biden administration’s deployment of billions in federal resources for full five-days-a-week reopening of schools and launched an unprecedented \$5 million “Back to School for Everyone” campaign to realize it.

In the speech, “Return, Recover and Reimagine: Toward a Renaissance in America’s Public Schools,” delivered live from AFT headquarters, Weingarten spelled out the steps necessary to return safely to full in-person learning and build the support systems to help students socially, emotionally and academically. “There is no doubt: Schools must be open. In person. Five days a week. With the space and facilities to do so,” she said. “We know that’s how kids learn best and that prolonged isolation is harmful.”

“Educators have yearned to be back in school, with their students. They only asked for two things—a safe workplace during this pandemic and the resources they and their students need to succeed.”

[AFT Communications staff]

Read the full news article here:

<https://www.aft.org/news/call-school-reopening-and-reimagining-public-education>



# Not sure where to start with your summer to-do list?



Whether it's assisting NYSUT members with everyday essentials, important choices about insurance needs, or making prudent decisions about financial and legal concerns, NYSUT Member Benefits can help.

Scan the QR code below to learn more about the following endorsed programs and services.

## Saving you money: MB Discounts & Deals

With the **Member Benefits Discounts & Deals** program, NYSUT members can save up to 50% at more than 700,000 merchants nationwide (including thousands throughout New York State). Save on groceries and food delivery; restaurant dine-in or takeout; gasoline, oil changes and vehicle maintenance; clothing and shoes; and much more. You can even request that your favorite merchant join the network.

## Saving you money: Every \$\$\$ counts

Whether your summer plans include home renovations, replacing or upgrading appliances, getting a new car, stocking up for the return to school, or even just hanging out and enjoying some time off, Member Benefits has a variety of endorsed programs -- **Purchasing Power, Buyer's Edge Inc., Office Depot/OfficeMax, Bose, Powell's Books** -- that might be able to minimize the impact on your wallet and maximize your enjoyment of the all-too-fleeting summer months.



## Protecting your family: Insuring yourself and your family

Member Benefits endorses a number of competitive insurance programs that are available to NYSUT members. These include **auto/home/renters, life, disability, long term care, dental, vision**, and even **pet insurance**. Some of these programs are also available to or cover spouses/domestic partners of members, dependent children, dependent parents, and grandparents. Most offer payroll & pension deduction as payment options.

## Planning for the future: Have a plan for wherever life takes you

It's never too early or too late to make a plan. Just starting a career or looking at retirement? Beginning to pay off loans or building a nest egg? Looking to buy a new home or refinance the one you're in? Welcoming a new child or adopting? Now would be a good time to look into the ways to put a plan in place or make adjustments to your existing one. Explore the Member Benefits **Financial Learning Center** for assistance; while you're there, check out our **Legal Service Plan** and **Financial Counseling Program**.

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of programs and services that are available to NYSUT members and their families, including the following options:



To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org), call 800-626-8101 or scan the QR code above.

For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.

May/June '21

# Member Benefits Quick Guide

## INSURANCE COVERAGE

### Auto/Home/ Boat/Motorcycle

Special group rates on coverage for auto, home, renters, boat and motorcycle, and personal excess liability umbrella coverage from MetLife.

**866-697-8822**

### Term Life/ Level Term Life

Financial protection for your family from MetLife.

**888-386-9788**

### Disability

Income replacement benefits, provided by MetLife, help cover expenses if you become partially or totally disabled and unable to work.

**888-386-9788**

### Dental

Competitively-priced coverage from MetLife, including preventive and routine services.

**888-883-0046**

### Catastrophe Major Medical

Supplements existing coverage if you have a serious medical issue, are confined to convalescent or custodial care, or require home health care.

**800-626-8101**

### New York Long-Term Care Brokers

Long-term care insurance specialists help you choose the best coverage at the most competitive premium.

**888-884-0077**

### Vision

Full coverage from Davis Vision for an eye exam, and one pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses per benefit period.

**800-626-8101**

### Pet Insurance

Nationwide insurance for pets covers accidents and illnesses, ranging from ear infections to cancer, plus optional pet wellness plans.

**866-838-3461**

### WrapPlan® II Universal Life Insurance

Transamerica provides coverage that increases as your term life coverage decreases or ends.

**866-697-8897**



## LEGAL & FINANCIAL SERVICES

### Legal Service Plan

Legal expertise on a range of personal legal matters provided by Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C.

**800-626-8101**

### Financial Counseling Program

Unbiased financial counseling with investment advisor Stacey Braun Associates.

**800-626-8101**

### Synchrony Bank

Earn preferred rates on various savings products.

**800-901-2965**

### Cambridge Credit Counseling

Get expert assistance on student loan repayment options and/or debt consolidation, along with no-cost consultations.

STUDENT LOAN COUNSELING

**888-254-9827**

CREDIT & DEBT COUNSELING

**888-254-0398**

### UnionDirect Mortgage Discount Program

Save up to \$2,700 on lender fees and closing costs with Mid-Island Mortgage Corp.

**800-50-NYSUT**

**(800-506-9788)**

## TRAVEL & TOURS

### Orlando Employee Discounts

Save up to 30% on theme parks, attractions and vacation packages.

**866-463-0193**

### Grand Circle Travel

Worldwide group travel and adventure tours.

**800-221-2610**

MENTION NYSUT MEMBERSHIP FOR SPECIAL RATES AND OFFERS

## HOME ENERGY

### American Solar Partners

American-made modules, installed by IBEW union pros.

**914-699-3366**

### Heat USA

Buying group that provides discounted heating oil and service plans.

**888-432-8872**

### Tankfarm

Savings on propane service. No fees for rental, delivery or compliance.

**855-966-1444**





## DINING & SHOPPING DISCOUNTS

### **NEW PROGRAM!** Member Benefits Discounts & Deals

Exclusive member access to savings of up to 50% at 700,000 locations nationwide.

**800-406-6020**

### **Bose**

Discounts on personal and home sound systems.

**877-709-2073**

### **Buyer's Edge, Inc.**

Discounts on appliances, vehicles, furniture and other major purchases.

USERNAME: 215  
PASSWORD: NYSUT

**973-660-1001**

### **Office Depot/ OfficeMax**

Online and in-store discounts on school and office supplies.

**855-337-6811, x 12897**

### **Powell's Books**

One of the world's largest independent booksellers and proud union employer.

**800-878-7323**

### **Purchasing Power**

Member shopping program offering consumer products, vacations and online education services with easy and convenient payment plans.

**800-537-3135**

### **1-800-Flowers**

Flowers and gifts delivered worldwide.

**800-356-9377**

USE CODE:  
NYSUTMB



## CAR & TRUCK RENTALS

### **Alamo**

**800-462-5266**  
USE CODE: 213855

### **Avis**

**800-698-5685**  
USE CODE: A441200

### **Budget**

CAR RENTAL:  
**800-455-2848**  
USE CODE:  
BCDX928400

TRUCK RENTAL:  
**800-566-8422**  
**888-633-3857**

USE CODE:  
56000070789

### **Enterprise**

**800-736-8222**  
USE CODE: NYSUTMB

### **Hertz**

**800-654-2210**  
IN THE U.S.  
**800-654-3001**  
OUTSIDE THE U.S.  
USE CODE: CDP85352

### **National**

**800-227-7368**  
USE CODE: 5028191



## HEALTH & SAFETY

### **EPIC Hearing**

Provides access to audiologists and ENTs, plus special pricing on hearing aids.

**866-956-5400**

USE CODE:  
NYSUTMBC

### **Defensive Driving Training**

Online training course provides savings on your liability and collision insurance, and can reduce up to four points on your license.

**800-626-8101**

USE CODE:  
NYSUTDDC

### **Connect America**

Personal emergency response system for individuals living independently.

**844-996-9788**



**AS A MEMBER OF NYSUT,** we are fighting for you every day—for better contracts, safer working conditions and fair pay. Through our advocacy, we uphold hard-won labor rights for our members – and the best possible conditions for the students, patients and others that our members serve. We also offer you exclusive access to a variety of endorsed programs and services offered by NYSUT Member Benefits, and our national affiliates, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and National Education Association (NEA). From insurance to vacations, use this brochure to start taking advantage of all we have to offer. We're union proud and honored to serve you.



**In solidarity,**  
**J. Philippe Abraham**  
Chairperson, NYSUT Member Benefits Trust



**100,000+**

**PAYROLL/PENSION  
DEDUCTION**

More than 100,000 NYSUT members take advantage of this convenient way to pay for endorsed programs. Payment options often include enhanced coverage or additional discounts.

**\$1,500**

**AUTOMATIC  
INSURANCE BENEFIT**

Every member receives this accidental death & dismemberment insurance benefit at no charge. It includes free travel coordination services.

**\$25,000**

**ONE YEAR, NO-COST,  
TERM LIFE INSURANCE**

Provided for every new NYSUT member for one year. Guaranteed renewal includes free preparation of a Will, grief counseling, funeral and beneficiary claim assistance, and estate resolution.

**15%**

**METLIFE MULTI-POLICY  
DISCOUNT**

By purchasing exclusive NYSUT member homeowners and auto insurance through MetLife, you'll receive a 15% multi-policy discount.

**18-79**

**ELIGIBLE AGES TO  
PURCHASE LONG-TERM  
CARE INSURANCE**

With discounted rates for members and partners, New York Long-Term Care Brokers program specialists will help explain and compare different coverage from multiple insurance companies.

**100**

**FREE FINANCIAL  
LEARNING MODULES**

Available at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org), check out our Financial Planning Center for quick overviews of important topics such as retirement planning, student loans, budgeting and more.

**90%**

**CASH BACK ON  
ELIGIBLE VET BILLS\***

Nationwide offers pet insurance policies for dogs, cats, birds or exotic pets. Enjoy up to a 10% discount for multiple pets enrolled in a household.

*\*Some exclusions may apply. See policy documents for a complete list of exclusions.*

**\$5,000**

**ADDITIONAL BENEFIT  
FOR AFT MEMBERS**

This accidental death & dismemberment insurance benefit for AFT members will double if an injury or death occurs in the workplace.

**\$150,000**

**ADDITIONAL BENEFIT  
FOR NEA MEMBERS**

Additional life insurance and accidental death & dismemberment insurance from \$1,000-\$150,000 (depending on circumstances). Details at: [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org)

For information about these programs or contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits.



To learn more about our endorsed programs and services, please visit:

[memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org)

NYSUT Member Benefits

800 Troy-Schenectady Rd. Latham, NY 12110-2455

PH: 800-626-8101 FX: 518-213-6413

[memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org)

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