



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
**POUGHKEEPSIE PUBLIC SCHOOL
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

APRIL 2025

NEWSFLASH



PPSTA

General Membership Meeting



**Benefit Trust
Medical & Vision
Updates**



**Thursday
May 15th
3:30pm @ PHS**



NEWSFLASH

Mid-Hudson NY Fix Tier 6 Rally



Walkway over the Hudson

**CLICK
HERE!**

Poughkeepsie, New York

**SAVE THE DATE
June 6th**

**GIVE TO
NOTE-COPE**

**SUPPORT EDUCATORS
HELP OUR STUDENTS
PROTECT OUR RIGHTS
ADVANCE DEMOCRACY
UNITE OUR NATION**



**Why help NYSUT
Fix Tier 6?**

- Tier 6 members must pay into the retirement system their entire careers.
- Tier 6 members must contribute more as their pay increases, starting at 3 percent and growing to 6 percent.
- Tier 6 members can't retire before 63 without heavy penalties.
- Tier 6 doesn't incentivize professionals to enter, or stay in, education.
- NYSUT knows how to get this done. In 2000, we helped end career-long contributions and reduced early retirement penalties for Tier 4 members.



PPSTA WILL DAY

May 29th, 2025 (NEW DATE)



As a benefit of the PPSTA Access Group Legal Plan, you are entitled to draft or update a Simple Will each year. The same holds true for your spouse or domestic partner. This is a service that is provided at no cost to PPSTA members.

On Thursday, May 29th, 2025, a plan attorney will be at the PPSTA Office at 40 Garden Street, Suite 207 beginning at 2:30 p.m. to meet with legal plan participants on an individual basis to assist in drafting a Simple Will. A member, spouse, family members, or domestic partners are invited to attend the session. **Please be sure to bring your completed Legal Security Packet to the scheduled appointment.** If you need the questionnaire packet, please indicate on the coupon below or call **Olga Mirabilio at 845-471-3376.**

If you would like to take advantage of this service, complete the coupon below and return it to Olga either via inter-office mail, or call the office (471-3376) with the information as soon as possible.

Retirees, if you would like to avail yourself of this opportunity, for a \$55 annual fee you can likewise have these documents prepared (and receive more legal services) by enrolling in the Legal Service Plan at www.nysut.org. You must buy the NYSUT Legal Plan before your appointment.



(Please Print)

YES! Sign me up for Will Day.

Name: _____

Building: _____ Extension # _____

Please send me a questionnaire yes _____ no _____

Home Phone or Cell Phone: _____

Time Preference from 2:30 – 5:00: 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____

(the schedule may be extended if there is a need to include more people)

Return coupon to Olga Mirabilio at the PPSTA Office via inter-office mail or call.

Response Deadline: May 21st, 2025

My name is Kim Popken and I am running for PPSTA president. As a 27-year veteran in the District, I have consistently been an active participant in PPSTA since receiving tenure. I was an adviser and CBR at the middle school, and, most recently, your very proud union President for the past four years.

When I began teaching in Poughkeepsie in 1998, PPSTA was picketing for a labor contract. Many years later, I am proud of where we stand today, having settled a contract that increased our salaries by over 20% all the while protecting our health insurance that the district was set on dismantling.

None of this was accomplished alone. I've been blessed with the support of an amazing group of women on the Executive Board: Heidi Murphy, Ashley Bass and Kim Messick from the middle school, Heather Duncan-Carter from the high school, and Kim Coleman from Krieger. I would like to thank Kim Coleman for her service, she has truly been amazing the past four years and welcome Stacy Grady to our slate. This team is composed of veteran teachers with the institutional memory to confront our current challenges.

At the building level, we are deeply grateful to the CBR's for their dedication and leadership. We also appreciate the advisers and trustees for their commitment to our union.

The negotiations team and crisis committee were the driving force behind the settling of the contract. They did amazing work and gave so much of their time and energy to the cause. We showed the force that PPSTA has when we come together. It is the union - all of us coming together - that can affect the change we need for our members and our students.

In the last four years we have revived our Facebook page, updated our bulletins, sent a press release with the other union presidents, conducted walk-ins for safety, settled a contract that went back 5 years and forward 6 ending in 2029, as well as supported local charities and organizations. We communicate regularly with our members through our updates. We also re-established our relationship with NYSUT, attending Dutchess County Union President meetings, ED13 and 13-14 meetings. We also regularly meet with representatives at both the state and federal level. These meetings are an opportunity to collaborate with other leaders and advocate for the change we believe needs to happen at both the State level and federal level.

This past summer I attended the NYSUT Leadership Institute. I spent a week in the summer and a long weekend this past winter learning about my leadership style and how to use that knowledge to best collaborate with others. We also learned strategies to help us face the current challenges in our union and district. I will continue to learn and grow as your leader to make this union the strongest it can be.

Of course, none of this can happen without you. A union isn't an outside organization that comes in to offer assistance; it is YOU and your colleagues coming together to empower each other as a COLLECTIVE. In this current climate there is much uncertainty. We are ready for what challenges lie ahead and proud to be the team to lead this union into these next two years.

Kim Popken

Hello...My name is Heidi Murphy and I am honored to announce that I am running for reelection as 1st Vice President of the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers Association.

I have been a proud PCSD teacher for the past twenty-seven (27) years.

I am willing to take the time away from my family and time away from my friends because PPSTA matters...Public Education matters...

I am willing to commit to continuing to serve PPSTA for the next two years with this amazing slate of women...in order to continue the amazing work we~ as a collective union~ have all started.

WE are the ones who make a difference everyday in the lives of the students and families we serve.

WE are the ones who provide stability and unlimited love to our most vulnerable students when all around- chaos seems to reign...

I have said it before and I'll say it again...PPSTA is on the front lines whether it be advocating for foundation aid, collaborating for safer schools, fixing Tier 6 for our newest members, providing support for our colleagues, or fighting for and WINNING a fair contract that respects the work we do. WE MATTER.

At the present time, I have been your PPSTA 1st Vice President for the past four fruitful years. Thank you for supporting our efforts over the past several years! I am extremely proud of the work we have done and continue to do. Your combined efforts have fostered real success in the form of a ratified contract~ Our contractual rights protect our unit members while supporting our collective goal of protecting and advocating for our students and their families. While the challenges we all face are at times daunting, I strongly believe that our experienced, motivated Slate~ together with the members we serve~ can continue to make a positive difference.

I would be honored to continue to serve as your 1st Vice President of the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association and am grateful for your consideration as I join my colleagues:

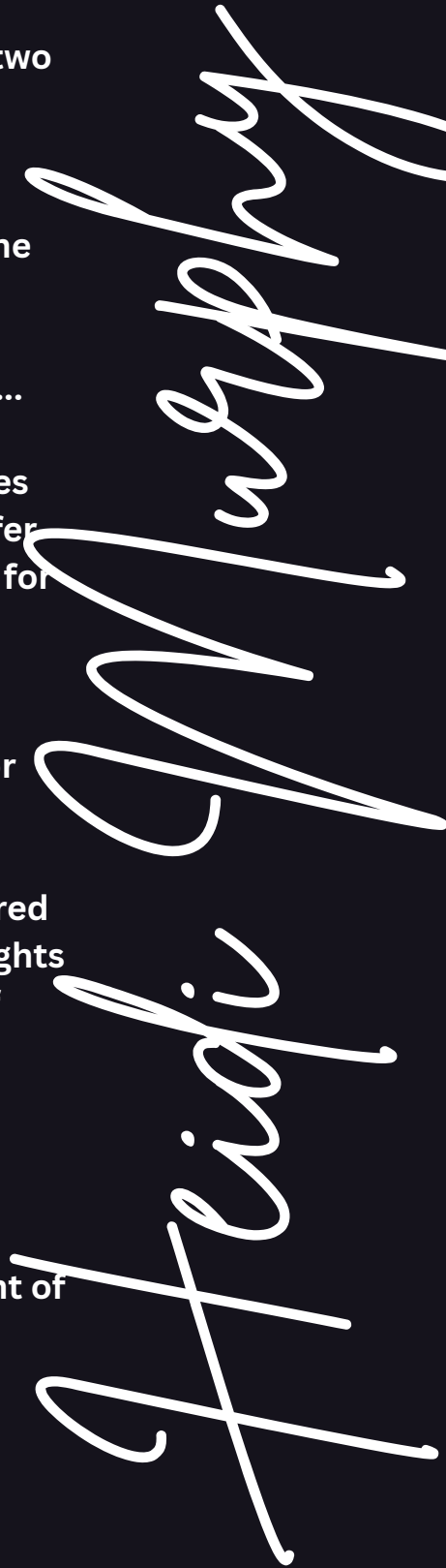
Kim Popken for President

Heather Duncan-Carter for 2nd Vice President

Ashley Bass for Treasurer

and Stacey Grady for Secretary

in running for your PPSTA Executive Board. Thank you!

A large, stylized handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Heidi Murphy". The signature is written vertically, starting from the middle of the page and extending down to the bottom right corner, overlapping the printed text.

My name is Heather Duncan-Carter, and I am honored to be running for 2nd Vice President of the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association. For the past 20 years, I've dedicated my career to the students of the Poughkeepsie City School District, working in five different buildings. Some of you may not know that during this time, I was excessed for two years due to statewide budget cuts. I was the "low man" on the list, and just like that, my job was gone.

That experience was a wake-up call. It taught me how fragile our positions can be. But it also deepened my gratitude for this profession and strengthened my commitment to our union.

My love for art and working with Poughkeepsie's children never wavered, but it evolved into something more—advocating for and creating opportunities for our union members.

With creativity and determination, we have:

Built a new website to keep PPSTA members informed about resources and benefits.

Reinvigorated our Vote-Cope campaigns into an award-winning effort that promotes public education and educators

Advocated for Safety in our schools

Created PPSTA merchandise, fostering unity among our members

Nurtured Facebook & Instagram accessibility for the members

Nurturing our community partners

Supported Professional Growth and Well-Being

Worked towards and finalized the 2024 Teachers Contract after 6 years

When I first decided to run for office in 2021, my goal was to contribute to a strong, stable team. I believed that with the right group of colleagues, we could bring about real change ~ Promoting Unity and Transparency and a deeper understanding of why unions matter!

Little did I know just how much I would learn along the way.

From leadership conventions to Fix Tier 6 rallies, from the Committee of 100 events to the Representative Assembly in Cooperstown and New York City, from advocating at NYSUT headquarters to serving as the Mid-Hudson Vote-Cope Coordinator—this journey has been nothing short of transformative.

And yet, there is still so much more to do.

Working w/ the following leadership:

Kim Popken for President

Heidi Murphy for 1st Vice President

Ashley Bass for Treasurer

and Stacy Grady for Secretary

We can bring about Collective Change!

I am grateful for the knowledge I've gained, and I am committed to continuing this working alongside you. Together, we must face the challenges ahead—united, informed, and ready to fight for what's best for our members and our families.

Let's move PPSTA, together. Thank you!

Heather Duncan-Carter

My name is Ashley Bass and I'm very excited to be running for Treasurer of The Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association. I would like to express my gratitude to Kim Coleman for all the wonderful work she has done as treasurer in the past 4 years.

I am an incredibly proud PCSD ENL Teacher! I have worked in Clinton, Morse and have spent my last 9 years at Poughkeepsie Middle School. I have been working in Poughkeepsie City School District for more than 12 years. Before becoming an ENL teacher, I was a reading teacher serving the elementary students.

I love working with students and what thrills me the most are the "ah hah" moments that they have as they learn the English Language. I'm grateful to have worked with so many wonderful students and colleagues. Since I have worked in Elementary buildings I have experienced the many struggles with time management and being pulled in so many directions with the tasks that need to be accomplished in so little time. I have experienced the many problems and leadership changes in the secondary school and the effect that it has on our students academically but also behaviorally. There can be stress and frustration when working at all levels, however, there can also be joy and satisfaction when you have supportive colleagues and a union that you know will support and fight for you.

I have participated in PPSTA activities throughout my 13 year career. I have been serving on the PPSTA New Member Committee for about 3 years. Before becoming secretary I served as a trustee for a couple of years. I want to thank all of you who have put in the hard work for the union in your various roles, such as, CBR's, advisors, trustees, serving on committees, or just showing up to PPSTA events. All of these things really help contribute to building a stronger union! Working as a unit member is not an easy job but you are essential and I want to thank each and every one of you for showing up and giving your all to serve our students in PCSD. It has been a privilege serving you all as Secretary of PPSTA. It has been an honor serving with the amazing PPSTA exe team: PPSTA President, Kim Popken, PPSTA 1st VP, Heidi Murphy, PPSTA 2nd VP, Heather Duncan-Carter, PPSTA Grievance Chair, Kim Messick & Outgoing PPSTA Treasurer, Kim Coleman.

It's my hope that Slate #1 ~ Kim Popken, Heidi Murphy, Heather Duncan-Carter, Stacy Grady, and myself can serve all educators in this district and make a difference. Now that we have a contract it is more important than ever for us to stay united and work on increasing morale. When we are strong and stick together we can accomplish so much more.

Ashley Bass

My name is Stacy Grady and I am excited to be running for Secretary of the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association.

I have worked at Krieger Elementary for the past 23 years as a general music and chorus teacher. Working with our talented “budding” musicians, I get to witness firsthand the joy, creativity, and confidence that music brings to children everyday.

My job is more than just notes and songs—it's experiencing my students discovering new instruments for the first time, mastering a tricky rhythm, and getting to be by their side as they perform in their concerts with pride.

These same values—connection, communication, and care—are what I want to bring to the role of union secretary. I'm running for secretary not only to serve my colleagues, but to strengthen the bonds between us—fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and teamwork—just like we do in our classrooms.

Let's make our voices stronger—together.

Working with the following leadership:

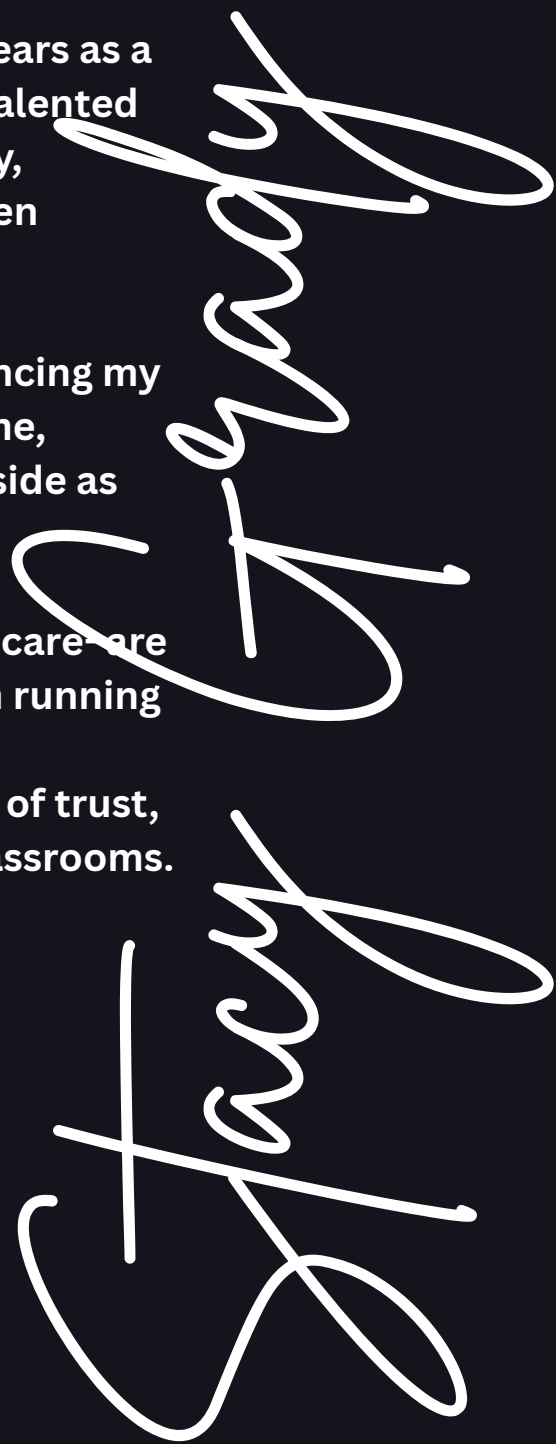
Kim Popken for President

Heidi Murphy for 1st Vice President

Heather Duncan-Carter for 2nd Vice President and

Ashley Bass for Treasurer

Just like in the classroom, every voice matters and when we work together, we create something greater than any one person can do alone. Thank you for considering me to serve in this important role. I would be honored to represent you.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Stacy Grady". The signature is written vertically, with "Stacy" on the left and "Grady" on the right, and it spans across the right side of the text blocks.



Updates & Information



BENEFIT TRUST

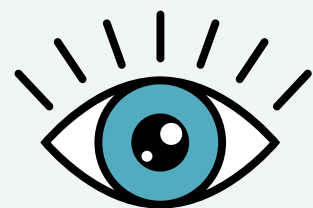


Changes to our Medical Plan Effective July 1, 2025

On March 6, 2025 the PPSTA Benefit Trust voted the following changes to the fertility benefit:

1. Increase the annual \$10,000 max to a max of \$15,000 per round.
2. Set the max number of rounds to 3.
3. Continue the IVF drugs to 80% in network and 70% Out of Network.
4. Eliminate the age limitations.

There will be more to come on this. Stay tuned!

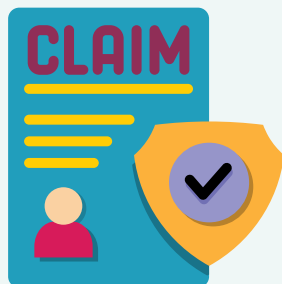


If you are having problems with registering on
www.myUHCvision.com:

MyUHCVision Tech Support team 1-877-844-4999.

Submitting Claims to UMR

When you are submitting claims for reimbursement, it is very important to follow the directions on the form. If you submit by mail, keep copies!!! If you are emailing, the UMR system CANNOT read google docs or sheets. These claims end up in a 'dead letter file' and cannot get processed. You need to attach the claim form and supporting documentation in pdf form.



The PPSTA Benefit Trust has engaged Health Navigator for actives and retirees no matter what their choice of medical plan. Members can use the service for not only their immediate dependents but parents, parent in laws and non-dependent adult children over the age of 26.



Sun Life

Health Navigator



Health Navigator now has an app: SunLife Health 360

The app can be used to get healthcare support or various wellness workouts.

You can also call 888-352-4969 or go to

www.PinnacleCare.com/health-navigator-support

CLICK HERE



Health Navigator Services

Sun Life Health Navigator Care Advisors provide a high-touch, personalized model of support, offering in-depth medical knowledge of all health conditions.

Once Members engage with a Health Navigator Care Advisor, they continue working with the same trusted person throughout their engagement.

When a Member is facing a complex medical condition such as cancer, our Care Advisors help get access to top experts quickly, confirm diagnoses, and determine appropriate treatment options.

Members with less complex medical needs are provided assistance with navigating the healthcare system based upon their unique circumstances, needs, and preferences. The range of services includes:

Health Advisory & Advocacy

- Dedicated personal advisor
- Expedited access facilitation and appointment scheduling with top specialists

Treatment Decision Support & Navigation

- Review and confirmation of diagnosis from medical professionals
- Data validated research on treatment options
- Identification of clinical trials

Member-Physician Matching

- Preferences for in-network or best-in-class specialists, including geographic preferences
- Physician credentials, including education, fellowship training, and ongoing research
- Physician experience and evaluation of medical licensing qualifications, certifications, and disciplinary sanctions
- Physician affiliations with hospitals/medical centers

Expert Medical Opinions

- Expedited medical records collection and organization
- Clinical case review
- Identification of top in-network physicians
- Facilitated virtual consultations, written or video
- Facilitated in-person appointments





PPSTA BENEFIT TRUST



Calendar Year Information:
Medical: January 1- December 31
Dental: July 1- June 30
Vision: September 1- August 1
Legal: April 1- March 31
Opt-Out: September 1- August 31

Notice to all PPSTA/UMR Plan members:

Members can locate providers by logging onto **UMR** or through the **PPSTA website** under Benefits page, just scroll down to:

Health Benefit Summary Plan Description



GETTING MARRIED:

Call Olga at the PPSTA office for a change of status form. After you receive the marriage license, please send a copy to Olga. New family members must be enrolled within 30 days!!

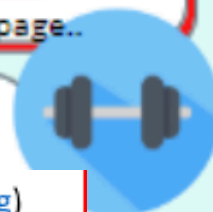
GYM REIMBURSEMENT:

Find this form on the **PPSTA website** under Benefits page..

MOVING?



It is critical that when your address changes that you notify Olga (officesecretary@ppsta.org) and Debbie (benefittrust@ppsta.org). If we don't have your correct address things like dental and medical reimbursements will go to your old address and they don't always get sent back to UMR!



Are you expecting a new family member?

Newborns are automatically covered during the first 30 days following birth. Enrollment is required during the first 30 days to continue coverage! From date of adoption, provided family or dependent coverage is applied for within 30 days of adoption or legal custody. You **MUST** contact the PPSTA office in the first 30 days. Please send a copy of the birth certificate and Social Security Card to the PPSTA office.



Status Changes:

Members are responsible for updating the plan within 30 days of any changes in health or dental coverage. (for any covered member) or any changes in family status (divorce, separation, retirement, birth, death, adoption, change in full time student status, no longer an eligible dependent due to age, etc.) If you need to make changes to your enrollment status, or the enrollment of any of your eligible dependents, please contact the PPSTA Benefit Trust office.

Did your child graduate from college recently?

All children are covered under their parent's plan until the age of 26 as long as they are enrolled in the plan.



Do you have a child in College?

Dependents in colleges are enrolled in the plan regardless of how far they live from home. There is no Out of Area coverage needed.



Traveling to a foreign country this summer?

PPSTA Medical coverage is limited to Emergency Care and is subject to the Emergency Care Copay plus an additional \$250 Copay for foreign Travel. The bills need to be detailed in English or which are translated to English with the medical procedures clearly listed.

For a non-emergency situation, if you are out of the country less than 6 weeks, the \$250 Copay would apply to any service and the balance of the charges would be paid as an out of network benefit subject to the NPPO deductible (\$1,000) and coinsurance (30%).

When you travel in a foreign country, we recommend that you get some temporary travel insurance that is appropriate for the country you will be visiting.

***If you are returning from a leave of absence**, it is your responsibility to contact the PPSTA office to re-enroll for benefits.

Medicare Eligibility:

Once you and/or your spouse are no longer actively employed and Medicare Eligible, you need to update your enrollment status. Please provide the plan with an updated enrollment form along with a copy of your Medicare ID Card. You must enroll in both Medicare Part A & B once you are no longer covered under a plan of a member who is actively at work. You must contact the District for information on reimbursing your Medicare Part B premiums.

If you need to make changes to your enrollment status, or to enrollment of any of your eligible dependents, please contact the PPSTA Benefit Trust Office!

If you have other questions regarding your available benefits, including the preventive and routine services available to you and your dependents, contact:

UMR 800-826-9781 Monday-Friday from 8am - 5 pm

Questions about prescription drug, contact OptumRx 1-877-559-2955

If there is ever any problem with the adjudication of claims or with a provider, PLEASE call the PPSTA office!

NEWS

Benefit Trust Coordinator: **Debbie Kardas**

benefittrust@ppsta.org

Office hours: 10:30-1:30

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday

845-471-3376

www.ppsta.org



Please visit **www.ppsta.org** to access your health care information & updates.

To comply with the federal Transparency in Coverage Rule, UnitedHealthcare, UMR and HealthSCOPE Benefits creates and publishes the Machine-Readable Files on behalf of the PPSTA Benefit Trust. This link will be active July 1, 2022.

To link to the Machine-Readable Files, please click on the URL provided:
<https://transparency-in-coverage.uhc.com/>



PPSTA General Membership Meeting



Benefit Trust
Medical & Vision
Updates



**Thursday
May 15th
3:30pm**

****PPSTA Bulletin Deadline
for submissions is the
1st of each month.****

*Do you want to highlight
your classroom or school
event? Do you have
awesome pictures of
union members doing
great things?*

If you have:

*Articles

*items of interest

*Congratulations

*Pictures

*Condolences

Please submit them to
bulletin@PPSTA.org**



Office Secretary:
Olga Mirabilio
officesecretary@ppsta.org
Hours: M-F 8am-12pm



PPSTA is located at:
40 Garden Street, Suite 207
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
845.471.3376
FAX 845.471.6783



THE PPSTA BULLETIN IS THE
OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION
FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP
REGARDING ALL MEDICAL
AND DENTAL INSURANCE
INFORMATION.





EXPERT LEGAL & FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE



NYSUT members have access to programs and services from NYSUT Member Benefits that can help them save money, protect their family, and assist with planning for the future.

With our **Legal Service Plan**, you will receive crucial estate planning documents (Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Power of Attorney); free attorney consultations; and guaranteed maximum fees for personal legal matters. Plan participants receive guaranteed hourly rates along with discounted prices for referral attorneys.

Our **Financial Counseling Program** offers access to certified financial planners that provide fee-based financial counseling services. Participants can get help with retirement planning, 403(b) & 457(b) plan advice, debt management, savings, budgeting, and more.

Check out **Synchrony Bank** for some of today's most competitive interest rates on certificates of deposit, money market, and savings accounts. An optional automated savings program (which makes transfers from your checking account at another bank to your money market or savings account at Synchrony Bank) is an easy way to build your balances in higher-earning accounts.

Our online **Financial Learning Center - powered by Kiplinger's Personal Finance** - offers numerous articles designed to assist NYSUT members with achieving their personal financial goals and better understand the nuances of insurance, savings, investing, and more. This free resource is updated on a monthly basis.

Do you have student loan or general debt concerns? Our **Cambridge Credit Counseling program** is available at no cost to assist NYSUT members with better understanding general debt consolidation and student loan repayment options. Members can take part in a free consultation with a certified Cambridge counselor or sign up for a no-cost student loan debt webinar provided by Cambridge.

Take back your financial independence and protect your family for whatever the future may bring.

Learn more by scanning the QR code, visiting memberbenefits.nysut.org, or calling 800-626-8101.

