



Lockport Education Association  
NYSUT Local 03-085 AFT Local 2794 AFL-CIO

# Lockport Education Association

## March/April 2024 Newsletter



[www.lockportea.org](http://www.lockportea.org)



### President's Update...

*Courtesy of Scott Reddinger - LHS*

Sisters and Brothers,

As this newsletter hits your inboxes the LEA finds itself positioned well on a number of fronts and issues we have been tackling over the past few months.

First, in collaboration with K-6 LEA leadership, the LEA recently was able to convince the district of the need to record K-4 discipline data in eSchool. This reality for 2024-25 is significant because in prior years, little to no discipline was recorded. As LEA members, it is imperative to know the background of our students so we can better assist them in their movement along the continuum. Thank you to all of those who were a part of conversations leading to our formal request and appeal for this change!

Second, we were able to secure and retain a contractual provision for our unit of Speech Language Pathologists. These dedicated members bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars for the LCSD through medicaid submission and reimbursement. Unfortunately, this fall LCSD decided they were not going to adhere to the contract and pay out reimbursement for licensing/certification for these members. As a result of staunch advocacy, presentation of data and eventually the threat of needing to file charges with the NYS Public Employees Relations Board, LCSD decided to continue paying out this benefit as they have for the past decade. We received a communication from the Superintendent indicating they will adhere to this provision, and that in the next round of negotiations they will support cleaning up the language so it is crystal clear that this reimbursement will be made.

Both of these experiences in addressing challenges took time, detailed communication and advocacy. What I want to share with our membership is that in all of these circumstances, the Superintendent was willing to listen rationally to our concerns and work with the LEA to resolve the problem. To that end, we are finding our way together as labor and management towards solving issues. Please continue to be patient as we work through items brought to our attention and know that oftentimes there are multiple conversations going behind closed doors to resolve your concerns. Through open and honest dialogue we will continue to work together to make sure your voice is heard.

Moving forward into May and June we will continue to work on the issues related to changes in Special Education programming within the district, as well as watch as LCSD finalizes the interviewing and filling of positions. It is our great hope that many of our ARPA grant funded members will be retained and rewarded for their efforts throughout the years of COVID and beyond.

Lastly, I want to thank our membership for always welcoming me into your buildings, faculty rooms, and classrooms. One of the greatest benefits the LEA president has is to be released and have the time to come and see you in person. Always know that if you have an issue, problem or question you want to speak about together, I am a phone call or email away and ready to help you.

In solidarity,  
Scott



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**Executive Vice President Shawn Haley**

### **PAC and VOTE-Cope Update!!!**

#### **School Board Races:**

We anticipate a number of candidates gathering petitions with the intent to run for school board. We have 3 open spots. Trustees Ferraro and Schutt are seeking re-election, while trustee Linderman is not. Petitions were available starting April 5 and are due on or before May 1. If you are interested in joining the PAC, please let me know.

#### **Committee of 100 Requests:**

- 1) Fix Tier 6: NYSUT urges the legislature to reduce the final average salary calculation from five to three years for Tier 6 members, which would increase their pension earnings and offer parity with Tier 4.
- 2) Foundation Aid : NYSUT urges the legislature to develop a budget that fully funds our public schools.
- 3) APPR: NYSUT urges the legislature to support legislation that allows districts to develop evaluation systems that are locally controlled and prioritize teaching and learning instead of punitive testing.
- 4) Teacher Center: NYSUT urges the legislature to restore funding for Teacher Centers.
- 5) Higher Education (SUNY & CUNY): NYSUT urges the legislature to support the New Deal for Higher Ed, which includes funding for more full-time faculty, better adjunct pay, more support for SUNY hospitals and increased funding for student mental health services.
- 6) Charter Schools: NYSUT urges the legislature to support legislation that holds corporate charter schools to the same standards of transparency and accountability as public schools if they receive public funding.
- 7) BOCES Programs: NYSUT urges the legislature to include the provisions contained in S.5024/A.7481 to reform the BOCES and Special Services funding formulas to meet today's needs in the one-house budget bill.
- 8) Replace the Receivership System: NYSUT asks the legislature to support a system that gives schools and districts resources and tools to meet educational standards, not an arbitrary shame-and-blame system that disadvantages them.

#### **VOTE/COPE is Needed More Than Ever, Here are the Priorities:**

The 2024/25 VOTE/Cope campaign will be starting soon. VOTE/Cope is instrumental in leading our fight. We had 85% of our members contribute in 2023/24, let's strive to improve that percentage. The ask is \$6.25 per pay for a total of \$100. If every member increases by just \$0.25, our contribution will increase by over \$2000. We must work together as we battle these important issues. Also, 40% of our contributions are returned to the LEA for our own training, team building and school board races. VOTE/Cope contributions put us at the table instead of on the menu!

**Invest in Your Profession and Invest in Your Future, Give to VOTE-COPE!!!**



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### NYSUT Initiative Fix Tier 6

Over the past year, NYSUT has ramped up efforts to work systematically to address the growing concerns over the teacher shortage and *gross inequity* that exists between retirement tiers.

Here is the LEA's most current breakdown of Tier participation is:

**Tier 3** - 1 member

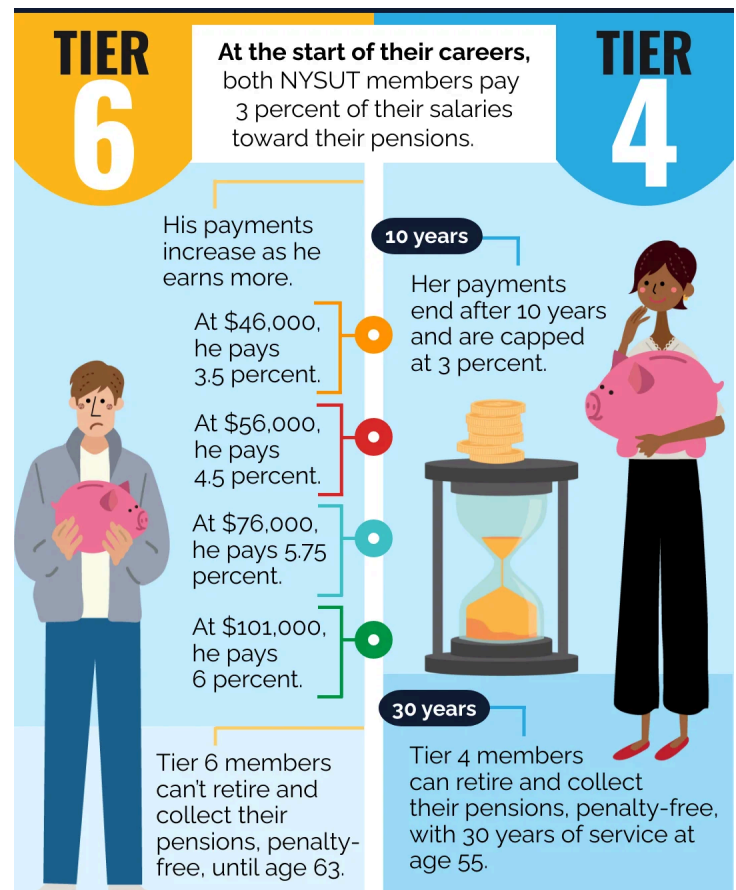
**Tier 4** - 358 members

**Tier 5** - 9 members

**Tier 6** - 144 members and growing each month

In an effort to begin to mobilize and educate members on this topic, NYSUT WNY has asked all locals to have their members sign-up for the FixTier6 campaign. Use the following link to sign up if you have not already to join the cause to [Fix Tier 6!](#) As a reminder, Tier 1 and 2 members fought for years to make sure those of us in Tier 3 and 4 would have the retirement benefits we have today.

Please assist the LEA and NYSUT in helping to Fix Tier 6 and **bring equity and equality to our youngest sisters and brothers who deserve better!**





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### Getting to Know Your Building Representatives

**Name:** Megan Rankie

**Current building:** LHS

**Other buildings worked In:** EBIS and CU

**Years in LCSD:** 6 years

**Years as rep:** 1 year

**Why do you feel the role of the building rep is so important to our membership?**

The role of a building rep is important because we are here to help all of our members. We are safe and familiar people in our buildings. We are able to answer questions, provide guidance, and to find out answers to questions we may not know.

**Do you have a favorite LEA memory?**

The winter conference was a great time. It was great to get to know more reps in a fun environment. I was also able to learn new information that will help me as a building rep.

**Any words of wisdom for our newest members?**

Make sure you take care of your mental health and always ask questions when you are unsure of something!







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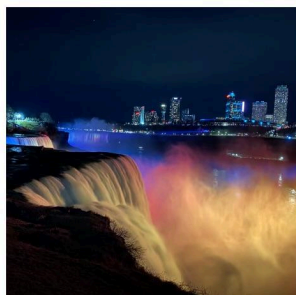
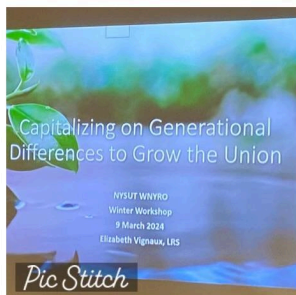
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### NYSUT Winter Conference

*Courtesy of Lindsay Siejak- LHS*

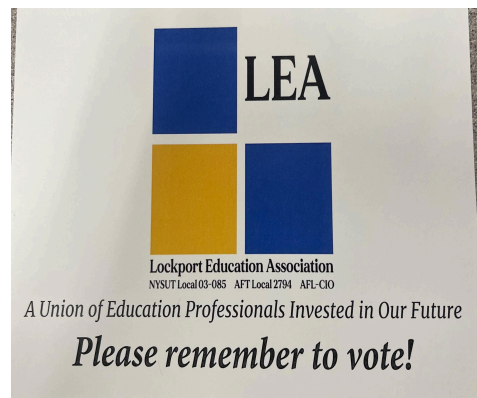
Our workshop numbers continue to grow as 19 LEA representatives attended the Winter Workshop in Niagara Falls this past March. It was a great opportunity to bond with new attendees and we continue to look forward to these workshops each year! Some workshop offerings included:

- Capitalizing on Generational Differences to Grow the Union
- Current State of the Labor Movement
- Managing Local Union Finances
- Safe Schools: Dealing with Students with Disabilities
- The Impact of Wage Inequality
- The Importance of Properly Orienting New Members into Your Union
- The Wage Gap: History Repeats Itself
- When the Principal Calls



### Positive Postcards

*Courtesy of Tanya Reese- EBIS*



**Please remember to fill out our Positive Postcards!**

### Directions:

- Fill out a positive message to any student(s)
- Make sure the correct address is written on the card
- Please send to Tanya Reese at EBIS
- Postcards will be mailed right before the BOE and budget vote in May to encourage people to vote!



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### VP Elementary (K-6)

*Courtesy of Tanya Reese - EBIS*

I would like to say SPRING is here! Along with state testing, VOTE COPE drive and the final stretch of this 2023/2024 school year. VOTE COPE is super important and is needed to help FIX Tier 6. I encourage everyone to support this drive. State testing is here and in full force. Thank you for all the work you have done to prepare students for this. Hopefully soon, we will see some positive changes regarding testing. Enjoy the nice weather and "GO SUMMER."

### Contract TidBits - Sick Leave

Sick leave shall consist of fifteen (15) days per year with full pay, which shall be credited to each member of the professional staff at the beginning of each year's service up to two hundred and ten (210) days maximum. A member who has reached the two hundred and ten (210) days maximum is also entitled to utilize the fifteen (15) days annual allotment. Days unused in any year shall accumulate to a maximum of 225 sick days to the credit of the unit member. A member will be allowed to accumulate a maximum of 225 sick days. A maximum of 195 accumulated sick days will be used for the sick day conversion benefit at retirement. Those regularly hired employees whose service begins after the opening of the school year shall be immediately credited with a pro-rated number of days.

### VP Secondary (7-12)

*Courtesy of Lindsay Siejak - LHS*

This spring, we applied for and received an additional \$3000 grant from NYSUT and NEA to continue to grow our TALAT program in partnership with higher education institutions. Our students find a great deal of value in making college connections and envisioning themselves as future college students! We visited Buffalo State University for their 2nd annual "Be A Bengal, Be A Teacher" event. Students were able to listen to a panel of new teachers, SLP's and student teachers and learn about their paths to becoming teachers or related service providers. Students also took a tour of the campus, spoke with specific departments including Special Education, English Education, Speech Language Pathology, etc.





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### **Treasurer (and Webmaster)**

*Courtesy of Steve Young - AMJHS*

### **Executive Secretary**

*Courtesy of Cheryl Lynn- EBIS*

Please remember to vote on the upcoming school district's budget (no matter what school district in which you reside) and for your school district's Board of Education members. Stay tuned to the [LEA website](#) and your personal Gmail address for information on school board candidates that are endorsed by the local teacher unions.

On a completely different topic, I am always looking to enhance the [LEA website](#) so please view it at your convenience and make any suggestions to me for enhancements.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact Steve Young with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the LEA's Treasury or the [LEA website](#).

### **Steve Young**

**LEA Treasurer & LEA Webmaster**

(716) 417-1499

[SYoungLEA2794@gmail.com](mailto:SYoungLEA2794@gmail.com)







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## LEA Sponsored Bowling Social Brad Angelo Lanes

We had approximately 80 members show up for this fun event!







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## Check out all your union membership has to offer!

NYSUT Member Benefits offers dozens of endorsed programs and services that can save you money, assist you in protecting your family, and help you plan for the future.

### Legal Service Plan

Plan benefits include:

- Crucial estate planning documents (Simple Will, Health Care Proxy, Living Will & Durable Power of Attorney)
- Free telephone consultations
- Guaranteed maximum fees for specific legal matters

### Financial Counseling Program

Plan benefits include:

- Unbiased objective advice
- Free telephone & virtual consultations
- Assistance with retirement planning, 403(b) savings, college savings, tax planning and more

For an annual fee, the Legal Service Plan -- provided by the law firm of Feldman, Kramer & Monaco, P.C. -- offers legal expertise on a variety of personal legal matters such as dealing with a speeding ticket or handling estate planning. Plan participants receive unlimited access to toll-free advice weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) as well as a toll-free hotline for urgent legal assistance outside of these hours.

Meanwhile, the Financial Counseling Program -- provided by Stacey Braun Associates, Inc. -- offers unbiased, objective advice customized to your specific financial situation. The full-service program provides up to six hours of objective toll-free telephone or virtual consultations with a Stacey Braun Certified Financial Planner. \*



Learn more by scanning the QR code to the left, visiting [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org), or calling 800-626-8101.

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





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### NOTES BEARING INTEREST

**Lockport Schools & Community Federal Credit Union**  
360 South Transit Street; Lockport, NY 14094

**716-433-7740**  
Spring 2024



Heather, Erika, Tammy & Michelle  
Members since 2001 - 2018

The winner of the  
2024 Annual Valentines Survey  
was **Michelle Burtis!!!**



The classroom Michelle chose  
to receive \$100 from LSCFCU was  
**Mrs. O'Brien's & Mrs. Lamberts 1st Grade Class!!!**

*Thank you to all that participated in our survey, we are so grateful to have such amazing members!*

More than half of the 281 survey takers heard about us through a referral from a colleague, showing that our best resource is **YOU** through word of mouth. We love this survey because it gives us an idea of what we're doing good and what needs to be improved. Here are some of the things that you **LOVE** about us:

"I love that you're a member-owned not-for-profit - who cares about the financial needs of their community members."

"Friendly service, small office where you are recognized, good interest rates."

"I have only been a member for a few months but everybody seems to know my name when I walk in, everyone is so friendly."

"The staff is very personable. Rates. The bank is highly regarded by LCSD staff."

"Open and down to earth interactions & advice. Friendly & approachable."

"The personal attention to everything, great rates, easy to contact and work with all."

"Every thing! The professionalism of each and every person that works there. How they help their customers. Just a bunch of caring and loving people."

"How easy it is to do transactions and the skip pay in the summer!"

"All of the things I hear: helpful, kind, personalized assistance, a place where you are recognized by name and not just another number/member. Also, auto and loan rates are a huge draw to join!!"

"Easy loans and banking." "The "family" feeling." "Personal, fast, nice building and location."

"I love the ease of securing a loan, the office hours, the debit card, and the very friendly staff."