

INFORMATION, NEWS AND SUPPORT  
**SPEAK OUT!**  
 PITTSFORD DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



Lorinda Spring, Sherry Tontarski, Suzanne Kaier-Tuttle, Jill Pink, Karen Socker, Brian Regan and Stephanie Warchol at the NYSUT Day of Action Rally.

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**From the President:  
 Jolene DiBrango -  
 So, What's Next?**

In the pursuit of ensuring all children receive a high quality public education, we must all be engaged, motivated and ready to shield our colleagues and our communities from the attacks that are sure to come.

This is why PDTA continues our recommit campaign, so each of our members will have the ability to be contacted by the Association using their personal emails and cell phones when we need to act collectively to preserve the ideals we believe in as public educators!

Thank you to all of our members who participated in our Day of Action on January 19th where we identified and put the world on notice that PDTA will

shield our students, colleagues, and communities from privatizers and those who seek to dismantle what generations of public educators and unionists have built!

If you missed Randi Weingarten's\* speech on the Four Pillars of Success for Public Schools and how they run counter to Betsy DeVos and her record, please take a moment to read about it below, and be sure to reach out to your PDTA leaders if you have creative, innovative ways to support the four pillars here in Pittsford and throughout New York State:

- 1. Promoting children's well-being**
- 2. Supporting powerful learning**
- 3. Building teacher capacity, and**
- 4. Fostering cultures of collaboration**

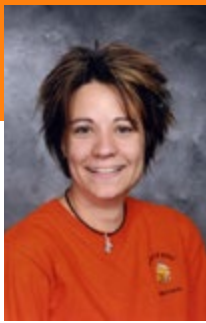
<http://www.aft.org/news/weingarten-speaks-future-public-education>

\*Randi Weingarten is the President of the American Federation of Teachers



Jolene DiBrango urging teachers gathered at School Without Walls on Jan. 19th to "Dump DeVos"!





# Political Action: Unionism is a Powerful Thing

Karen Grace

Being a member of a union is a great privilege, one that is immersed in a rich history of education, passion and activism. Unionism provides a voice for those who are often voiceless, provides hope for bringing about positive change for millions of hardworking people, and creates the opportunity for a society that benefits all.

As modern day unionists, we should be proud of that fact that we carry on the traditions of our union brothers and sisters who came before us. While we recognize that we may not all have the same political or religious backgrounds, we should be proud of the fact that we can come together for the greater good and through our collective efforts, continue to be catalysts of positive change for workers and those struggling to find justice and equality.

Our union strength and solidarity will continue to be what enables us to address the issues we will face in the midst of our current political and economic climate. We must recognize that we cannot do this work alone. We will need to work on building coalitions to help build support for our organizing efforts and in turn, we need to do the same for those organizations from whom we garner support.

Brothers and sisters, as modern day unionists we must continue to educate, advocate and mobilize around the issues that will directly impact our lives and the lives of our students. Educational issues, as well as, human rights, civil rights, rights of the disabled, and other social justice issues will continue to be at the forefront of our work.

Moving forward, I hope we will all approach our union work in the same way the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama suggested we approach citizenship.

*“All of us, regardless of party, should throw ourselves into that work -- the joyous work of citizenship. Not just when there’s an election, not just when our own narrow interest is at stake, but over the full span of a lifetime.”*



Remember, if you’d like to learn more about unions, check out our PDTA professional development workshops on what to say about unions and how politics and education are related in the spring Teacher Center catalog.

CONTACT YOUR NY SENATORS



**Senator Kirsten Gillibrand**

**Rochester Office:**  
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Federal Office Building  
100 State Street  
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**Senator Chuck Schumer**

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100 State Street, Room 3040  
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# Release Days

Dwayne Cerbone, Resolution Specialist

In response to the needs and compelling requests of our members, the

Association has worked diligently over the years to secure options and opportunities for release time when important or required professional work extends beyond the school day or traditional job expectations. It is important for each of you to be fully aware of these and to take advantage of them when you engage in corresponding activities.

Personal decisions to not do so, not only adds to a member's current work load, but also potentially jeopardizes the provision for our other members in the future. Detailed here, are a few of these provisions as found in the contract or an equally binding Memorandum of Agreement. If you have any questions about the use or application of release to your specific scenario, please see the contract or contact your Building Representative.

## STANDARDS LEADERS

Some Standards Leaders, dependent on department and other release, are granted 10-18 release days. The newest addition is the ELL Standards Leader, who now receives 10 release days. Additionally, each District Standards Leader will be given two paid summer days.

## DEPARTMENT LEADERS

For Department Leaders, the principal will grant up to one day release time per year, per full-time equivalent teacher to carry out department responsibilities. Additionally, the principal may grant up to 5 summer work days to complete tasks related to the improvement of instruction.

## FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Each full-time employee may be granted up to two days each year to observe other in-district or out-of-district programs.

## GRADES 1-5

Teachers of grades 1-5 shall be provided the equivalent of 4 half days release time, full time kindergarten teachers 8 one-half days, and half-time kindergarten teachers 4 one-half days to conduct parent conferences.

## GRADE LEVELS

Grade levels shall be granted 2 half days release time per semester for the purpose of conducting curriculum related meetings.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION/ SPEECH TEACHERS

All special education and speech language teachers shall receive one day of release time annually for each child with an IEP for whom they serve

as a case manager. Additionally, time can be granted through the building principal to speech language teachers or special education teachers regardless of case manager status.

## SECONDARY READING

Secondary school reading teachers may be granted up to three release days for 504 writing and one day, per year, of clerical/paraprofessional support per reading teacher for the purpose of supporting 504 work.

## ENGLISH

English teachers with class loads exceeding 100 are provided up to two release days per semester to conduct writing conferences.

## MS WORLD LANGUAGE

Middle school world language classes with 4 or more students with an IEP or a combination of 7 or more students with IEP/504 plan that include reading and writing support are granted up to three hours over the summer for the purpose of consulting with a learning specialist, literacy specialist, or SLP.

## COLLEGE

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers writing 15 or more college recommendations shall receive one day of release time annually.

## PUPIL SERVICES TEAM

Standing members of PST may receive release from supervisory, adjustment of starting/ending time or release/compensatory time. Non-standing members of PST are entitled to the same compensation, once the non-standing members have attended at least four meetings during the school year.

## CSE-ASSIGNED PARAS

CSE-Assigned Paras and Educational Assistants may receive one additional paid summer day and 2 hours with pay during the school year for planning with the classroom teacher.

## Doing your taxes and need your total dues paid last year?

### Salary Range

**\$43,576+**

**\$34,000 - \$43,575**

**\$25,500 - \$33,999**

**\$17,000 - \$25,499**

**\$8,500 - \$16,999**

**Under \$8,499**

### Annual Dues

**\$730.00**

**\$615.82**

**\$490.41**

**\$363.18**

**\$181.09**

**\$ 89.05**

<http://www.nysut.org/members/retirees/retirement-guide>

## Your Blueprint for a Successful Retirement:

An online planning guide



# KEEP CALM AND EDUCATE YOURSELF



## VP for Administration

Kim Chesko

As we open 2017, we come to a time of year that can be expensive for our students' families. Field trips, college applications, SATs, yearbooks, instruments, drivers ed, even new glasses can put a strain on the household budget.

Because we are caring teachers, it is difficult for us to see our students and their families struggle. The good news is that there is help available; here are 2 resources that we as teachers can help our students and their parents access to offset costs.

### PDTA Student Benefit Fund

The Student Benefit Fund was established to provide assistance for students experiencing financial difficulties, which would limit their opportunity to learn or participate in school-sponsored educational activities. A teacher or parent can fill out the form and request up to \$50 for use toward things like (but not limited to) field trips, college exam fees, new glasses, etc. Find guidelines for the fund [here](#) and an application [here](#).

### Student Opportunity Fund

This fund is very similar to the PDTA Student Benefit Fund, but is funded by PTSA and PDAA. Funds can be

used for the same kids of activities or personal needs, but can request up to \$100. These requests can also be made by a parent or by a teacher on behalf of a student/family. Find more information on this fund [here](#).

As VP for Administration one of my responsibilities is to review and approve requests to both of these funds. If you have any questions about either fund, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your constant dedication to our students and their families – your care makes a difference every day!



### YOU ASKED AND YOU GOT IT!

Everyone has been asking if they can still order a PDTA t-shirt or sweatshirt, and the answer is YES! The orders are ongoing all year. All you need to do is fill out the form ([CLICK HERE](#)) and mail it with a check to Recognition Experts.

PLEASE MAKE SURE you add 4% tax to your total. If it's easier, you can send it to the PDTA office, and they will make sure it gets to Recognition Experts. Tom will deliver the shirts to your school when ready. They are ready in 7-10 days!

Kelly Jordan  
Public Relations

# Phoenix in July?

Liz Berens, Science Olympiad co-advisor CRMS



Phoenix in July.... who would willingly go there? With the help of the **PDTA Professional Growth Committee**, I happily spent a week in July meeting other enthusiastic advisors, learning more about this coming year's Science Olympiad events, and getting advice on preparing our students for competition.

Daily from 8 a.m. until 10 pm, 150 Science Olympiad advisors from around the country built Bottle Rockets, made calorimeters, played science trivia, made Oreo cookie models of the earth's layers and listened to experts explain the 24 events of the competition.

Participants ranged from brand new advisers to seasoned veterans who have gone to the National Championships

regularly. Regardless of experience everyone worked toward the shared goal of gathering materials to help our students be successful in the competitions ahead and the learning that leads up to them.

I missed four breathtaking sunsets due to our rigorous schedule; but saw a gorgeous one the night of my departure, as thousands of us sat in the Phoenix airport hoping that Southwest Airlines would be flying soon.

It was a wonderful experience and I am very appreciative of the generosity of our district.



Science Olympiad Summer Institute 2016 - Phoenix, Arizona



**Delegate Spencer Jones of the Pittsford District Teacher's Association speaks at the January meeting of the Rochester Labor Council, AFL-CIO about the ties between education & social responsibility, and also about a new merit badge being offered by the Seneca Waterways Council, Boy Scouts of America, called American Labor merit badge. Spencer's daughter, Abby, a freshman at Pittsford Sutherland High School, also attended.**

## Building News for January 2017

### PRES:

Gail Hall's father-in-law passed away in October.

### CRMS:

Gregg Herman lost his wife Maggie on 8/25  
Kathy Lewis lost her father on 11/6  
Betsy Parke lost her father in December  
Marsha Carey lost her mother-in-law in December

### SHS:

Recently there have been three little additions to the SHS family. Mark Critelli has had a son; Annie Missel has had a daughter, and Mark Pellegrino welcomed a son. Congratulations to all the moms and dads! We also welcome Katie Phillips to our Special Education Department. She joined us in October and we share her with MHS.

# NYSTRS Annual Meeting 2016

Kathleen Curtis



The 96th Annual Meeting of the NYSTRS Delegates was held at Saratoga Springs City Center November 6th and 7th. Congratulations to our PDTA President, Jolene DiBrango who was elected to a second term on the New York State Teachers' Retirement System Executive Board. She was first elected to the NYSTRS Board in 2014 when Karen Magee, vacated her position as a Teacher Delegate to become the President of NYSUT.

In addition to voting for teacher membership on the NYSTRS Board, there were several presentations during the convention and an opportunity for Delegates to ask questions. Your Pittsford Delegates, Bernadette Canfield (TR), Kathy Curtis (SHS), and Lynn Smith (SHS) attended these sessions. You can access the complete slideshow presentations and additional information, by visiting [www.nystrs.org](http://www.nystrs.org). If you have not visited this website lately, we encourage you to log on as a member.

## Service and Salary: What's Includable in your Benefit and What is Not?

The Pension Factor is determined by years of service rendered and the final average salary. The FAS (final average

salary) usually is an average of the highest 3 years of the last 5 years of service, but it depends on your tier membership. Depending on your Tier, there may be a salary limit of \$179,000 (the Governor's Salary) and annual increases may be subject to a 10% cap. Generally, if the funds are paid on regular payroll then they are allowable; for example substituting, club advising and coaching. It is wise to transfer service to NYSTRS sooner rather than later. If you were a NYS public employee in another system you can purchase prior service with 3% to 5% interest. There are some new additions to prior service. If a member was a SUNY Graduate or Teaching Assistant anytime from 1982-1991 this is allowable service. Military service credit can transfer with at least 5 years of NYSTRS membership, the cost to purchase this is 3% for teachers in Tiers 1-5.

## Social Security Information

A representative reviewed the rules of Social Security in planning for your retirement. It is important to know that your age when you retire affects your benefits. Your benefits are based on your earnings and members can estimate what their benefits may be in retirement by logging on to [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) and requesting a statement. It is important to know that you can work in retirement and still receive benefits but there are limits on what you can earn. Your spouse may also receive benefits after age 62, or at any age, if caring for a child less than 16 years of age or disabled. Children and divorced spouses may qualify for benefits, under certain circumstances. For more information, members were encouraged to visit the above website or call 1-800-772-1213.

## Wondering What Retirement Will Be Like as a NYSTRS Member?

It is never too early to begin planning for retirement. PREP is for all ages and there are seven parts to the PREP (Pension and Retirement Education Program) which is a full day workshop but some members choose to attend for part of the day only. 1) NYSTRS benefits 2) Financial Planning 3) Social Security 4) Estate Planning (including Wills) 5) Retirement 6) Filing for Retirement 7) Retirement Income. There are three speakers at PREP; a fund expert, a lawyer, and a NYSTRS

representative to address the emotional aspect of retirement. The application for retirement is to be submitted up to 90 days before you retire that is April 2nd if you were planning to retire July 1st. Members can change the benefit payment option up to 30 days after retirement date (Post Marked July 31st). Pension payments to members are an electronic deposit on the last business day of the month. There is federal tax on your pension, however there is no NYS tax or Social Security Tax on your pension. Here are some additional states that do not tax a NYS Pension: TN, MI, AL, TX, WY, IL, FL, NH, PA, WA, and HA.

The COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) is 1-3% of the first \$18,000 of the pension, it is automatic, and annual payments add up over time. Keep up to date on [MyNYSTRS](http://MyNYSTRS) you can confirm receipt of retirement application, check requested date of retirement, change address, and direct deposit information. If you decide to go back to work, Section 212 describes working in retirement, in section 211 the employer applies for waiver to permit you to work. Section 503.11 describes suspending collection of your pension. If you die one year after retirement, your beneficiary receives 50% of your death benefit, 2 years after 25% of your death benefit goes to your beneficiary. There is a checklist: When a loved one passes, your beneficiary needs to mail the death certificate to NYSTRS and they will send additional forms.

## Communication Is Key

Outgoing communication includes newsletters, mass emails, the annual Benefit Profile, and NYSTRS web headlines and updates. As of June 30, 2016, net assets were \$107.5 Billion, 84% of income from investment returns over the last 20 years an investment return of 7.6%. When you receive your Benefit Profile in November, review who you have named as a beneficiary, confirm your salary and verify your service credit. Self Service Tools on NYSTRS Website:

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# PDTA on the MARCH(es) January 21, 2017



Eva and Brian Regan in Rochester.



Jeanne Strazzabosco and Kathy Jordan in DC.



Dennise Zobel and her daughter Sydney in Seneca Falls.



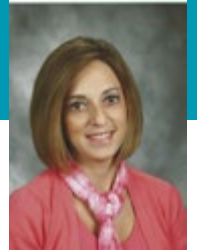
Jolene DiBrango in Seneca Falls.



Emily Natoli-Burns and Amy Brenner with friends in Rochester.

# SRP Newslink

Lorinda Spring



## Phase II of our Recommit Campaign

Over the course of the next few weeks and months, a union leader will be reaching out to each of our members to set up a brief one-to-one meeting. This is an opportunity for you to meet a representative that you may not know, learn a bit more about your union, get answers to questions you may have and share some thoughts about what the union means to you. During the meeting, you will be asked to fill out a brief survey. The attacks on public education and unions are very real and

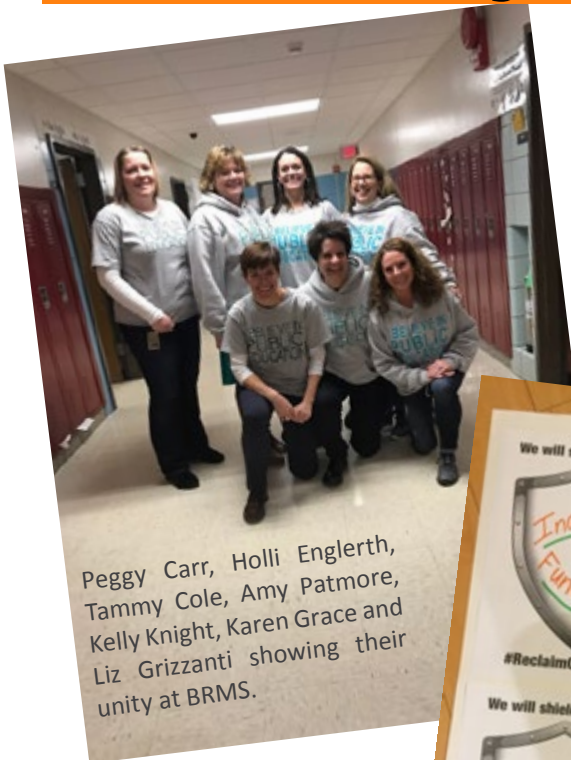
our best defense is to band together and stay informed. We all make up the union and our strength lies in our size which is why we are able to continue to bargain effectively for our jobs, health insurance, working conditions and so much more. We are always looking for members to become more involved in the union so if you are interested, please let a union leader know!

### Upcoming Workshops for Paraprofessionals

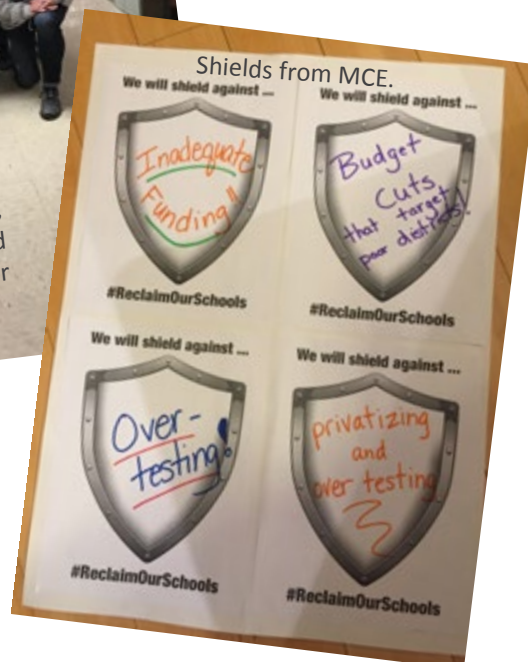
If you are interested in attending any of the following workshops, you may enroll by logging into WinCap Web. Click on Professional Development, Catalog and then Electives 2016-2017.

- Para Academy: Games Changers - Current Brain Research in Education- 1/30/17
- Adult and Child CPR/AED Training- 2/16/17 or 4/25/17
- Crisis Prevention Institute Training- 2/6/17
- Para Academy: Self Awareness- 2/27/17 and 3/20/17 (this is a two-session workshop)
- Para Academy: Zones of Regulation- Strategies and Tools for Self-Regulation- 5/22/17

# Day of Action January 19th



Peggy Carr, Holli Englerth, Tammy Cole, Amy Patmore, Kelly Knight, Karen Grace and Liz Grizzanti showing their unity at BRMS.



## Building

### Representatives:

Allen Creek: Dennise Zobel  
Jefferson Road: Julie Shaw  
Mendon Center: Jill Drake  
Park Road: Karen Socker  
Thornell Road: Lisa Mauger  
Barker Road: Kristen Dolan  
Calkins Road: Stephanie Warchol  
Mendon High School: Dave Larson  
Sutherland High School: Lynne Drake  
SRP Representative: Lorinda Spring

### Assistant Building Representatives:

Rhonda Matthews, AC  
Elizabeth Kramer, JR  
Patty Mayer and  
Hendrina Schindeler, MCE  
Marcia Brown, PR  
Greg Bischooping, TR  
Karen Grace, Grace Kemp,  
Tammy Cole, BRMS  
Chrissy Doggett, Claudia Foti, CRMS  
Scott Bielec, Tom Kennell,  
Paula Fink, MHS  
Marc Hellems, Brian Schafer,  
Amanda Marshall, SHS

### SRP Representatives:

Tracy Anderson, PR  
Radhika Ramesh, TR  
Constance Bader, BRMS  
Suzanne Kaier-Tuttle, MC  
Maryanne Maland, JR  
Sherry Tontarski, MC  
Vicki McCutchon, SHS



# You asked for it... and you got it!

## Third Annual Member Appreciation Month set for February 2017



### Don't miss out... join MAP!

NYSUT Member Benefits and our endorsed program providers will once again be teaming up for the Third Annual Member Appreciation Month set for February 2017 in recognition of all you do to make *NYSUT union strong*.

To be eligible for these drawings, you simply need to be a member of the voluntary MAP Alert email service or sign up before January 31, 2017.

MAP Alerts are a convenient way to learn about new endorsed programs; updates to current programs; and special offers unique to MAP Alert participants -- without being inundated with emails.

Prize drawings will be held each day, with the winners announced exclusively on the Member Benefits website throughout the month of February.



Win prizes such as Best Buy, Amazon or American Express gift cards; car rental certificates; wireless speakers; an i-Pad Mini; and many more.

**Last's year Grand Prize winner received a free vacation to Orlando, FL!**

We encourage you to spread the word to your colleagues about this special event. **So if you see a phone call or email from us, make sure you answer it!!!**

For more details about this exciting event, visit the Member Benefits website at [memberbenefits.nysut.org](http://memberbenefits.nysut.org) or call **800-626-8101**.



For information about contractual endorsement arrangements with providers of endorsed programs, please contact NYSUT Member Benefits. Agency fee payers to NYSUT are eligible to participate in NYSUT Member Benefits-endorsed programs.

Jan./Feb. '17

Speak Out is edited and assembled by Brian Regan.

Your feedback is welcome at [brian\\_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu](mailto:brian_regan@pittsford.monroe.edu)

# Cut and Keep Reminders

- SRP and Auxiliary Staff retirement notification for Career Award Eligibility:
  - To be eligible for the career award, notice of retirement is required by April 1 for an end of school year retirement.
  - If notice is not received by April 1, it is assumed that an SRP will be finishing the school year and working through October 31 of the following school year in order to be eligible for the career award.
  - SRPs can retire at any time between November 1 and March 31 with the career award if eligible.
- Full-time staff members who are not on the payroll as of October 1, but who are on the payroll before February 1 of the school year, shall be eligible for a pro-rated portion of the health fund, according to the following schedule:
  - On the payroll before November 1: 80% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before December 1: 70% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before January 1: 60% of the benefit
  - On the payroll before February 1: 50% of the benefit
  - Part-time staff members of .5 or more shall receive a prorated contribution of the above schedule.
  - In order to receive this prorated contribution, staff members must fill out and submit the "Request for Prorated Health Fund Benefit" form found on [www.pdta.org](http://www.pdta.org) by March 1 of the school year.
- If you are a teacher, don't forget your contractual 12 hour obligation for professional development! All PD must be completed by May 31.
- Our Extracurricular Process Sheet has been updated! Please review this sheet if you are a new or continuing Club Advisor. <http://www.pittsfordschools.org/documents.cfm?id=34.133>
- Seniority reports will be in the buildings soon. Contractually the Human Resources department must provide those to the buildings by February 1st. Once we notify you of the release of the new building lists, please check them for accuracy and report any discrepancies to your representatives.



(continued from p.6)

1. Employer Secure Area allows employer reporting
2. Employer Billing Membership, Member Service credit
3. Through MyNYSTRS, members can send a secure message, review announcements, and run loan and pension estimates.

E-subscribe helps the environment, members receive information faster than mail and there is a new mobile app for MyNYSTRS.

## Ensuring Your Personal Information is Secure

NYSTRS secures the site in many ways. Staff have electronic key card IDs. Access to areas of the building are restricted. There is a Clean Desk Policy where every unit locks away confidential items so they are not left on desks overnight. The pace of technological changes is extraordinary, even with innovation, remain vigilant.

Members should use a private computer when accessing MyNYSTRS. Processing procedures help stop fraud. (For address changes, the fund mails confirmations to the new and old address). If a member fears identity theft, please call fraud reporting. Be wary, do not click on a link or open a

questionable email. Protect yourself from phishing, here are some pitfalls to avoid:

- Emails from someone you do not know, bad spelling of things intentionally subtle for example: BankofArnerica.
- The receivers of the email includes an odd group of people, was sent at a strange time, the only content is a link, or there is a mismatch between content and subject line.
- The Email claims you can gain something of value in exchange for some personal information.
- If you hover your mouse over the hyperlink and the path is a different address than claimed, this could be fraudulent.
- If you receive an email that your credit card is compromised, call the number on the back of your card NOT the number in the email, it is most likely a phishing incident.

## NYSTRS' Strength: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words.

Approximately \$ 6.7 Billion paid out in 2016 and for every dollar paid to a retiree, \$ 1.29 impacts the economy. Retiree spending has a ripple effect throughout the economy. As of June 30, 2015 there were 150,582 retirees receiving a service retirement benefit

from NYSTRS. Another 2,026 were receiving a disability benefit. The average years of service at retirement is 28 years and 3 months, the average annual benefit was \$40,689 and 80% of the benefits are paid to New York State residents. The more than \$5 billion in System benefits paid to New Yorkers has a significant positive impact on local communities.

The 3 cost saving drivers for our Defined Benefits Fund are: 1) Pooled Longevity Risk 2) Balanced Portfolio 3) Higher Investment Returns

- 10% cost savings compared to an individual investor who must save more in case they live beyond average life expectancy. (Save for 100)
- 11% cost saving compared to an individual investor who typically moves to lower risk, thus lower return as they age.
- Defined Benefit is ageless, in other words young people are coming on board wanting higher risk in investments for greater returns.

**The National Institute for Retirement Security has recognized NYSTRS among the best systems in the country.**