Oneida Teachers' Association
Partners for a Better Community

May/June Newsletter
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A message from the President: Dave Dampf

Dr. Simine Vazire is a personality researcher and psychology professor. She was recently interviewed on the "Ologies" podcast about personality psychology. She spoke about "the Big Five" personality traits. The acronym OCEAN (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) is used to describe dominant traits. The traits are measured on a bell curve, with no one being categorized into a single 'type'. In other words, nobody fits into a single box.

Dr. Vazire was asked if there are traits that are commonly associated with professional success. She answered that self-discipline and responsibility tend to be strong indicators of success across all fields. Different traits are more advantageous in different career paths. The example she gave is that teachers use extraversion as an asset.

I see all five categories in the OTA which contributes to our strength as a union.

We are **O**pen - full of creative minds forming an action team to come up with new ideas that benefit our community.

We are **C**onscientious - keeping in mind the long-term goals of negotiating a multi-year contract.

We are **E**xtraverts - engaging with students every single day and watching their progress throughout an entire school year.

We are **A**greeable - consistently rising above and beyond to help others when they need help, whether that's a book drive or delivering food.

We are **N**eurotic - how can we avoid that when caring so deeply for our students and our community?

Most of us would find that we excel in a particular trait but score lower in another. As individuals, we each bring our own piece of the Big Five to the table. As a union of professionals, we master them.

If you are curious how you would score on the Big Five personality test, you can follow the link to it here - https://www.truity.com/test/big-five-personality-test.

Have a great summer. Rest. Relax. Enjoy!

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UPCOMING MEETINGS:

OTA Representative Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month) ALL ARE WELCOME!

Next Meeting:	**May 14th**	**3:30 pm @ TBD**
	June 11th	**3:30 pm @ OHS**
	Sept 10th	**3:30 pm @ TBD**

Any special meeting dates will be announced through e-mail

Board of Education Meeting (Second Tuesday of the month)

May 14th	**6:00 pm @ CTC**
June11th	**6:00 pm @ TBD**
Sept 10th	**6:00 pm @ TBD**

Board of Education Meetings

The Oneida City School District Board of Education will meet on the second Tuesday of every month.

The meetings are generally held at one of the buildings in the district and begin at 6 pm.

We all need to remember that it is our job, our livelihood, that is constantly under attack. Make every effort to attend a meeting to show solidarity in the OTA. Remember, it is in your best interest to know what is going on in your district.

Donations and Contributions

Through May 2019, The OTA and OSEU have contributed nearly $2000.00 to our monthly Casual Friday's!

This does not include the money that we have raised on "special" Casual Friday's throughout the year.

Great Job Everyone!

TALES FROM THE CRYPT

The members of the Oneida Retired Educators Association remind you that we are alive and well and still active on the educational scene in Oneida.

Congratulations and CHEERS to the newest group of OTA members who are soon to become Retirees!! We thank you for your work over the years on behalf of children, and anything you have done to ensure the strength of the union. As you have read in other CRYPT tales...the work you expend pays off into your retirement! A strong union benefits working members and also ensures that the benefits will continue long after you lay down your last piece of chalk!! (Haha, I know I'm dating myself...turn off your last Smartboard? Who knows!)

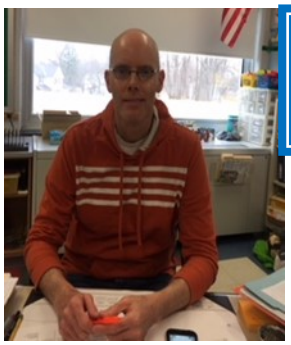
Retirees, you will be hearing from the OREA as we invite you to join our group and continue to be active in union activities. The OREA fits right in with this description from the NYSUT Retiree Handbook:

"Retirees: Who Are We? We are the people who have retired from the education systems and health care professions in New York State. Now more than 200,000 strong and growing, we are retired NYSUT/AFT/NEA members organized in retiree councils across New York and Florida. We are part of the more than 600,000 members of NYSUT who led the drive for COLA. We continue to press for other improvements in pensions, assured health benefits, Social Security and Medicare.We are friendly people who get together to meet with people of similar interests. We listen to speakers and panels, and participate in discussions on a variety of interesting topics. We meet to take care of business, to continue our education, to communicate and to keep informed. Sometimes, we plan luncheon meetings and social activities just for the fun of it! We are active people who stay abreast of current legislation and possible changes affecting education, health care, our retirement and our many other fields of interest. We retired; we didn't resign from life. We still care about the education, the health and well-being of our community, of our successors and of ourselves. We continue to grow and to give of ourselves unselfishly. We have roots here; we helped build this union; we are family. As part of the NYSUT/AFT/NEA family, our interest and participation continues."

As we congratulate and thank the new retirees, we congratulate and thank all the OTA members for another year of hard work, compassion, nurturing and rising to the challenges that bombard you from all directions all the time. What a job it is to be a teacher!! You are all to be commended for what you do every day. We wish you a wonderful summer!

Patricia Albaugh, 2007 Retiree, Oneida Castle School

Happenings in and around the OTA



Paul O'Connell
4th Grade Teacher
Willard Prior

Paul O'Connell began his journey as a part of a large Irish family with many siblings. He graduated from Cortland College with his masters in 1986 and was hired in Oneida, first at North Broad Street. He remained there for 22 years, inspiring generations of families. He spent 3 more glorious years at Oneida Castle teaching 3rd grade and finally ended up at Willard Prior teaching 4th grade for his last 8 years.

As his many students over the years can attest to, Mr. O, can be a "teddy bear" or a "grizzly bear", (loved and respected either way). However, he is also known for his professional excellence, dedication, colorful sense of humor, and quiet gestures of kindness. His family and colleagues know that it is important to him to have his "ducks in a row". They also know he loves a good laugh, corny puns, a spirited St. Patty's Day celebration, movies, evening walks, and of course his family.

Mr. O has mentioned that he will miss finding that "just right" book for his class, making kids laugh, designing new Smart board lessons, and that "Ah-ha!" moment kids get when they finally understand something. "He will also miss his "second family", (staff), very much too. He is ready to begin a new chapter, perhaps working on a college campus, sitting down for meals again, and enjoying family time and adventures.

Mr. O will live on in the hearts of people whose lives he has touched during his years of service at Oneida. Hundreds of students will forever be humming Mr. O's ditties and reciting the clever puns and acronyms, he has created to help them learn. His colleagues and friends will smile for years to come, remembering how he always found a way to remind them of why we teach and what is most important. Best wishes to Paul O'Connell from all of us. We are better having known and worked with you these 30+ years.

Bonnie DeGroat
English Teacher
Otto Shortell Middle School

It seems surreal that I have been teaching for 30 years. Where did the time go? Thanks for the trip, OSMS! I have thoroughly enjoyed working with students and staff at this outstanding middle school, and now it is time for me to take another trip onto retirement. My husband and I plan on camping, motorcycling, and enjoying our grandchildren.

Bonnie DeGroat

Happenings in and around the OTA

Sharon Barbano
2nd Grade Teacher
North Broad

The time has come for me to start another chapter of my life – retirement. My working at the North Broad Street Elementary School for most of my career, (26 years), has provided me with many cherished memories. During those years, I have observed that the members of the staff were second to none … beginning with our principals and secretaries: Peter O'Brien/Sheila Blair, Bill Simmons/Carol Madonia, Eric Coriale/Sue Chambers. While my fellow teachers are a team of committed and dedicated professionals.

I have learned as much as, if not more than, the students I have taught. They have taught me many lessons of compassion, kindness, patience, and self-control. My desire and goal for my students past and present is a future in which they can be confident and prepared for.

I will miss my North Broad family, but I am looking forward to having time relaxing with my family and friends. I'm sure my grandchildren will keep me busy!

Annual OTA Spring Fling

The OTA will be celebrating the end of the 2018-19 school year with our annual Spring Fling. This year it will be held at the Marble Hill Inn on Friday June 14th. The event will begin at 4 pm.

All current and former members of the OTA are encouraged to attend. As always, spouses, significant others and friends may attend with a $10 fee.

This year we are also inviting members of our sister Unions to com and join us. We are asking for a $10 fee for those to attend as well. Come out and celebrate an end to a great school year with your friends and family here at Oneida City School District.

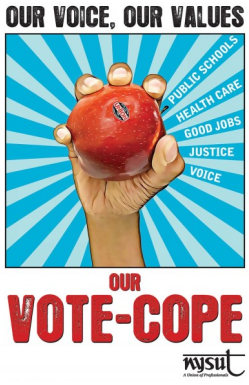
Thank you to all OTA members who recently participated in the Spring Vote Cope Drive. Many members started contributing for the first time, while others generously increased their contributions. The current Vote Cope statistics are as follows:

82.6% of OTA members contribute to Vote Cope (up over 10%!)

Building Numbers As Of Fall 2019

OSMS – 95.6% contribution
OHS – 87.9% contribute
Seneca Street – 79.0% contribute
Durhamville – 72.0% contribute
North Broad – 68.8% contribute
Willard Prior – 66.7% contribute

Please email Brian Myatt if anybody would like to start contributing to Vote Cope. It has never been more important to have a say in the political process than ever!



Protect Your Loved Ones with Union-Endorsed Benefits

Insurance... it's often the type of product you hope to never have to utilize. In the event you do need it, though, it's important to have the insurance product that best meets your needs and those of your loved ones.

NYSUT Member Benefits endorses a variety of **crucial insurance programs** that provide important protection for NYSUT members and their families, including life, auto and home, disability, long-term care, dental and vision plans, and more.

The Power of the Union

Regardless of whether you're participating in one of our endorsed insurance programs; legal or financial services; or many shopping, entertainment or travel offerings, NYSUT members receive a quality product and enjoy the **"Power of the Union"** behind them.

The **"Power of the Union"** should serve as a steadfast reminder to all NYSUT members that we are your advocate. Unlike when purchasing products available to the general public, NYSUT Member Benefits is here if you ever have any issues or concerns with our endorsed programs. You aren't just a member to us... you are part of our union family.

Member Benefits is here to offer assistance with the student loan crisis. Visit our website for more information.

To learn more about Member Benefits-endorsed programs & services, visit ***memberbenefits.nysut.org*** or call **800-626-8101**.

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