



Stronger together!

175 Fulton Avenue, Suite 501
Hempstead, New York 11550
(516) 279-6642
www.Hempsteadteachers.org



HEMPSTEAD CLASSROOM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2026

President's Message



Nicole J. Brown
HCTA President

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we reflect on this past year, there is so much for us to be proud of as members of the Hempstead Classroom Teachers Association and NYSUT. Together, we delivered real wins for educators and students across the state:

- A successful No Cellphone policy made New York the largest state to pass distraction-free schools.
- Free breakfast and lunch for all students.
- \$1.4 billion increase in Foundation Aid and the start of long-overdue work to modernize the funding formula.
- Expanded support for SUNY, CUNY, and community colleges, including scholarships in high-need fields.
- Investments in public teaching hospitals, including SUNY Upstate and SUNY Downstate.
- A new law requiring students and staff to be removed from rooms when temperatures exceed 88 degrees.
- Workplace Violence Prevention Act training rolling out statewide to make schools safer.
- A new APPR (3012-e) policy ending punitive evaluations, decoupling evaluations from test scores, and restoring the union's bargaining power.
- NYSUT's free Science of Reading course designed by educators, for educators.
- NYSUT members raised over \$642,000 for the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks.

And we're not finished. We are still fighting to fix tiers 5 and 6 and demand transparency from charter school operators.

In Hempstead, strong advocacy delivered real results too. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Siela Bynoe and Assemblyman Noah Burroughs, our district secured an additional \$24 million in funding. This was a major win that helped protect David Paterson Elementary School from closing and instructional staff from excessing.

Over the summer, we ratified a one-year contract extension with a 2.5% increase to salaries, hourly rate, coaching, clubs, longevity, transitional, and service assignment stipends. With feedback from our Negotiations Committee, we are preparing to return to the bargaining table this month.

Thanks to our building representatives and Grievance Chairperson, Stephanie Dubose, we won the Health Declination and Multiple Meeting grievances at arbitration. We also secured settlements for members who lost their preparation time and retirees who did not receive their sick day payout on time.

This year proved, once again, that when we stand together, we get results. Thank you for your advocacy, your trust, and your commitment to our students and one another.



Teacher Recognition
&

Mentor/Mentee Celebration

Thursday, May 7, 2026 at 3:30pm
Rhodes Academy

End of the Year Retirement Party

Thursday, June 11, 2026
Coral House, Baldwin NY



HEMPSTEAD CLASSROOM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2026 – Page 2

Winter Safety & School Conditions

Cold weather brings unique safety concerns. Classroom temperatures, building maintenance issues, and unsafe conditions should be reported immediately.

Under new NYS education law (§409-n) that NYSUT advocated for and that took effect on September 1, 2025:

- When a classroom or educational space reaches 82°F indoors, the district must take action to relieve heat-related discomfort.
- If the classroom temperature reaches 88°F or higher, students and staff should not remain in that space and must be relocated to a cooler environment where practicable.

❄ Minimum Temperature Standards

Separate from the heat law, the existing state regulation requires a **minimum classroom temperature of 65°F during colder months.

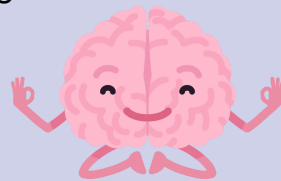
Mid-Year Check-In: Workload, Burnout & Boundaries

The midpoint of the school year can feel particularly demanding. Lesson planning, assessments, parent communication, and student support needs often peak during this time.

The HCTA encourages members to:

- Set healthy boundaries between work and personal time
- Use sick and personal days appropriately when needed
- Prioritize self-care without guilt

Burnout is not a personal failure—it is often the result of systemic overload. Please remember that you are not alone. Your union is here to support you and advocate for sustainable working conditions.



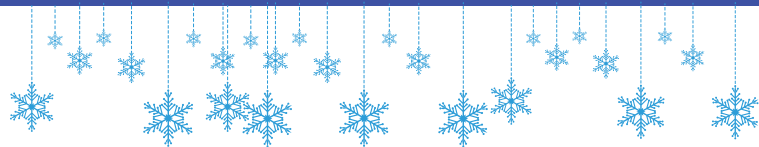
STATEWIDE RALLY TO FIX TIER 6!

When: Sunday, March 8, 2026 | Noon – 2 p.m.
(Doors open at 10:30)

Where: MVP Arena, Albany

Who: You and 10,000+ of your fellow educators, union members, and allies ready to make history.

Register Now: <https://fixtier6.org/events/statewide-rally-to-fix-tier-6>



NYSUT Together Program

We're excited to introduce NYSUT Together, our new program that gives back to educators with exclusive discounts on sports, theater, and entertainment across New York state, plus specially curated signature events. These experiences bring our union family together creating opportunities to relax, recharge, and build the connections that sustain us through challenges and amplify our collective voice. Go to NYUST.org for info.



HEMPSTEAD CLASSROOM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2026 – Page 3

Contract Corner: ARTICLE XXIII – TEACHER EVALUATION

- There may be unlimited informal observations (walkthroughs), with the shared understanding that observations are intended to support and improve teaching practice, not for harassment or abuse.
- Untenured teachers will receive no more than three formal observations per school year.
- One formal observation may be unannounced for both tenured and non-tenured teachers.
- Formal observations must take place between October 1 and May 15. If an observation occurs after May 15, the District must notify HCTA in writing beforehand

District Update: New HR Platform – nVision Web

The district has announced the rollout of a new Human Resources platform, nVision Web, which will replace Optigate. According to the district, the platform has been successfully tested and is now being implemented in phases across the district. At this time, nVision Web provides employees with access to:

- Payroll information
- W-2 history
- Personal general information

The district's stated goal is to implement this system district-wide over the coming months.

What Members Need to Know

- Members are being asked to register for nVision Web in order to participate in the rollout
- Registration instructions have been provided by the district and should be reviewed carefully
- As with any new system, members are encouraged to monitor their information for accuracy after registering.
- Download and save all of your paystubs and W2s on a flash drive.



New Legal Plan: Will Day

We are pleased to remind members about an important benefit available through our new legal plan Will Day. Will Day provides members with the opportunity to draft a new will or update an existing will at no cost, by meeting directly with a qualified attorney through the legal plan. This service helps ensure your personal affairs are documented clearly and gives you peace of mind for the future.

Important Information for Members

- Appointments will be available virtually **Tuesday, January 27, 2026 and Friday, January 30, 2026**. Keep a lookout for an email from Veronica with the link to register.
- Members must complete the required 10-page pre-meeting packet prior to their scheduled appointment
- Completion of the packet is necessary for the attorney to properly prepare and maximize your appointment time
- You can also call (800) 832-5182 to make an in-person appointment.

Taking care of yourself and your family is part of taking care of your future so don't miss this valuable member benefit. Will Day is an excellent opportunity to take care of an essential legal matter that often gets postponed. We strongly encourage members to take advantage of this service.



HEMPSTEAD CLASSROOM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2026 – Page 4

January 2026 Graduate Courses Are Here!

HCTA members have the opportunity to take graduate-level courses that count toward salary advancement. These **HCTA-sponsored** courses are reimbursed after completion. Visit Hempsteadteachers.org to follow the step-by-step directions to register for these courses. All graduate courses must be approved by Dr. Gilmore and HCTA President, Nicole Brown, before registering. Don't miss this chance to further your professional growth while moving up the salary schedule!



CURI 6500 SUNY Empire State University

Activating the Motivated and Engaged Brain: The SEEKING System

- Course Dates: January 9,10,11,16,17,18
- Time: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Synchronous: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- Instructor: Randi Azar
- Location: Remote

Hempstead Teacher Mentor Program



Phase One of the Teacher Mentor Program has officially concluded. The HCTA thanks all mentors and new teachers for their time, collaboration, and commitment during this initial phase.

As the program moves into Phase Two, participants will continue their work focused on professional growth and instructional support.

Contact the Mentor Coordinator, Kellie Wilson-McNeal, at kwilsonmcneal@hempsteadschools.org, if you are interested in becoming a mentor.

Mandated Reporter Training Requirement

New York State requires educators to complete updated mandated reporter training. The deadline for completion is **November 17, 2026**.

- Training must be completed no later than November 7, 2026
- Members must use the same provider used for their original mandated reporter training
- Certificates of completion should be saved for personal records and submitted to your TEACH account

This training is a state-mandated requirement and necessary for continued compliance with professional obligations. Members are encouraged to complete the training well in advance of the deadline to avoid last-minute complications. Members with questions or difficulty accessing their original training provider should contact their building representative or union leadership for assistance.





HEMPSTEAD CLASSROOM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2026 – Page 5



Winter 2026 IN-SERVICE COURSE REGISTRATION FORM

Listed courses are for one in-service credit or 15 hours of CTLE. Please use the QR Code below to register for any courses. For any questions, you may contact our Teacher Center Director, Stephanie Lockhart-Turner at hempsteadtc@gmail.com.

Reminder: 1/3 of any salary increment can be in-service courses.



FOSTER MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS IN THE CLASSROOM (REMOTE)

This course provides educators with actionable strategies to create classrooms where all learners feel valued and supported. Participants will learn how to foster meaningful connections, navigate challenges, and empower students to build confidence and resilience across various learning environments.

INSTRUCTOR: Susana Lara Ramotar **DATES:** 1/10 & 1/17, 2026 (8:30-4:00)

BOOK STUDY: HACKING QUESTION (REMOTE)

Through collaborative reading, reflective dialogue, and practical application, participants will examine the role of questioning in fostering deeper learning, equity, and student ownership using the book, *Hacking Questions: 11 Answers That Create a Culture of Inquiry*, by Connie Hamilton. Purchasing the book is not a requirement.

INSTRUCTOR: Kisha Matos **DATES:** 1/12, 1/15, 1/22, 1/26, 1/19 2026 (3:30-6:30)

AI IN THE CLASSROOM: USING CHAT FOR SCHOOLS (REMOTE)

This course introduces teachers to the district-approved Chat for Schools AI platform and guides them in safely and effectively integrating AI into classroom instruction. Participants will learn to create custom AI chatbots aligned to content, assignments, and student needs, while emphasizing ethical use, student safety, digital citizenship, and the role of AI as a support—not a replacement—for teacher instruction.

INSTRUCTOR: Claire Lamothe **DATES:** 1/20 & 1/21 2026 (3:30-7:15)
1/24 (8:30-4:00)

EMBRACING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY FOR ALL LEARNERS (REMOTE)

Explore the foundations and impacts of culturally responsive pedagogy and the effects on academic engagement. Enhance instruction, foster a deepened cultural understanding, reflect on identity, and bias, and create more inclusive, student-centered classrooms.

INSTRUCTOR: Daniela Ranieri **DATES:** 2/7 & 2/28 2026 (8:30-4:00)

APPR: BEST PRACTICES FOR HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS (REMOTE)

Teachers will gain a better understanding of the APPR system and its process. A key component of the class involves a detailed breakdown of the nine indicators within the NYSUT Rubric, providing educators with concrete strategies to apply these standards to improve student outcomes.

INSTRUCTOR: Nicole Brown **DATES:** 2/19 & 2/20 2026 (8:30-4:00) - This course is held during Winter Recess



Another new year is upon us and with it comes the opportunity to take stock of where we are in our lives. NYSUT Member Benefits endorses numerous programs that can help with creating a plan to prepare for whatever the future brings.

**CREATE YOUR
PLAN OF ACTION
FOR THE UPCOMING
YEAR TODAY.**

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



Have you addressed any legal or financial concerns?

With our Legal Service Plan, you gain access to a national network of attorneys at a reduced cost; two, free hour-long consultations; and a legal security package containing a simple will, health care proxy, living will, and power of attorney. Meanwhile, our Financial Counseling Program provides access to certified financial planners that can offer unbiased financial counseling services.

Improving your financial acumen is a key part of building a successful retirement plan. Powered by Kiplinger's Personal Finance, our Financial Learning Center is a free online resource that offers monthly articles about dealing with debt, insurance, retirement, finances, and more.

Do you have an emergency fund?

Synchrony Bank offers several options to help grow your savings over time, including high-yield savings accounts,

money market accounts, and certificates of deposit. NYSUT members receive special rates above those available to the general public.

Is a new home or refinancing of your current home on your list?

NYSUT members can save up to \$2,700 on lender fees and closing costs with the UnionDirect Mortgage Discount Program from Mid-Island Mortgage. For more than 60 years, Mid-Island Mortgage has been helping union members with realizing the joy of homeownership.

Are you looking for assistance with credit and/or debt management?

Our partnership with Cambridge Credit Counseling can assist members with understanding debt consolidation and student loan repayment options. Members can receive a free, no-obligation consultation with a Cambridge certified counselor.



HEMPSTEAD CLASSROOM TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

January 2026 – Page 5



2025–2026 Executive Board

Officers

Nicole J. Brown, President
Stephanie DuBose, 1st Vice President
Joelle Day, 2nd Vice President
Veronica Jimenez, Secretary
Monifa Salako, Treasurer

Building Representatives

Janice Gedeon, Prospect
Kathryn O'Shea & Keira Strougn, David Paterson
Timothy Bishop & Tomasina Minecci, Jackson School
Michael Levine, Joseph A. McNeil
Jacqueline Bois & Cynthia Perez, Barack Obama
Lisa Hallett & Lateef Myles, Rhodes Academy
Estare Alston & Michael Malatesta, ABGS Middle School
Dr. Ashton Bell, Mitch Roseman, & Nicole Zamor, Hempstead High School

Committee Chairpersons

Amanda Galanoudis, Communication
Lisa Byrd-Watkins, Community Outreach
Stephanie Dubose, Grievance
Nicole Zamor, Health & Safety
Lateef Myles & Adriana Urena, Social
Daphne Padalla, Scholarship
Stephanie Lockhart-Turner, Teacher Center Director
Kellie Wilson-McNeal, Teacher Mentor Coordinator & TRP Liaison
Joelle Day, Vote Cope & Membership
Wendy Oyebody, Parliamentarian
Cheryl Goodridge, Office Manager & President of HERA

The HCTA Salary Scale

Understanding the salary scale is an important part of knowing where you stand and how you advance on the salary scale. The salary schedule is organized by Levels and Steps:

Levels (horizontal, left to right): These represent your educational attainment or number of graduate credits. For example, a BA-15 is considered “Level 2”, even though it is not displayed on the chart. As you earn more graduate credits or degrees, you move across the levels to the right.

Steps (vertical, up and down): They represent progression on the salary scale, but they do not always equal the number of years you’ve been in the District. Your placement may vary depending on prior experience, contract provisions, or negotiated agreements.

In short: **Levels** = Education/Graduate Credits **Steps** = Salary progression (not always years of service)

Below is our salary scale for the 2025–2026 school year. If you are unsure where you fall on the scale or how to advance, please reach out for clarification. Knowing how to read the scale ensures you understand how your education and experience impact your pay..

These are Levels. Please note Level 2 was removed from the salary decades ago.

	Bachelors	B - 30	B - 60	Masters	M - 15	M - 30	M - 45	M - 60	Doctorate
Step	1	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	BA	BA-30	BA-60	MA	MA-15	MA-30	MA-45	MA-60	DR
1	\$ 58,293	\$ 63,514	\$ 67,677	\$ 66,114	\$ 68,885	\$ 71,634	\$ 74,406	\$ 77,169	\$ 79,162
2	\$ 60,902	\$ 66,114	\$ 70,291	\$ 68,885	\$ 71,634	\$ 74,406	\$ 77,169	\$ 79,938	\$ 81,932
3	\$ 63,514	\$ 68,725	\$ 72,891	\$ 71,634	\$ 74,406	\$ 77,169	\$ 79,938	\$ 82,694	\$ 84,689
4	\$ 66,114	\$ 71,332	\$ 75,503	\$ 74,406	\$ 77,169	\$ 79,938	\$ 82,694	\$ 85,463	\$ 87,456
5	\$ 68,724	\$ 73,934	\$ 78,110	\$ 77,169	\$ 79,938	\$ 82,694	\$ 85,463	\$ 88,218	\$ 90,222
6	\$ 71,332	\$ 76,535	\$ 80,711	\$ 79,938	\$ 82,694	\$ 85,463	\$ 88,218	\$ 90,978	\$ 92,978
7	\$ 73,934	\$ 79,151	\$ 83,322	\$ 82,694	\$ 85,463	\$ 88,218	\$ 90,978	\$ 93,742	\$ 95,736
8	\$ 76,535	\$ 81,751	\$ 85,931	\$ 85,463	\$ 88,218	\$ 90,978	\$ 93,742	\$ 96,508	\$ 98,504
9	\$ 79,151	\$ 84,362	\$ 88,527	\$ 88,218	\$ 90,978	\$ 93,742	\$ 96,508	\$ 99,268	\$ 101,259
10	\$ 79,151	\$ 86,977	\$ 91,135	\$ 90,978	\$ 93,742	\$ 96,508	\$ 99,268	\$ 102,033	\$ 104,025
11	\$ 79,151	\$ 89,573	\$ 93,742	\$ 93,742	\$ 96,508	\$ 99,268	\$ 102,033	\$ 104,795	\$ 106,800
12	\$ 79,151	\$ 92,182	\$ 96,351	\$ 96,508	\$ 99,268	\$ 102,033	\$ 104,795	\$ 107,551	\$ 109,551
13	\$ 79,151	\$ 94,783	\$ 98,960	\$ 99,268	\$ 102,033	\$ 104,795	\$ 107,551	\$ 110,318	\$ 112,314
14	\$ 79,151	\$ 97,404	\$ 101,558	\$ 102,033	\$ 104,795	\$ 107,551	\$ 110,318	\$ 113,086	\$ 115,087
15	\$ 79,151	\$ 100,002	\$ 104,174	\$ 104,795	\$ 107,551	\$ 110,318	\$ 113,086	\$ 115,849	\$ 117,849
16	\$ 79,151	\$ 100,002	\$ 104,174	\$ 105,842	\$ 108,626	\$ 113,086	\$ 115,849	\$ 118,612	\$ 120,610
17	\$ 79,151	\$ 100,002	\$ 104,174	\$ 106,900	\$ 109,712	\$ 115,850	\$ 118,613	\$ 121,374	\$ 123,364
18	\$ 79,151	\$ 100,983	\$ 105,196	\$ 109,028	\$ 111,896	\$ 118,155	\$ 120,975	\$ 128,150	\$ 130,167
19	\$ 79,151	\$ 101,488	\$ 105,722	\$ 109,574	\$ 112,456	\$ 118,746	\$ 121,579	\$ 128,790	\$ 130,817
20	\$ 79,151	\$ 101,996	\$ 106,250	\$ 110,121	\$ 113,018	\$ 119,340	\$ 122,187	\$ 129,434	\$ 131,472
21	\$ 79,151	\$ 103,016	\$ 107,313	\$ 111,222	\$ 114,148	\$ 120,533	\$ 123,409	\$ 130,728	\$ 132,786
22	\$ 79,151	\$ 104,046	\$ 108,386	\$ 112,334	\$ 115,289	\$ 121,738	\$ 124,643	\$ 132,036	\$ 134,114

School Year 2025-2026

Elementary Proposed Extended Wednesday Schedule- 90 Minutes

1 Teacher's Choice Sessions

Proposed Extended Wednesday Dates- Teachers

Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
17 Open House the week of Sept. 22-26	15, 22 90 minutes	Nov. 4- Half Day	10 Teachers Choice 90 minutes	14,28 90 minutes	25 90 minutes	11,18 90 minutes

90 Minute -Secondary Proposed Extended Wednesday Schedule

School Year 2025-2026

Proposed Extended Wednesday Dates- Teachers

Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
17	15, 22 90 minutes	Nov. 4- Half Day	10 Teachers Choice- 90 minutes	14, 28 90 minutes	25 90 minutes	11,18 90 minutes