

New York State Teachers' Retirement System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Heidi Brennan
518.447.2911
heidi.brennan@nystrs.org

News Release

Benaquisto Joins NYSTRS Board of Trustees

ALBANY, N.Y. (September 15, 2021) — Juliet Benaquisto, a special education teacher in the Schenectady City School District, was appointed to the New York State Teachers' Retirement System (NYSTRS) Board of Trustees. She is one of three active teacher members on the Board.

New York State Commissioner of Education Dr. Betty A. Rosa appointed Ms. Benaquisto to fill the remainder of the three-year term vacated by Sheila Sullivan Buck, who stepped down from the Board May 31 to serve as a labor relations specialist of New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). Ms. Benaquisto will need to be elected by her peers at the October 29, 2021 Annual Delegates Meeting to complete the term that ends Jan. 31, 2023.

The other active teacher members on the Board are Elizabeth A. Chetney of the Baldwinsville Central School District and Eric J. Iberger of the Bayport-Blue Point Union Free School District. David P. Keefe of Hempstead is the retired teacher representative and serves as president of the Board.

NYSTRS' Board sets policy and oversees operations for the Retirement System, which had net assets of \$145.9 billion as of June 30, 2021. The 10 members of the Board serve without compensation and represent various constituents, including active and retired teachers, school administrators, school boards, and financial experts. They are responsible as fiduciaries to protect the long-term value of the System's investment portfolio and provide benefit security for its nearly 434,000 active members, retirees and beneficiaries.

Ms. Benaquisto has taught at Schenectady City School District for 33 years. She has served as president of the Schenectady Federation of Teachers since 2006, and she was a longtime NYSTRS delegate prior to joining the Board.

Ms. Benaquisto has served NYSUT since May 2020 in several capacities, including serving on the board of directors and as director of Election District 12 (ED-12). She received her bachelor's degree in special education at SUNY Geneseo and her master's degree in education psychology from SUNY Albany.

(more)

Ms. Buck, a music teacher at Rush-Henrietta Central Schools, had been a member of NYSTRS' Board since 2017. She recently served on the Board's Audit, Disability Review, Ethics, and Investment committees.

“On behalf of our staff, I thank Sheila for her commitment to New York’s educators and her valued service on the Board,” said NYSTRS Executive Director and Chief Investment Officer Thomas K. Lee. “We welcome Juliet to the Board and look forward to the voice she will bring to our vision to be the model for pension fund excellence.”

NYSTRS, one of the 10 largest public pension funds in the nation, provides retirement, disability and death benefits to eligible New York State public school teachers and administrators. The System, which manages one of the best-funded pension plans in the country, pays more than \$7.5 billion annually in benefits, over 80% of which is distributed to New York residents.

#