



Long Beach Classroom Teachers Association

322 Lagoon Dr. W., Lido Beach, NY 11561 • (516)897-2175 • www.lbcta.com

President

Karen Bloom

Vice President for Elementary Schools

Jennifer Maggio

Recording Secretary

Patricia VanLoon

Executive Vice President

Jennifer Garrett

Vice President for Secondary Schools

Matthew Hartmann

Corresponding Secretary

Tamara Sommers

Treasurer

Jonathan Bloom

State of the Union

March 23, 2026

Good afternoon to my fellow Executive Board members and to my LBCTA sisters and brothers.

Today we gather not just as colleagues, but as a community of dedicated educators united by our commitment to our students, our schools, and our profession. Each day, in classrooms, offices, and throughout our district, we work to support one another and advocate for the learning and well-being of every student we serve.

At the heart of everything we do is a simple belief: strong schools depend on strong educators, and strong educators depend on standing together.

It is an honor to share this State of the Union. Together, we have faced challenges, celebrated successes, and continued the important work of strengthening our union and uplifting the voices of our members. Today is a chance to reflect on our progress and focus on the work ahead.

I am proud to say that the Long Beach Classroom Teachers Association is strong. We continue to face challenges from special interests, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, and an ever-shifting political landscape. We will not be divided, distracted, or allow our schools or our students to be used for political purposes.

Our strength comes from our members. From your dedication and your commitment. It is our unity and shared purpose that make us strong.

The LBCTA is more than just the Executive Board. It is every one of you. Each member plays a vital role, and our greatest strength is our unity.

Together, we continue to make progress in areas such as curriculum, working conditions, and community outreach. This year, we made important strides in Workplace Violence Training and Reporting, strengthening protections for our members.

We also stood together in support of Fix Tier 6 and the charter school campaign, demonstrating our commitment to public education and the issues that matter most to our members.

Each year, the LBCTA proudly makes a positive impact in the community by supporting a variety of charitable causes. We began this year with our **Making Strides Against Breast**

Cancer campaign and continued that momentum with our **2nd Annual Music Bingo**, which once again proved to be a fantastic event. Together, we raised **\$7,350** for Making Strides and the American Cancer Society, reminding our community that no one faces this fight alone.

During the Thanksgiving season, we donated **\$1,650 to St. Mary's Food Pantry** to help address food insecurity. Most recently, with the support of LBSEA and ASPPG, our annual bowling fundraiser raised an incredible **\$9,158 for Surf For All**.

These efforts, along with the many Sunshine events and building-level initiatives throughout the year, reflect the generosity and commitment of our members.

A special thank you to our Executive Officers for their outstanding leadership in coordinating these events and for their ongoing commitment to supporting our members. Their hard work often takes place behind the scenes, and I want to take a moment to recognize and sincerely thank them for all that they do.

Beyond our community initiatives, it is the strong connections within our membership that truly define us. The commitment and camaraderie across grades, departments, and buildings are inspiring. Every day, our members go above and beyond for students, planning lessons late into the evening, supporting them through challenges inside and outside the classroom, and continuing to give their best as the demands of our profession grow.

Our collective efforts in support of our students and one another strengthen our voice and make our impact undeniable. It is an honor to serve you, both as individuals and as a united team.

The strong partnerships we build with our students, their families, and district stakeholders reflect our deep commitment to Long Beach. These relationships strengthen community trust and support for our schools, including continued backing of the annual budget. We are fortunate to be part of a district and community that consistently champions public education. It is our engagement and the strength of the relationships we build that truly define who we are as an organization.

We have achieved meaningful victories. Through the strong advocacy of NYSUT, we secured major changes to Tier 6, including lowering the Final Average Salary calculation from five years to three and reducing contribution rates for many educators. These are the most significant pension reforms in decades.

In early March, I stood alongside thousands of educators from across New York, including many from Long Island, at the Fix Tier 6 rally in Albany. You could feel the strength of our union and the power of collective action. We made it clear that Tier 6 is not fair. It forces our members to work longer, contribute more, and receive less. While we are seeing movement, with both the Assembly and Senate advancing proposals, we are not done. We will keep pushing until real reform is signed into law and our members can retire with the dignity they have earned.

That same spirit of advocacy continued this past Saturday, as we stood together again, demanding fiscal accountability for charter schools. Over the last four years, Long Island taxpayers have handed over more than half a billion dollars without community approval or oversight.

Public schools are built on transparency, accountability, and local control. Charter schools are not. They bypass community approval, operate without elected local boards, and can place uncertified individuals in classrooms, all while taking money from public schools with little transparency about how it is spent.

These are privately operated, for-profit entities, enabled by state policies that redirect public school funding into an industry that has already diverted a half billion taxpayer dollars from our classrooms, our teachers, and our students. Too often, they are run by outside companies with no real stake in our communities, treating education like a business while profiting from public funds.

Enough is enough. Our tax dollars should support all children, not corporations.

At the state level, NYSUT also helped secure increased operating aid for public schools and higher education, expanded CTE funding to strengthen career and technical programs, and supported bell-to-bell cell phone restrictions to protect instructional time. In addition, continued advocacy has protected due process rights, preserved local control over key decisions, and helped ensure that districts have the resources needed to support students and staff. These victories demonstrate what is possible when members stay engaged and support NYSUT's legislative efforts through VOTE COPE.

These accomplishments are a direct result of our solidarity, and we should be proud. Together, we have achieved a great deal, but there is still important work ahead.

We are currently negotiating with the district as our contract expires in June 2026. The LBCTA remains committed to securing a fair and strong agreement for all members, and we recognize the direct impact these negotiations have on your professional lives.

Over the past few years, the strong relationships we have built are helping move negotiations forward, leading to more productive conversations at the table, grounded in open dialogue and a shared focus on reaching a fair agreement. As we move forward, our message is clear: our members stand together.

Our focus remains on ensuring that your hard work and dedication are properly valued through fair compensation, improved working conditions, and meaningful benefits that reflect the vital role each of you plays in our schools and community. Throughout this process, we will stay united, focused, and determined to reach an agreement that serves all members.

Now more than ever, it is essential that we stand together. We cannot allow ourselves to become divided. Every member plays an important role in moving our union forward. Whether you work in the classroom, the library, the guidance office, the nurse's office, or any other part of our schools, your voice matters and your work makes a difference. Our strength comes from standing together, and only by doing so can we continue to achieve our goals.

In closing, I would like to sincerely thank the Executive Board and all of our members for the dedication and effort you bring every day to make Long Beach Public Schools a better place for students and staff. Your professionalism and commitment do not go unnoticed and are deeply appreciated.

When educators stand together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

Together, we will continue to make a lasting impact.

Solidarity forever!

Karen Bloom

President, LBCTA