

Southern Region 3
Spring Conference

Thursday, April 16 – Sunday, April 19, 2026

Saratoga Casino Hotel –342 Jefferson St., Saratoga Springs, NY 12866



Thursday, April 16, 2026

4:00 pm Hotel Check-in

Friday, April 17, 2026

7:30 am - 8:30 am Breakfast Buffet*Hotel Break Area*

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration & Vendor Tables*Hotel Break Area*

*****ALL DAY (Coffee/Water/Soda)**

9:00 am - 12:30 am Workshops

Treasurer Training*Piping Rock*

Nicole Meeks, *Statewide Treasurer*

This workshop will provide practical information to help the Treasurer keep complete and accurate records of all income and expenses, prepare required annual reports to CSEA and the federal government, and, as custodian of union funds, enforce the rules and regulations outlined in the Financial Standards Code.

The Officer and the LRS Training*Riley's*

Kate Fitzpatrick, *Director Region 3*

Vanessa Van Alstyne, *LRS, Region 3*

Howard Baul, *LRS, Region 3*

A strong union is built on unity – not only among its members, but also in its partnerships. One of the most critical relationships in effective union leadership is the one you have with your Labor Relations Specialist (LRS). This workshop takes a deeper look at the role and value of the LRS. Participants will explore strategies for collaborative problem solving, member advocacy, and best practices for clear, timely, and honest communication.

Friday, April 17, 2026, continued

9:00 am - 10:30 am **Overview of Member Benefits** *Arrowhead*
Beth King, *Director of Member Benefits*
Christine Wright, *Member Relations Associate, Member Benefits*

Saving the membership money and helping to make life better, both on and off the job, is important to CSEA. We have negotiated and secured valuable consumer savings and programs. In this session, representatives will explain the variety of benefits and services available and discuss strategies to share the information with the membership.

9:00 am - 11:00 am **President's/Vice-President's Training**..... *Morton's Steakhouse*
Seth Leibson, *Labor Education Specialist (ELearning)*

This workshop is the first in a series of leadership workshops designed to engage and empower both new and experienced Presidents and Vice-Presidents. Participants will gain a clear, practical understanding of their roles and responsibilities while exploring the Officer's Manual as an essential tool for strong, successful leadership. This session lays the groundwork for effective member representation.

11:00 am - 12:30 pm **Contract Campaigns** *Arrowhead*
Howard Baul, *LRS Region 3*
Vanessa Van Alstyne, *LRS, Region 3*

A strong contract campaign is about more than bargaining at the table—it's about building power in the workplace and showing management that the union is united, informed, and ready to act. This workshop introduces the foundational elements of a successful contract campaign and explores how member engagement, communication, and strategic action can shift the balance of power. Participants will learn what a contract campaign is, why it matters, and how to start building one from the ground up. From forming a campaign team to mapping the workplace, creating escalating actions, and keeping members engaged throughout the process, this session provides the tools and mindset needed to lay the groundwork for a winning campaign.

Friday, April 17, 2026, continued

11:00 am - 12:30 pm **Everything You Need to Know About Your New York State and Local Retirement System Membership** *Riley's*
Jason Cooper, *Director of Advisory Council Affairs, NYS Retirement System*

During this presentation, we will discuss for all New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) members no matter what tier you are in, how your NYSLRS benefit is calculated, how to file for retirement, what death benefits you are covered by and important post-retirement information.

12:45 pm - 1:45 pm **Lunch Buffet** *Hotel Break Area*

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm **GENERAL SESSION**..... *Hotel Ballroom*
(Statewide Officers Review & Questions)

6:00 pm **Cocktail Hour** *Hotel Break Area*

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm **Dinner Buffet** *Hotel Ballroom*

Saturday, April 18, 2026

7:30 am - 9:00 am **Breakfast Buffet** *Hotel Break Area*

8:00 am - 12:00 pm **Registration & Vendor Tables** *Hotel Break Area*

9:00 am - 11:00 am **Two Hour (Coffee/Water/Soda)**..... *Hotel Break Area*

9:00 am - 10:30 am **Workshops**

Secretary's Training..... *Arrowhead*
Stacey Baldwin Deyo, *Statewide Secretary*

This workshop will help Local and Unit Secretaries gain a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of their constitutional responsibilities, as well as the critical role they play as officers and leaders within the Union.

Saturday, April 18, 2026, continued

9:00 am - 10:30 am

Workshops

Conflict Management & Resolution *Piping Rock*
Nisha Stillwell-Frankson, *Labor Education Specialist,*
Education & Training Department

In this interactive workshop, participants will learn how conflict manifests itself and how to identify the elements of a conflict by gaining an understanding of the messages and the sources of conflict. Participants will also learn the necessity of conflict and the types of conflict that exist, while gaining an understanding of the dos and don'ts of managing conflict. Finally, participants will practice how to engage in conflict management through the use of self-mediation and resolution techniques.

Hearings: Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, and Beyond *Riley's*
Dara Hebert, *Associate Counsel, Legal Department*
Howard Baul, *LRS, Region 3*
Vanessa Van Alstyne, *LRS, Region 3*

Grievance hearings are a critical part of enforcing the union contract and protecting members' rights—but each step requires a different level of preparation, documentation, and strategy. This workshop walks participants through the full grievance hearing process—from initial filing at Step 1, through escalation to Step 2 and Step 3, and beyond to arbitration or settlement discussions. Participants will learn how to effectively prepare for and present a grievance at each stage, how to gather and use evidence, and how to represent members professionally and persuasively. We'll also explore what changes as a grievance moves up the steps, and how to assess when to escalate, settle, or seek alternative resolutions.

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Communicating Digitally *Piping Rock*
Bryan Miller, *Director of Communications,*
Communications Department
Jessica Ladlee, *Communications Specialist,*
Communications Department

Informed members are engaged, united, and ready to act. This workshop gives union officers practical tools for regular, transparent communication. We explore our union's communications toolbox, including choosing content that matters, setting a realistic schedule, and sharing updates in print, by email, or online. Learn how to highlight wins, lift up member voices, and strengthen solidarity in order to harness our collective power and turn it into action that wins.

Saturday, April 18, 2026, continued

11:00 am - 12:30 pm Workshops

Membership Meetings Arrowhead

Shane Quandt, *Field Mobilization Specialist, Membership*

Jessica LaFountaine, *Field Mobilization Specialist, Membership*

When done right, general membership meetings can energize your membership and build solidarity. They're where information is shared, voices are heard, leaders are built, and solidarity takes shape. This workshop is designed to help union officers understand the critical role these meetings play in building unity, transparency, and trust across the membership. We'll walk through a step-by-step approach to planning and executing successful meetings—from setting clear goals and creating accessible agendas to promoting attendance and facilitating inclusive discussions.

Grievance Writing 101 Riley's

Vanessa Van Alstyne, *LRS, R3*

Howard Baul, *LRS, Region 3*

Every grievance is an opportunity to enforce the contract, protect members' rights, and show the power of the union in action. This hands-on workshop is designed for union officers who want to build confidence and skill in writing effective grievances from start to finish. In this workshop, we will walk through the full process—identifying a grievable issue, gathering facts, applying the contract language, drafting a clear and compelling grievance, and tracking it through the steps of the procedure. Learn how to ask the right questions, avoid common mistakes, and advocate for the best possible outcome.

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm Two Hour (Coffee/Water/Soda) Hotel Break Area

12:45 pm - 1:45 pm Workshops

Advancing Our Agenda: Legislative & Political Action 2026 Riley's

Davin Carroll, *Interim Director of Political Operations, Political Action*

Chris Ludlow, *Political Action Coordinator, Political Action*

Learn what our Legislative & Political Action Department has accomplished with CSEA members in 2026, our legislative priorities for the remainder of the year, and the political roadmap for this fall.

Saturday, April 18, 2026, continued

12:45 pm - 1:45 pm **Workshops**

Blitzing & Mobilizing *Piping Rock*
Veronica Valetin, *Deputy Director of Membership*
Jessica LaFountaine, *Field Mobilization Specialist, Membership*

It is time to build energy on the ground and move your membership into action. The first step to this is learning how to plan and execute powerful blitzes that build visibility, deepen connections, and inspire collective action. From one-on-one conversations to coordinated outreach campaigns, we'll cover how to prepare your teams, set clear goals, and spark momentum across your worksites.

*****LUNCH & DINNER ON YOUR OWN*****

Sunday, April 19, 2026

7:30 am - 8:45 am **Breakfast Buffet** *Hotel Break Area*

9:00 am **Closing Session & Raffles** *Hotel Ballroom*

Thank you for your attendance & participation
Safe Travels Home

Thank you to the Planning and Education Committees for their hard work and dedication and a special thank you to Nisha Stillwell-Frankson, CSEA Labor Education Specialist, for her assistance in arranging programs for this conference.

UPCOMING EVENTS

9/18/2026

Region 3 Golf Outing

Walkill Golf Course

CSEA STATEWIDE OFFICERS

Mary E. Sullivan, President
Vacant, Executive Vice President
Stacey Baldwin Deyo, Statewide Secretary
Nicole Meeks, Statewide Treasurer

REGION 3 OFFICERS

Rosemarie Kukys, President
Fred DeStefano, Executive Vice President
Christopher Vogel, 1st Vice President
Susan Fontana, Secretary
Kevin Mahler, Treasurer

CSEA
NEW YORK

LOCAL 1000, AFSCME
AFL-CIO

MARY E. SULLIVAN
PRESIDENT

