

BCUEA 2022 Election Candidates

President

Charles Jones

I served for many years as President on the BCUEA board as the voice for my constituents and support staff. I strongly believe that all staff is valuable no matter who you are or your job function.

One of my primary goals is to continue to improve communications, understanding, and morale throughout the whole of our respective communities—is the cornerstone of a cohesive unit and will afford me the opportunity to continue the momentum in moving our unit forward. My other goal is simple—advocacy. To advocate for better wages, equality and recognition as a critical component of the daily success of Bethlehem Central School District.

Leadership is about service and being able to inspire others in ways that create value for the organization. We may not all be able to do great things individually, but we can do small things together that will impact in a great way!

James Kane

I am running for our BCUEA association's president. I have been actively involved in our union for fifteen years. This includes four years as building rep at the high school, four years at Elsmere, and seven years at Slingerlands where I currently am a lead custodian. I have also sat on many committees and served as first and second vice president.

What I will do as President is to bring integrity to the office. I have always been honest, trustworthy, and forthright with all members. I will do my best to learn more from NYSUT to be the best president I can be.

1st Vice-President

Angelina LaSure

I have been an ASWD for over 17 years, starting as a noon-hour aide in Slingerlands and then as an ASWD at other elementary schools, the middle school, Virtual Learning Academy and the high school. I have also substituted in the elementary, middle and high school as a teacher. I have worked with students of various abilities and learning levels.

I've seen the BCUEA change over the years and feel we need some changes. I am hoping to bring my many years of experience to create more transparency, and changes to some policies and procedures that affect our jobs.

I am very passionate about helping people and hearing what concerns they have. I understand that each position in the BCSD is important and has specific challenges and needs. As the 1st VP of the BCUEA, I hope we can work together to create an even better working experience in Bethlehem.

Mike Lee

I am running for 1st Vice President of the BCUEA. I have worked at O&M since 2016 and have been a member of the BCUEA since 2017. I have been a board member since 2020. I decided to run because members have asked me to run for office and because I feel it is time for change. I would like to change our bylaws to support using today's technology to enable us to communicate better, make voting easier and allow more people access to voting, while also saving money. I would schedule meetings in advance with email reminders to give members time to plan their schedules and attend meetings.

I am hoping for the chance to listen to, and represent, all of the members and departments of our Union, alongside Kane, Levasalmi and Empie.

2nd Vice-President

Laura Empie

I would love the opportunity to continue to be your Membership 2nd VP which I have been in since the 2019-2020 school year. I have worked in the district for 16 years as an ASWD. I have been working with visually impaired students since 2014.

I've had the pleasure of attending NYSUT conferences where I learned more about NYSUT, what they stand for and what they have to offer. Working closely with NYSUT to clean up membership, focusing on emails to ensure members get up to date information.

I am running again because, I would like to continue to help make our union stronger and allow you to feel comfortable to express your thoughts and concerns to the board. We are ONE union and I believe we can do this together. I look forward to having the opportunity to continue being your Membership VP.

Karen Verhagen

At the upcoming election you, the BCUEA members, will be given a ballot to choose who you want to work with, work for you and represent you. I started off at BC as a substitute cleaner in 2000 then hired in 2003. Charlie Jones recruited me as a BCUEA Board Member/building representative at the Middle School and then I was elected as 1st Vice President. From day one of my journey, I have brought ideas, information, and commitment to the position. My goal has always been to learn more about members' concerns and needs and how to best represent you, our members. I attend meetings, conferences, and training's to better represent you and to make the union stronger and more united. Voting for me as 2nd Vice President and NYSUT delegate ensures membership will stay on this path forward. You deserve to get the most from your union.

Treasurer

Matthew Assini

No write-up from the candidate

Secretary

Deborah Carr

I am running for the Office of Secretary. I am one of the Account Clerks in the Bus Garage. While I may be new to Bethlehem Central Schools, I have over 35 years experience with union membership. I would like to bring my extensive work and volunteer history to enhance this office. As Regional Administrative Assistant for NPG Cable in Arizona, I maintained multiple records for their nine cities, as well as correspondence for those areas. I served on the Board of Directors for the Lake Havasu Girl Scouts while leading my own troop of over thirty girls. This required exceptional organizational skills as well as communication abilities on many levels. Maintaining accurate records is an important attribute I ascribe to. I believe strong union membership leads to better welfare for the employees and better understanding for the employer.

Lisa Levasalmi

Thank you for your interest in the upcoming union elections! I am running for the Secretary position, which I am currently filling. I started at BC in 2014 as a noon aide, then moved to an ASWD at Eagle Elementary. I became a building representative, then general board member in 2020. I feel it is important for all departments to be equally represented and heard by the board. We can do that by having open and respectful dialogue within the union during the meetings and encouraging members to bring issues to the board. We are all one union, covering a variety of functions but we are at our strongest together.

Candidates for NYSUT Delegate positions:

Laura Empie

Running for 2nd Vice-president

Charles Jones

Running for President

Cathy Lee

I am running for Delegate for BCUEA to represent our union at the annual convention, the Representative Assembly.

I have worked for BCSD, and been a member of the BCUEA, since 2008. I was an ASWD in the Intensive Skills program and later in the SD program. In 2020, I took a clerical 12 month position in the high school. I have been lucky to have worked in many buildings: Eagle, Elsmere, the Middle School and now the High School.

My goal if I am elected for a Delegate position is to provide communication between the BCUEA and the NYSUT Union. I would like to represent the BCUEA members' interests at the Representative Assembly Convention and keep our members informed on key issues and resolutions discussed and voted on at the convention.

Lisa Levasalmi

Running for Secretary

Brian Perry

No write-up from the candidate

Karen Verhagan

Running for 2nd vice-president

The president, 1st vice-president and 2nd vice-president are all delegates. We are voting for four delegates. Once the ballots are counted, delegate candidates winning those positions will be removed if the candidate was listed on the ballot as seeking to be a delegate. The remaining delegates candidates with the most votes will be the fourth delegate. The remaining people would then become alternate delegates based on the vote count.