



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Four County School Boards Association continues to do good work on behalf of our member districts. I recently had an opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. for the annual Equity Symposium and Advocacy Institute; both events were sponsored by the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

Lobby Day on February 9, was a very successful event during which we had an opportunity to meet via Zoom with our area legislators and their respective staff, to present our State Positions on recommended legislative actions on behalf of school children attending public school in each of the four counties served by our organization. The work of our Legislative Committee was so beneficial to our discussions with our legislators; the committee developed statements concerning state and federal legislative work to benefit children attending public schools throughout our Four County membership area.

We are looking forward to a well attended seminar for prospective school board members, a service we offer annually to residents from our four counties (and surrounding counties) who are considering running for the Board of Education in their local school districts. This year the Prospective School Board Seminar is scheduled for March 5, from 9:00 am to noon. Please encourage anyone interested in participating in the seminar to register for the event on-line or with our Membership Services Coordinator, Sue Wyatt.

Looking ahead to our Annual Meeting scheduled for May 26, we are very excited about welcoming the Commissioner of Education Betty Rosa, New York State Board of Regents Chancellor Lester Young Jr., Regent Wade Norwood, and Regent Ruth Turner who will all be attending the event in-person at Club 86 in Geneva. Kudos to Sue Wyatt for her persistence in arranging the participation of our esteemed guests.

Thank you for the important work you do on behalf of our school children. As Jacqueline Kennedy once said *"If you bungle raising your children, nothing else you do matters much."*

Steve Miskell

Four County SBA Executive Director

February 2022

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- 2) President's Message
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- 4) Legislative Committee Message
- 4) Heather Zellers Legislative Message
- 5) David Little, Esq, RSA Message
- 6) Upcoming Events

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MARCH 17TH



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

6:00 pm - Zoom

"Taking Care of your Staff during these Demoralizing Times to Avoid Burnout"

Presenters:

Lisa Brockhuizen and Erica Ebert
Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Spring is around the corner and soon the academic year will be over. We are all eager to have things get back to normal and I hope that we can do so with the minimum of scars. There are many that want this pandemic to be over, but I am worried that the ending of masking mandates will not satisfy everyone. There seems to be an undertow of dissatisfaction in education in our schools. We have groups that want certain books to be banned, others that want our curriculum to contain or not contain certain content and those who do not want their children vaccinated, masked, or tested.

As board members we need to stay informed and seek council from our superintendents, school attorneys, school insurance agents, and Local, state, and federal health agencies. We need to remember we have a legal obligation to uphold the law and regulations governing education to protect the students and community. Sometimes we aren't popular, but we need to stick to the facts and the oath we swore to.

We also need to seek council with each other as board members and as a group. Four County School Boards Association is made up of 139 members and we are public officials who serve 4 counties with a population of over 260,000. We need to stay focused and continue to advocate for the best educational opportunities for all the children under our watch.

In a recent release of graduation results education leaders pointed to a lower graduation rate for students in rural schools as a sign of the need to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in all of New York's schools.

"This is an example of where 'all means all,'" said Regent Baldwin. "There are some looming challenges around rural education in New York," he said, citing sparse populations, declining enrollments, economic disadvantages, scarce access to broadband, and lack of access to other educational resources.

"This is a serious concern for our department as we move forward," Rosa said.

The Board of Regents and the State Education Department are also continuing an examination of New York graduation requirements and considering potential alternatives to Regents exams.

"We must move away from the one-size-fits-all approach that we know leaves some vulnerable students behind," Rosa said.

As we move forward we must keep our focus on the priorities that advance all students to become productive adults.

Russ Harris

Four County SBA President

VIRTUAL SEMINAR FOR PROSPECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Saturday, March 5, 2021

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

School board elections will be held this year on Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Candidates for seats on boards of education must file petitions 30 days prior to the election (20 days for small cities). If you have been thinking about running for a seat on your board of education, know someone who is, or if you would just like to know more about what it is that school board members do, then this program is for you!

Panel Presentation with Question/Answer Session - Panel consists of:

Veteran School Board Members, A New School Board Member, A Superintendent, Legislative Committee Members, and A Legal Representative from Harris Beach PLLC

REGISTRATION REQUIRED TO RECEIVE A ZOOM LINK - Register on our website: www.fourcountysba.org

Or Contact FOUR COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION Phone: (315) 332-7294 Email: 4countysba@edutech.org



MESSAGE FROM OUR NYSSBA AREA 2 DIRECTOR

Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant." As school board members, our decisions are planting the seeds every day for the educational opportunities for our children. Given the initial State budget runs from Governor Hochul, which were generally favorable for our districts, should add some fertilizer to the seeds we have helped plant. Governor Hochul has also indicated all districts will have a full restoration of their Foundation Aid by next year. This is great news and something NYSSBA has been diligently lobbying towards for several years. Once the Foundation Aid has been fully restored, we will need to work with the legislature to reevaluate and update the current Foundation Aid formula to make it truly serve the needs of the children in all districts.

This COVID pandemic, which has hampered our schools for two full years, appears to be abating with more parents and school-age children getting vaccinated and boosted along with the mitigation measures we have successfully implemented. Governor Hochul recently lifted the masking mandate on businesses while many of our school superintendents crafted letters to the Governor asking for better guidance moving forward. Too frequently, the State COVID mandates have been issued with little time to examine them and properly prepare for their implementation. We need to work closely with our local Departments of Health to identify strategies and practices for safe learning environments for our students and our staffs. With common sense and good science, working with the local Departments of Health we can keep our schools open and populations safe.

As we move through February and March, I look forward to final State school budget runs on (or about) April 1. During this time, however, I know you are all working diligently developing your school district budgets for the 2022-23 school year. I wish you all the best in addressing the program needs for your students in that process as you continue to "plant seeds".

Finally, stay warm and stay healthy. I look forward to the opportunities to see you in person soon.

Rodney George

NYSSBA Area 2 Director

THANK YOU TO OUR GUEST SPEAKERS:

Michael Horning Jr., M.Ed., Ed.D.
SuperEval Executive Vice President

Bob Hartz, MBA
SuperEval Vice President - Partnership Development

Mark Snyder
NYSSBA Leadership Development Manager

February 15, 2022
Professional Development meeting
"SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION AND
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER EVALUATIONS"

Members may access meeting recordings, PowerPoint presentations, and meeting resources for this and many more meetings, on the Four County SBA website's Members-Only page

www.fourcountysba.org

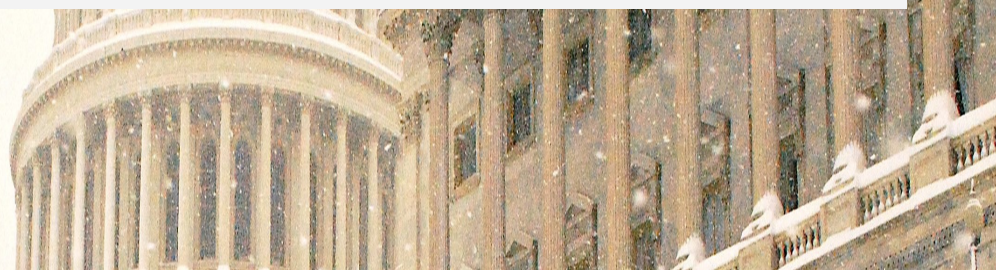


MESSAGE FROM OUR LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The legislative committee has been very busy over the past couple of months in developing our state and federal position papers. The committee met with Senator Pam Helming in January to discuss our State Position Paper; she gave us a lot of information on how to present them so they are most effective. The State and Federal Position Papers proved to be very helpful in furthering our discussion with our legislators on Lobby Day and in Washington D.C. when Executive Director Steve Miskell attended the Equity Symposium and Advocacy Institute. We will continue on with our meetings through out the school year. We are hoping to have more of our local leaders attend future meetings so we can keep advocating for our children as the year progresses.

Jennifer Schoene

Four County SBA Legislative Committee Chair



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The USDA has issued transitional guidance for returning to the Child Nutrition Program standards for milk, whole grains and sodium. I encourage boards to have conversations with their Food Service Directors about the proposed guidance, the return to the standards, and to submit comments through the USDA website.

Some questions to consider: How was the district impacted by the initial change to the nutritional guidelines? Did we see an increase in food waste? Were there budgetary impacts? Did we see an increase/decrease in revenues after the waivers were in place? Can we increase our Farm-to-School purchases? Did the district have creative solutions that the students liked?

Please make sure you share any impacts experienced by your district with the decision makers in Washington. **The department will continue to seek input from school meal stakeholders through March 24, 2022**, with a goal of SY 2024-2025 to issue long term nutritional standards. You can visit the USDA website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/building-back-better-school-meals> to better understand the process and find the link to submit public comment.

Districts should be contacting legislators to extend the USDA waivers through the SY 2022-2023 to maintain flexibilities so we can meet the needs of our students. The June 30, 2022 deadline means that summer meal programs will not be able to operate under the same program rules, forcing many providers to stop serving meals or shut down altogether, leaving children without access to healthy meals. The expiration also takes away the USDA's ability to respond to supply chain, operational and access challenges that are likely to continue into SY 2022-2023. It also denies schools and other community groups the tools and flexibilities they need to recover from the lingering impacts of the pandemic.

Legislation in the spotlight: Healthy Breakfast Help Kids Learn Act, amends and removes limitations within the current National School Lunch Act. The bill would provide additional support to the USDA's School Breakfast Program where participating schools provide healthy breakfast foods to students in grades pre-k through 12.

Heather Zellers

Seneca Falls BOE, Rural Schools BOD, and National Rural Education Association BOD





FOUR COUNTY AND RURAL SCHOOLS TO PARTNER ON STUDENT CENTERED CONFERENCE



Students are all of our mission, pure and simple. Their health, safety and future are at the core of everything we all do. The issues our students are facing from the pandemic, years of underfunding of our schools, and the economic outlook have traditionally challenged us.

As we squint at the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, it's time we focus in on how we best address those challenges. So we're meeting to do just that. The Four County School Boards Association is partnering with the Rural Schools Association in presenting RSA's Spring Conference at the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES Conference Center on March 18th. The morning portion of the summit will hone in on our basic responsibilities to address student mental health in the wake of two years of increased isolation, as well as presenting the latest information on preventing school shootings and other violence. The afternoon will give you ways to prevent cyberattacks and ransomware attacks on your district and your student identifying information. Then we'll cap of your day by learning about exciting employment opportunities for your students on their graduation. Keep them safe and healthy and provide them a good life when we send them out: That's the mission and that's the summit.

RSA tries to hold their conferences around the state to provide important and timely information no matter where you are; so summer's are in Cooperstown, the Winter Conference is in Lake Placid, a school aid summit will be held on Long Island in May and the Spring Conference is right here in our backyard. Please plan to join us to hear top experts in the most important areas of your mission. The conference begins at 10:00 am (registration at 9:00 am) to give you plenty of time to drive to Newark – and it ends by 3:00 pm to get you home in time to relax and enjoy dinner! Lunch will be provided. See you there!



Wayne Finger Lakes BOCES
Newark, NY

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Online registration:
February 14 - March 14

Learn more at rsany.org



Their Health: Hear from the Mental Health Association of New York State as they provide the most current and effective ways of helping your students through the stress of this pandemic!

Their Safety: Dr. Susan Vickers, noted school leader and school safety author will give you the most recent and focused information on how to prevent school shootings and other threats to student safety. Let past mistakes lead you to a better approach!

Hear also from the New York School Insurance Reciprocal's Brett Carruthers as he shows you how to protect your district from ransom wear attacks and your student information from falling into the wrong hands.

Their Future: Jobs for your graduates! Cory Albrecht will discuss how Mohawk Valley Community College and the Advanced Institute for Manufacturing is helping to create awareness at the secondary education level regarding manufacturing industry opportunities and educational pathways. The discussion will take a look at opportunities in New York State for careers in Advanced Manufacturing, the competitive wages that can be earned, and the high-need for technical trades.



*David Little, Esq
Executive Director
Rural Schools Association*

Learn more at rsany.org

Four County SBA
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH UPCOMING FOUR COUNTY SBA MEETINGS AND EVENTS

March 2nd, Agenda Setting Meeting - 4:30 pm - **Zoom**

March 5th, Prospective School Board Seminar - 9:00 am - **Zoom**

March 12th, Legislative Committee Meeting - 9:00 am - **Zoom**

March 17th, General Membership Meeting - 6:00 pm - **Zoom**

"Taking Care of your Staff during these Demoralizing Times to Avoid Burnout"

Presenters: Lisa Brockhuizen and Erica Ebert, Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES

March 18th, Rural Schools Spring Conference - Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES - 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

March 29th, Board of Directors Meeting - 5:30 pm Dinner, 5:45 pm Meeting - **Hybrid**

April 2nd, Legislative Committee Meeting - 9:00 am - **Zoom**

April 26th, Professional Development Meeting - 5:30 pm Dinner, 5:45 pm Meeting - **Hybrid**

May 11th, Annual Meeting Agenda Setting Meeting - 4:30 pm - **Zoom**

May 14th, Legislative Committee Meeting - 9:00 am - **Zoom**

May 17th, BOARD ELECTIONS / BUDGET VOTE

May 26th, Annual Meeting - Information Below

June 4th, Legislative Committee Meeting - 9:00 am - **Zoom**

June 7th, New Member Get Acquainted Meeting - 5:30 pm Dinner, 6:00 pm Meeting

June 11th, Mandated Governance Training - 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

June 4th, Professional Development Meeting - 5:45 pm Meeting - **Zoom**

July 23rd, Mandated Fiscal Training - 8:00 am - 4:00 pm



SAVE THE DATE



FOUR COUNTY SBA ANNUAL MEETING

MAY 26, 2022

Club 86

86 Avenue E
Geneva, NY

5:30 pm - Registration/Conversation

6:15 pm - Student Entertainment

6:30 pm - Dinner

7:00 pm - Speakers

IN-PERSON GUEST SPEAKERS

New York State Commissioner of Education Betty Rosa

New York State Board of Regents:

Chancellor Lester Young Jr.

Regent Ruth Turner

Regent Wade Norwood

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