

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Tuesday, November 25, 2025
General Membership Meeting

Dr. Rick Timbs **Statewide School Finance Consortium**

Sustainability - Issues and Suggestions

The sessions focus on an overview of the financial issues and related challenges faced by school districts over the next five-years. Opportunities and threats will be discussed and suggestions to overcome financial and other barriers will be addressed. School finance permeates all facets of every school district. Thoughtful and analytical approaches to discover the financial health of a district are paramount to the success of every district. Then a proactive and long-range approach is needed to ensure financial success. The result is a school district in which students engage in robust and successful educational experiences as the mission of the district materializes.

In so far as practical, actual data from districts attending sessions will be used to illustrate issues, lessons and enhance understandings.

- ◆ Tax Cap Issues: How the Tax Cap REALLY works and Implications for District Fiscal Health.
- ◆ Long-Range Planning: Best Practices, Lessons and Missteps...
- ◆ Foundation Aid: Much still needs to be done.

Location - Club 86, Geneva
 5:30-6:00 pm - Registration & Networking
 6:00-6:45 pm - Dinner
 6:45-7:45 pm - Presentation

Who Should Attend?
 Board of Education Members
 Superintendents, School Business Officials
 District Level Administrators
 Legislators, and Vendors

REGISTER NOW!

4CSBA would like to THANK Dr. Bob Ike for all his work on the Student Board of Education Training In-Person Workshops and Virtual Sessions.

August 11, 2025
Non-Voting Student School Board Member Training



September 17, 2025
Student BOE Member Leadership Summit and NYSSBA Statewide Event



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MESSAGE FROM ASSEMBLYMAN JEFF GALLAHAN

As the representative for New York's 131st Assembly District, I am proud to continue being a strong advocate for our public schools. Supporting quality education and investing in the next generation is one of the most important responsibilities we share, and I am constantly inspired by the achievements of students, teachers, and administrators across our region.

First and foremost, I want to welcome the new Student Board of Education Members who are beginning their service this year. Your role is an important one, bringing the perspective of students into the decision-making process. I commend you for stepping forward to serve, and I encourage you to use your voice with confidence. You are helping shape the future of your schools, and your leadership is greatly valued.

This year's legislative session had its challenges, but it also brought real victories. I am proud that universal free school breakfast and lunch will now be available for all students in New York's public and non-public schools. I've said it before, and I'll say it again, how can we expect our children to learn and thrive on an empty stomach? Research consistently shows that students with access to healthy meals perform better, with improved attendance, behavior, and test scores. This investment in our children's future was long overdue, and I am proud to have fought to make it happen.

Over the past year, I've had the privilege of visiting schools throughout the districts and seeing firsthand the positive impact of vocational training, P-TECH programs, and college-level opportunities for high school students. These initiatives open doors for young people, whether they choose to pursue higher education or enter directly into a career in the trades. As someone who began my own career as a journeyman machinist, I know that strong vocational programs are life-changing and that employers across our region are eager to welcome talented, motivated graduates.

Just as important are the opportunities our schools provide outside the classroom. Libraries remain a cornerstone of education, ensuring every student has access to books, technology, and resources that inspire lifelong learning. Likewise, school clubs, recreational activities, and athletics play a vital role in shaping well-rounded students. These programs build leadership, teamwork, and community spirit, values that are just as important to future success as academics.

At the same time, I know our schools face new challenges. The recently enacted statewide cell phone ban has sparked many concerns from parents, educators, and administrators alike. While there is agreement that reducing distractions in the classroom is important, the implementation of this policy will not be easy. Questions remain about emergency communication, enforcement, and the added strain it places on teachers and school staff. This is an issue I will continue to monitor closely, and I will work to ensure that the voices of local districts are heard in Albany as adjustments are considered.

Looking ahead to the 2026 legislative session, I remain committed to standing firmly against any funding cuts that jeopardize the strength and independence of our schools. I will continue to be an

advocate for the unique needs of our local districts, while also working to expand student opportunities, support our dedicated educators, and foster partnerships that prepare young people for success in both college and careers.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the Four County School Boards Association on celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. For half a century, this organization has been a trusted voice for our schools, providing invaluable support, advocacy, and leadership. Your work has strengthened education across our region, and I am proud to stand with you as we continue building an even brighter future for our students.

Our children truly are the future, and here in the 131st District, I believe that future is bright. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can ever be of assistance to your districts.

Assemblyman Jeff Gallahan

gallahanj@nyassembly.gov



ThoughtExchange

RSA NEEDS YOUR INPUT!



We need your input on the issues facing NYS rural communities and their schools to help prepare for our Rural Issues Forums, through which RSA travels around the state to learn more about the key issues, concerns, and hurdles you collectively face

We will be using **your** thoughts to seed the conversation at these state-wide forums and to ultimately plan our advocacy platform for the 2026 session.

To better facilitate this process and harvest your valuable input, we are using [ThoughtExchange](#) so everyone has a chance to share their perspectives and understand what's most important to the group

Please share your thoughts and then return at a later date to review and rate a few dozen thoughts others have shared. While having considerable initial input is vitally important, reading opinions on other shared ideas has proven to be incredibly insightful and valuable.

[Click here to connect to RSA's ThoughtExchange](#)

Your participation is anonymous, so participants will not know who shared or rated which thoughts. Come back often to rate new ideas... the more input we're able to review, the more effective we can be as we continue to work on your community's behalf.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to help guide your Rural Schools Association as we enter the 2026 session.

Communities Committed To Educational Excellence!

www.RSANY.org



MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

Hello from your Legislative Committee Co-Chairs! We are Julie Nevelizer (Newark) and Emily Fisher (Geneva). We want to welcome all of our newly elected board members starting their terms. And to everyone who, like us, is back for another year, we're excited to see you again and continue working with you! This month, we'd just like to introduce everyone to the Legislative Committee in hopes that you'll join us for one, several, or all of our meetings this year.

With all that's happening in the world, it's an especially urgent time to stay connected to our local representatives. This year, the committee will be exploring new ways to build our connections with them, beyond the traditional trip to Albany for Lobby Day. We're hoping to invite representatives to our Saturday meetings to join us for a direct conversation or visit them in their district offices. WFL BOCES is planning a Legislative Breakfast on January 29th. Whatever it takes to make sure our representatives in Albany and Washington understand what our students need most!

The Legislative Committee is a great group of people to work with. We meet over Zoom once a month, on the 2nd Saturday morning, for lively conversations from wherever people are starting their weekends. It's an efficient way to learn about the important political issues that face all of our districts. And more importantly, it's a way to share in conversation about our district's needs and then find ways to advocate together for those needs with government officials at all levels. We often invite guest experts to help us understand timely policy questions and hear from our own district representatives to see how legislature affects those on the ground day to day.

We welcome new participants at any point in the year. Every Four County member board should have appointed someone to be their Legislative Committee liaison – if that's you, and you haven't already been a part of the conversations, please reach out so we can welcome you to the group! The more active districts we have, the better we can advocate for our members' top priorities. If you're not your board's liaison, but you think you would be interested in learning more, we'd be happy to have you attend meetings as well. Happy new school year to you all!



Julie Nevelizer

Newark BOE
julie.nevelizer@newarkcsd.org



Emily Fisher

Geneva BOE
efisher@genevacsd.org

We would like to start a new section in our newsletters that highlights districts from around the Four County Region.

Do you have something special (big or small) from your students or district that you would like to share in our next Newsletter in December?

Please email us:
4countysba@edutech.org

Newark CSD submitted a resolution to NYSBA for consideration at their October 16th Business meeting.

They would appreciate your support.

Proposed Resolution #27

RESOLVED, that the New York State School Boards Association supports the development and implementation of financial aid that provides a supplemental state funding to rural districts for the purpose of equalizing teacher salaries and improving recruitment and retention.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural Schools

Teacher recruitment and retention in rural school districts is often hampered by lower salaries, longer driving times, limited housing options, and fewer professional or cultural opportunities. These factors make it difficult for smaller districts to attract and keep high-quality educators, especially when competing with suburban and urban systems that can offer higher pay and amenities.

Newark's resolution is an effort to level the playing field-to recognize the challenges faced by rural districts and to advocate for fair and competitive compensation structures, incentives, and state support. By doing so, the district aims to ensure that every student, regardless of where they live, has access to excellent, stable, and experienced teachers.





C&S believes that a well-prepared plan is only as effective as its implementation. We understand the critical link between a project's overall success and the competent execution of its plan. Our focus is on delivering projects that meet or exceed our clients' expectations, while minimizing construction impacts and ensuring the highest quality of work.

Featured Project: (photo below)

As Construction Manager for the South Seneca Central School District's \$21.9 million 2022 Capital Improvement Project, C&S successfully led the development of a brand-new transportation facility. This pre-engineered metal building is now fully equipped with modern bus lifts, a state-of-the-art bus wash system, air handlers for heating the bus bays, and a ductless heat pump system that provides heating and cooling to four offices and a training center.

In addition to the transportation building, the district completed major renovations to the main offices and secured entrances at both the High School and Elementary School. Site upgrades included new storm chamber systems and redesigned parking lots at both campuses-enhancing safety, accessibility, and infrastructure for years to come.

SAVE
THE
DATE



Annual Convention
& Education Expo

OCT. 23-25, 2025 // NEW YORK CITY

NEW YORK HILTON MIDTOWN



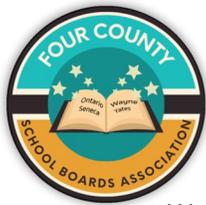
We have reserved a bus for transportation to/from the NYSSBA Convention in New York City!

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR MEMBER DISTRICTS

WE STILL HAVE SEATS AVAILABLE

The bus will pick up at the WFL BOCES campus here in Newark on Thursday, October 23rd at **5:00 am** and deliver you directly to the New York Hilton Midtown (Host Hotel) at approximately **10:00 am**. The bus will leave New York City (NY Hilton Midtown) Saturday, October 25th at **12:00 pm** returning to WFL BOCES here in Newark arriving at approximately **5:00 pm**.





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome back to the 2025 - 2026 School Year.

It has already been a very busy beginning to the year with the new expectations from the State Education Department. Districts are welcoming new Student Board of Education Members and making them feel comfortable with their new role. Districts are also dealing with new regulations around Cell Phone Usage. We are all continuing to do work around Regionalization opportunities as well as the Portrait of a Graduate changes. What an exciting time to be involved in School District Governance.

Four County has taken a Leadership Role in the region with Student BOE Member Training. Under the leadership of Dr. Bob Ike, two sessions have been held, and follow-up opportunities are scheduled in order to make sure that students are not only successful but that they are growing as individuals. The feedback has been super positive about this work!

We had a great turnout at our September 30th General Membership meeting. We hosted a panel of speakers featuring **Lynne Rutnik**, District Superintendent WFL BOCES, **Jessica Sheridan**, Assistant Superintendent For Staff & Curriculum Development WFL BOCES, **Erica Ebert**, Staff Development Instructional Coordinator WFL BOCES, **Karen Fahy**, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning & Geneva CSD, **Michel Pullen**, Superintendent North Rose-Wolcott CSD, **Megan Paliotti**, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction North Rose-Wolcott CSD, **Laurie Elliott** Community Schools Administrator North Rose-Wolcott CSD. They gave us an overview of the latest updates on Portrait of a Graduate and Graduation Pathways.

We are continuing to plan upcoming General Membership meetings for the year. Currently we have three more scheduled. The November 25th General Membership Meeting is scheduled with Dr. Rick Timbs and the Statewide School Finance Consortium and will be a discussion around financing Districts and the current climate and concerns with funding. This should be a great discussion around what Districts can do to be prepared! We are currently planning the January and March meetings and welcome all thoughts and ideas.

The May 13th Annual Meeting will be a celebration of the success of our Student BOE member's year of Leadership. More information will be coming about this event in the future.

Thank you for all you do in service to our students.

Howard Dennis

4CSBA Executive Director
howard.dennis@wflboces.org



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome back to another school year, another chance at a fresh start and new beginnings. It is an exciting time of year, with lots of festivities. Wishing each of you a fabulous year ahead! Fall is in the air, the leaves are turning quickly, the mornings are brisk, and we have the smell of apples and fresh cider donuts.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the new Student Board of Education members! We are excited to hear from you at our upcoming Board of Education meetings. We hosted the New Student Board of Education Member Training/Workshop on August 11th and the Student BOE Member Leadership Summit and NYSSBA Statewide Event on September 17th. Both were very well attended, and I want to give a shout out and huge thank you to Dr. Bob Ike (Superintendent of Pal-Mac) for all his work on this program.

Our General Membership meeting was held on September 30th at Club 86 in Geneva, the topic was "Portrait of a Graduate and Graduation Pathways". I thought it was an absolutely awesome program. It was a really energetic presentation, with dynamic presenters. It gave us a great look into all the work being done around "The Portrait of a Graduate". I hope that everyone that attended took back some great ideas and knowledge.

The NYSSBA Convention is coming up very soon, October 23rd - 25th. We still have a few seats open on the bus, which is leaving on Thursday, the 23rd. If you would like to join us on the bus, please contact Sue to reserve a spot.

Best Wishes for Success,

Robin Johnson

4CSBA Vice President

Penn Yan / WFL BOCES Board of Education
Robin.Johnson@wflboces.org



U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

We have scheduled a meeting in our office on the WFL BOCES campus for Thursday, October 16th from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm (in-person only) to meet with Austin Ponse, Rochester-Finger Lakes Regional Director in the office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. We would like to invite you to join us. Please let us know if you will be available to attend. We will discuss topics/questions at our October 11th Legislative meeting.

If the government shutdown continues thru the 16th the meeting will then turn to a Zoom only meeting. We will keep you posted. www.gillibrand.senate.gov



MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 2025–2026 School Year

As we begin a new school year, I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you. I hope you are settling into your fall routines, enjoying the excitement of fall sports, and taking part in the many open houses happening in our schools.

This year promises to be filled with new opportunities and important conversations. We'll be engaging in discussions around updated graduation measures, inviting students to join us as active voices at Board of Education meetings, and participating in meaningful conferences/events designed to strengthen our work as leaders.

I am excited for the journey ahead and grateful for the chance to work alongside each of you in supporting our schools and communities.

Wishing you all a successful and inspiring school year!

Julie Nevelizer

4CSBA Vice President
Newark Board of Education



Thank you to our 2025-2026 Gold and Silver Sponsors!

Gold Sponsors:



Silver Sponsors:



You can find more information about our sponsors with links to their websites on our website at [fourcountysba.org](https://www.fourcountysba.org). Some of the ways their sponsorship will impact your district this year is: there will be no cost to members to ride the bus to NYC for the NYSBA Convention, there will also be no charge for dinner at our Annual Meeting again this year, and so much more.

Please be sure to thank all our sponsors for all they do for 4CSBA and our districts!

MESSAGE FROM THE NYSSBA AREA 2 DIRECTOR

I hope you all had a safe and relaxing summer with family and friends and then a smooth school opening with few (hopefully no) disruptions. I am looking forward to NYSSBA's upcoming annual convention and Expo in NYC October 23-25. As a reminder, your Board's selection voting delegate has a virtual meeting on October 16 at 4 PM to vote on the NYSSBA resolutions.

At the convention, I am looking forward to the many exciting educational programs and opportunities that have been planned. Our two keynote speakers are Timothy Shriver and Steve Hartman. Dr. Shriver will give the opening address on Friday morning (10/24) speaking to Achieving Dignity For All. Dr. Shriver, an American filmmaker, is the son of Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Sargent Shriver, and has been the chairperson of the Special Olympics since 1996; he is an American disability rights advocate along with considering emotional factors in learning. Mr. Steve Hartman will speak on Saturday morning (10/25). Mr. Hartman has been a CBS reporter for over three decades with his "On The Road" reporting, where he travels the country covering stories. He has become a believer that all roads lead back to the classroom, as do many of us as school board members.

I would also like to encourage convention attendees to consider attending some pre-convention seminars, as well. I have always found the pre-convention law seminar to be interesting and informative given all the legal issues we are confronted with in our roles as school Board members. The pre-convention law seminar will be held on Thursday, Oct 23 from 8:00-3:45. Also on Thursday 10/23 is a School Boards Officers Academy from 9:00-4:00. The next two upcoming conventions will be held in Buffalo (October 22-24, 2026 and October 14-16, 2027). In 2028 the Convention will move back to NYC (October 26-28). At NYSSBA, our goal is to support all public schools in legal, legislative, and research matters relating to public education. If we can help in any way, please reach out to us using the web form:

https://www.nyssba.org/forms/contact-us/?displaytype=Default_2019

I hope you have a great year.

Rodney George

NYSSBA Area 2 Director
rgeorge9@rochester.rr.com



MESSAGE FROM RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Dear Four County Partners,
Knowing that someone cares is often half the battle. If that someone can actually help, it's even better! At your Rural Schools Association, we like to think that we know the challenges, needs and issues of our rural districts better than anyone. It's what prepares us to effectively advocate for your interests in a world that too often seems to only care about urban and suburban perspectives. One of the most effective ways we stay dialed in to your concerns is through our regular Rural Issues Forums. Every couple of years your RSA travels the state-from one end to the other-to meet not only with school leaders, but with business, higher education, community, military and governmental reps. The idea is to get insights across a broad array of issues so that when we're done, we can encapsulate them into a powerful policy brief that highlights potential solutions to the most deeply held concerns of our rural schools (and the communities that host them!)

To say that we're in a challenging time is a pretty dramatic understatement. Between economic concerns, political polarization, challenges to our institutions and legal upheaval from new edicts, we are living on the edge of our seats. Now, merge that together with our state moving toward new graduation pathways that showcase the strengths of our local students, and it seems that everything about rural schools is up in the air. You need help like never before and RSA needs to be in its best position to champion the cause.

We're still working on a date, but sometime in November we'll be at the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES Conference Center for a Rural Issues Forum. District Superintendent Lynne Rutnick is helping us contact the needed parties, but I want and need you to be there. We need to have this discussion; frank, honest, straightforward not only about our challenges but our hopes and dreams as well. What do we want for our children? What do we want the future of our communities to be? How do we get through to the powerbrokers with the message of how important our rural communities are to this state and this nation?

At the forum, you'll hear from your neighbors, from local leaders of the different cornerstones of our communities and our schools. You'll hear a little bit from me about what we can expect moving into the 2026 legislative sessions in Albany and Washington. We'll capture what you have to say so that we can compile powerful legislative proposals, regulatory amendments and the priorities we want leaders to support. We'll also be using Thought Exchange, an electronic form for you to input your ideas and to rate the ideas of others-honing us in our best collective approach. When we're done, we'll be well prepared to advocate with you and on your behalf through this most challenging of times.

I like to say that your job may be local stewardship of your district, but your legacy will be the advocacy you do on behalf of all rural students. Please join us in making something truly important happen for your students, your neighbors, and the future generations of your community!

David Little
RSA Executive Director
dlittle@rsany.org
www.RSANY.org



Registration now open!

2025 Winter Conference - December 4-5, 2025

Working the Plan: Planning the Work
Excelsior Springs Event Center - Saratoga Springs, NY

[Book your group rate for Rural Schools Association](#)
Special rate of \$126/night + tax
LAST DAY TO RESERVE A HOTEL ROOM: NOVEMBER 2ND

Questions about registration and BOCES aid?
Contact Abigail Turcotte - aturcotte@swhebores.org

Have a general question?
Contact Andrea Durmiaki - Director of Communications and Planning - adurmiaki@rsany.org

[Register Now!](#)



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR MEETINGS](#)

OCTOBER

- Saturday 10/04/2025** Area 2 Event - Zoom
- Saturday 10/11/2025** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Thursday 10/16/25** Senator Gillibrand's Representative
- Wednesday 10/29/25** Board Clerks Workshop
- Wednesday 10/29/25** Board of Directors Meeting

NOVEMBER

- Saturday 11/08/2025** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Tuesday 11/25/2025** General Membership Meeting

DECEMBER

- Saturday 12/13/2025** Legislative Committee Meeting

JANUARY

- Saturday 1/10/2026** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Tuesday 1/13/2026** Board of Directors Meeting
- Tuesday 1/13/2026** General Membership Meeting
- Thursday 1/29/26** WFL BOCES Legislative Breakfast

FEBRUARY

- Saturday 2/14/26** Legislative Committee Meeting
- TBD** Board Clerk Workshop

MARCH

- Saturday 3/07/2026** Prospective Board Member Seminar
- Saturday 3/14/2026** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Thursday 3/19/2026** Board of Directors Meeting
- Thursday 3/19/2026** General Membership Meeting

APRIL

- Saturday 4/11/2026** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Wednesday 4/22/2026** BOCES VOTE

MAY

- Saturday 5/09/2026** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Wednesday 5/13/26** Annual Meeting
- Tuesday 5/19/26** School BOE Election and Budget Vote
- Tuesday 5/26/26** Get Acquainted Evening

JUNE

- Saturday 6/13/2026** Legislative Committee Meeting
- Saturday 6/27/2026** Mandated Governance Training

JULY

- Saturday 7/18/2026** Mandated Fiscal Training

Please reach out to the office if you have questions, need assistance, or have suggestions.

Happy Fall!



Sue Wyatt

Coordinator of Membership Services

sue.wyatt@wflboces.org | 4countysba@edutech.org



September 30, 2025 General Membership Meeting Portrait of a Graduate and Pathway to Graduation



Left to Right: Linda Eygnor and Tina Reed



Heather Bachman and Joe McNamara



Tom Nespeca and Anne Morgan



Sharon Sweeney, Sean Phelan, and Joe Englebert



Heather Zellers and Anne Morgan



Lynn Gay and Jim Spellman