



# EVENT AGENDA

February 2015

- 6:30 p.m.**     **Welcome/Call to Action**
- 6:40 p.m.**     **Introduction of Featured Speaker**
- 6:45 p.m.**     **Featured Speaker**  
Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director  
Statewide School Finance Consortium (SSFC)
- 8:00 p.m.**     **Advocacy Tools**  
Charles Borgognoni, CNYSBA Executive Director  
**Advocacy Now Activity**  
Bonnie Russell, NYS PTA President - Advocacy
- 8:25 p.m.**     **Closing Comments**

**If You Are Tweeting from Tonight's Forum,**  
**Use the Hashtag #CNYschoolsinkeril**



## A D V O C A C Y   T O O L K I T

**School districts across New York are making devastating cuts to educational programs as they adjust to rising costs that are outpacing revenue.**

*Advocates  
give a voice to  
the issues, people  
and principles  
they care about.*

*Your voice  
can make a  
difference!*

For some districts, that has meant lost jobs and reductions in the number of class sections, sports, extracurricular offerings, after-school clubs and bus runs, enrichment opportunities, early learning programs, advanced courses, student support services, and more. In fact, many schools now face the very real threat of educational insolvency, when they will no longer be able to provide the minimum requirements for students under New York State Education Department guidelines.

Continued reductions are not a viable long-term solution to fiscal challenges when today's students and teachers must meet higher performance standards than those for any previous generation. **This trend of reductions cannot continue without threatening the quality—and equality—of the education available to all students.**

Community advocates must speak up *now*, on behalf of their students and their schools, or risk losing the high level of local public education that they've come to expect. **Thank you for being an advocate who stands up for our schools.**

# How can I make a difference for students?

Concerned citizens often wonder what they can do to help their local students and schools.

**The answer:** Complete one or more of the items on the Advocacy Checklist below. Then encourage friends and family to do the same.

## Advocacy Checklist

### ➤ Empower yourself

- Choose an issue affecting your local schools and learn about that issue (*Action Step #1*).
- Hone and deliver a “laser talk” to someone about the issue you chose (*Action Step #2*).

### ➤ Advocate with your legislators

- Send a letter or email to local legislators (*Action Step #3*).
- Establish a relationship with legislators’ aides (*Action Step #4*).
- Schedule face-to-face meetings with legislators, and ask them to take a leadership role on your selected issue (*Action Step #5*).
- Invite legislators to special events at schools.
- Ask questions at legislators’ town hall meetings.

### ➤ Advocate through the media

- Write a letter to a newspaper editor and send your published letter to local legislators.
- Copy editorials or newspaper articles about your issue and send them to local legislators.

### ➤ Advocate in the community

- Organize a letter-writing campaign.
- Speak to a local Community group.
- Participate in a forum on your selected issue.
- Use social media to spread the word about what you’re advocating for:
  - Update your Facebook or Twitter status with a key point from your “laser talk.”
  - Share links to relevant news articles or to your school district website.
  - Invite people to participate in events that are related to your selected issue.
  - Follow legislators’ social media accounts. Use social media to connect with legislators.

## How can I have a good discussion with a legislator?

Follow these tips to engage in productive back-and-forth discussions with legislators, even when you don’t agree on the issues.

- **Be brief.** Stick to your key points, and legislators will appreciate your respect for their busy schedules.
- **Be respectful, but also confident and direct.** A thoughtful discussion gives both sides an opportunity to come to an agreement, while a divisive argument makes both sides just want to win. So keep it civil while standing up for your beliefs.
- **Be clear and specific.** Let legislators know exactly what you want them to do (e.g., vote in favor of a bill, sponsor legislation) in a way that requires them to give you a “yes” or “no” response.
- **Be accurate.** Research your issue so you can answer legislators’ questions. Promise to follow up on any question for which you don’t immediately have an answer.
- **Be honest about your concerns.** Paint the real picture of your situation, even if it is scary. Share the ramifications for your community’s schools and children. Use personal or compelling stories and facts.
- **Be timely and persistent.** If an issue has a deadline, make sure you give legislators enough time to respond to the issue. Regular reminders about the importance of the issue from multiple advocates can increase the likelihood that legislators will pay attention to the issue.

# How can I be an advocate for my local schools?

## *Action Step #1*

### **Learn about the key issues we need our legislators to address.**

#### ➤ **Aid lost to Gap Elimination Adjustment**

**Challenge:** The Gap Elimination Adjustment was introduced in 2010 as a way for the state government to close its budget deficit. It did so by spreading the funding shortfall around to all school districts through a GEA reduction to the overall Foundation Aid due to schools. New York Schools have lost more than \$9 billion in promised school aid to the GEA.

If not addressed in this year's state budget GEA will deduct another \$1 billion from aid that schools are legally entitled to receive. (Go to [www.cnysba.org](http://www.cnysba.org) to obtain a table that provides data on what your district has lost to GEA over the past five years and what it will lose in this year's state budget if nothing happens.) Since its inception in 2010, CNYSBA member school districts have lost \$582,678,809 to GEA. You have to ask yourself what impacts the loss of funds to GEA forced on your district—and share these stories with your state legislators.

**Solution:** It's very simple...GEA MUST BE ELIMINATED COMPLETELY THIS YEAR in the 2015-16 state budget. There is no longer a state budget deficit to fill...in fact, there is a state budget surplus...so why does the GEA still exist?

#### ➤ **Inequitable distribution of state aid**

**Challenge:** The current state aid distribution system distributes funds at least partly based on the philosophy of making sure every school district gets a share. In practice, this means well-funded districts in wealthier communities receive a level of state aid (allowing for

expanded programs and services) that is disproportionate in terms of need when compared to less funded districts that would benefit more from the aid.

In September 2012, a report on school funding by the Center for American Progress found that New York has a “regressive” state aid distribution system where inequity in funding persists.

**Solution:** Call on your legislators to support the formation of a Qualified Non-Political Commission, Comprised Primarily of Education Finance Experts, Charged with Developing Legislation for the Creation of a New and EQUITABLE Foundation Aid formula.

**SCHOOL BOARDS SHOULD SUPPORT THIS EFFORT BY PASSING AND SENDING A RESOLUTION TO YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS that can be found at <http://www.statewideonline.org/wordpress/a-call-for-unity-and-a-call-for-action/>.**

#### ➤ **Diverting (even) more state funding to charter schools**

**Challenge:** After committing millions of dollars to their favored state office candidates in the November elections, the Charter School industry has an aggressive wish list for Albany—including enhanced state funding.

While charters enjoy a legal status as “public schools,” there is not a rigorous or well-defined system of scrutiny over their use of public funds as is the case with public school districts through their Boards of Education. Further, in communities that have a charter school(s), the local public school district must pay tuition to send their children to the charter, something that the charter industry is working hard to increase this year.

Regardless of whether your district has a charter

school or not, every dollar of state education funding that goes to charters is one less dollar that goes to real public schools.

**Solution:** Demand that your Senator and Assembly Member Not Divert State Funding that Your District Desperately Needs to Support Charter Schools—ESPECIALLY IF THERE ARE NO CHARTER SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY OR IN THEIR LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT.

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## *Action Step #2*

### **Develop a “laser talk”.**

Deliver your messages more effectively by telling gripping stories in brief presentations known as “laser talks.”

#### ➤ **Identify the Problem**

In your laser talk, focus first on identifying a problem you want your listener to know about. Try to connect the problem to an issue the listener already cares about.

#### ➤ **Present a Solution**

Next, inform the listener about a solution to the problem you just presented. Give examples of how the solution would work and why it would be effective. You might cite a recent study or use other credible statistics.

#### ➤ **Issue a call to Action**

The final section of the laser talk is the call to action. Calls to action should be concrete, specific and include a “yes” or “no” question.

#### ➤ **Work in a personal story**

Try to include a compelling, personal story that expands on your laser talk.

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## *Action Step #3*

### **Write letters and email messages to your legislators...many also**

## **have Twitter and Facebook accounts—use them too.**

Legislators often report that their inaction on an issue is simply because not enough people contacted them about it. Sending a message is a simple way to ensure your legislators know how you want to be represented. When writing:

- Include the same points that you refined in your laser talk. The message should include an introduction, problem statement, proposed solution, conclusion and call to action.
  - Keep your message short; a single page is best.
  - Be concise and specific, but add a personal touch.
  - Twitter and Facebook messages can also be effective because they are also available to a wider audience and allow for more frequent communications.
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## *Action Step #4*

### **Develop a relationship with your legislators’ aides.**

Sometimes knowing legislators’ aides can be just as valuable as knowing the legislators. Aides often have a great deal of influence on the assembly members and senators for whom they work as well as more time to devote to your concerns. Try to build great relationships with these essential staff members.

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## *Action Step #5*

### **Meet face to face with your legislators.**

Ideally, your first meeting with a legislator should be before a problem arises. It’s also best to schedule a personal meeting in a legislator’s local district office. Keep in mind these additional tips for an effective meeting:

- **Be on time.** Legislators have full schedules and may not be available if you arrive late.

- **Be concise.** Stick to your message, and expect no more than 15 minutes for a meeting.
- **Be flexible.** If your legislator is late or can't attend, convey the same message you had planned to deliver to the legislator's aide.
- **Be pleasant and appreciative.** Niceness and a bit of humor can make your visit memorable.
- **Be passionate, not emotional.** Emotional pleas often make others uncomfortable.
- **Be prepared.** Make sure you understand the arguments in opposition to your issue and have talking points prepared to combat them. Answer any questions your legislator may have and promise to follow up if you don't immediately have an answer available. Have some materials that are relevant to your issue to leave behind.
- **Be personal—about your issue.** Speak with passion about local children, local jobs, the local economy, local taxes, etc.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Because legislative boundaries and school district boundaries don't match, multiple legislators may represent single school districts.

SCHOOL DISTRICT	SENATE DISTRICT	ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
APW	48	120
Auburn	50, 51, 54	126
Baldwinsville	50	129
Candor	51, 52	124
Cato-Meridian	48, 50, 54	130
Cazenovia	53	121
Central Square	47, 48, 50, 53	117, 120, 130
Chittenango	50, 53	121
Cincinnatus	51, 52	122, 126
Cortland	51	125
DeRuyter	51, 53	121, 126
Dryden	51, 52	124, 125
East Syr-Minoa	50, 53	127, 128
Fabius-Pompey	51, 53	127
F'ville-Manlius	50, 53	127
Fulton	48	120
Groton	51, 54	125
Hannibal	48, 54	130
Homer	50, 51, 53	126
Ithaca	51, 52, 54, 58	124, 125
Jamesville-DeWitt	50, 53	127, 128
Jordan-Elbridge	50	126
LaFayette	50, 53	126, 128
Lansing	51, 54	125
Liverpool	50, 53	127, 128
Lyncourt	53	129
Marathon	51, 52	122, 124, 126
Marcellus	50	126
McGraw	51	126
Mexico	48	120
Moravia	50, 51, 54	126
N. Syracuse	50, 53	127
Newfield	51, 58	125
Onondaga	50, 53	128
Oswego City	48, 54	120, 130
Phoenix	48, 50	120
Port Byron	54	126, 130
Skaneateles	50, 51	126
Solvay	50, 53	129
Southern Cayuga	51, 54	126
Syracuse City	50, 53	128, 129
Trumansburg	54, 58	125, 132
Tully	50, 51, 53	127, 126
Union Springs	50, 54	126
Weedsport	50, 54	126
West Genesee	50	126
Westhill	50, 53	129

## How do I contact my elected officials?

### **N.Y.S. Senators:** (listed by district #)

#### **N.Y.S. Senator Patricia A. Ritchie**

**48<sup>th</sup> Senate District Office**  
 317 Washington St., 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Watertown, NY 13601  
 315/782-3418

Email: [Ritchie@nysenate.gov](mailto:Ritchie@nysenate.gov)  
[www.facebook.com/pages/State-Senator-Patty-Ritchie/186489928057565](https://www.facebook.com/pages/State-Senator-Patty-Ritchie/186489928057565)

Twitter: @SenatorRitchie

#### **N.Y.S. Senator John A. DeFrancisco**

**50<sup>th</sup> Senate District Office**  
 800 State Office Bldg.  
 333 East Washington Street  
 Syracuse, NY 13202  
 315/428-7632

Email: [jdefranc@nysenate.gov](mailto:jdefranc@nysenate.gov)  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Senator-John-A-DeFrancisco/8776617150](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Senator-John-A-DeFrancisco/8776617150)

Twitter: @JohnDeFrancisco

## **N.Y.S. Senators: (continued)**

### **N.Y.S. Senator James L. Seward**

#### **51<sup>st</sup> Senate District Office**

41 South Main Street

Oneonta, NY 13820

607/432-5524

Email: [seward@nysenate.gov](mailto:seward@nysenate.gov)

[www.facebook.com/senatorjimseward](http://www.facebook.com/senatorjimseward)

### **N.Y.S. Senator Thomas W. Libous**

#### **52<sup>nd</sup> Senate District Office**

1607 State Office Bldg.

44 Hawley Street

Binghamton, NY 13901

607/773-8771

Email: [senator@senatorlibous.com](mailto:senator@senatorlibous.com)

[www.facebook.com/libous](http://www.facebook.com/libous)

### **N.Y.S. Senator David J. Valesky**

#### **53<sup>rd</sup> Senate District Office**

333 East Washington St., Rm 805

Syracuse, NY 13202

315/478-8745

Email: [valesky@nysenate.gov](mailto:valesky@nysenate.gov)

[www.facebook.com/SenValesky](http://www.facebook.com/SenValesky)

Twitter: @SenDaveValesky

### **N.Y.S. Senator Michael F. Nozzolio**

#### **54<sup>th</sup> Senate District Office**

119 Fall Street

Seneca Falls, NY 13148

1-888-568-9816

Email: [nozzolio@nysenate.gov](mailto:nozzolio@nysenate.gov)

[www.facebook.com/SenatorNozzolio](http://www.facebook.com/SenatorNozzolio)

Twitter: @SenatorNozzolio

### **N.Y.S. Senator Thomas F. O'Mara**

#### **58<sup>th</sup> Senate District Office**

333 East Water Street

Elmira, NY 14901

607/735-9671

Email: [omara@nysenate.gov](mailto:omara@nysenate.gov)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/New-York-State-Senator-Tom-OMara/151463428240765>

### **Chair of the N.Y.S. Senate**

#### **Education Committee:**

#### **Senator John J. Flanagan**

Room 805 LOB, Albany, NY 12247

(518) 455-2071

Email: [Flanagan@nysenate.gov](mailto:Flanagan@nysenate.gov)

<https://www.facebook.com/sen.john.flanagan>

### **N.Y.S. Senate Majority Leader:**

#### **Senator Dean G. Skelos**

Room 909 LOB, Albany, NY 12247

(518) 455-3171

Email: [skelos@nysenate.gov](mailto:skelos@nysenate.gov)

[www.facebook.com/senatordeanskelos](http://www.facebook.com/senatordeanskelos)

Twitter: @SenatorSkelos

## **N.Y.S. Assembly Members:**

(listed by district #)

### **Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush**

#### **117th District Office**

40 Franklin St., Suite 2

Carthage, NY 13619

315/493-3909

Email: [blankenbushk@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:blankenbushk@assembly.state.ny.us)

<https://www.facebook.com/Blankenbush>

### **Assemblyman William A. Barclay**

#### **120th District Office**

200 North Second Street

Fulton, NY 13069

315-598-5185

Email: [BarclaW@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:BarclaW@assembly.state.ny.us)

[www.facebook.com/AssemblymanWillBarclay](http://www.facebook.com/AssemblymanWillBarclay)

Twitter: @willabarclay

### **Assemblyman William Magee**

#### **121st District Office**

214 Farrier Avenue

Oneida, NY 13421

315/361-4125

Email: [MageeW@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:MageeW@assembly.state.ny.us)

### **Assemblyman Clifford W. Crouch**

#### **122nd District Office**

1 Kattelville Road, Suite 1

Binghamton, NY 13901

607/648-6080

Email: [CrouchC@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:CrouchC@assembly.state.ny.us)

### **Assemblyman Christopher S. Friend**

#### **124th District Office**

476 Maple Street, PO Box 441

Big Flats, NY 14814

607/562-3602

Email: [friend@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:friend@assembly.state.ny.us)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Assemblyman-Chris-Friend/261283093907822](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Assemblyman-Chris-Friend/261283093907822)



**Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton**

**125th District Office**

106 East Court Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

607/277-8030

Email: [LiftonB@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:LiftonB@assembly.state.ny.us)

[www.facebook.com/pages/Assemblywoman-Barbara-Lifton/141413322537719](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Assemblywoman-Barbara-Lifton/141413322537719)

**Assemblyman Gary D. Finch**

**126th District Office**

69 South Street

Auburn, NY 13021

315/255-3045

Email: [FinchG@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:FinchG@assembly.state.ny.us)

<https://www.facebook.com/AssemblymanGaryDFinch>

**Assemblyman Al Stirpe**

**127th District Office**

7293 Buckley Road, Suite 201

N. Syracuse, NY 13212

315/452-1115

Email: [StirpeA@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:StirpeA@assembly.state.ny.us)

<https://www.facebook.com/AssemblymanAlStirpe>

Twitter: @stirpeal

**Assemblyman Samuel D. Roberts**

**128th District Office**

711 East Genesee St., Suite 2

Syracuse, NY 13210-1540

315/449-9536

Email: [RobertsS@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:RobertsS@assembly.state.ny.us)

**Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli**

**129th District Office**

333 East Washington St., Room 840

Syracuse, NY 13202

315/428-9651

Email: [MagnarW@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:MagnarW@assembly.state.ny.us)

[www.facebook.com/william.magnarelli](https://www.facebook.com/william.magnarelli)

Twitter: @BillMagnarelli

**Assemblyman Bob Oaks**

**130th District Office**

10 Leach Road

Lyons, NY 14489

315/946-5166

Email: [OaksR@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:OaksR@assembly.state.ny.us)

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**Assemblyman Philip A. Palmesano**

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105 E. Steuben St.

Bath, NY 14810

607/776-9691

Email: [palmesanop@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:palmesanop@assembly.state.ny.us)

**Chair of the N.Y.S. Assembly**

**Education Committee:**

**Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan**

Room 836 LOB, Albany, NY 12248

(518) 455-4851

Email: [nolanc@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:nolanc@assembly.state.ny.us)

<https://www.facebook.com/catherine.nolan.165?fref=ts>

**N.Y.S. Assembly Speaker:**

**Assemblyman Sheldon Silver**

Room 932 LOB, Albany, NY 12248

(518) 455-3791

Email: [speaker@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:speaker@assembly.state.ny.us)

**Representing New York State:**

**N.Y.S. Board of Regents – Judicial District V**

**Regent Anthony S. Bottar, Vice Chancellor**

120 Madison Street, Suite 1600, AXA Tower II,

Syracuse, NY 13202

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Email: [RegentBottar@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:RegentBottar@mail.nysed.gov)

**N.Y.S. Board of Regents – Judicial District VI**

**Regent James R. Tallon, Jr.**

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[RegentTallon@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:RegentTallon@mail.nysed.gov)

**N.Y.S. Board of Regents – Judicial District VII**

**Regent T. Andrew Brown**

925 Crossroads Building, Two State Street, Rochester, NY 14614

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**Governor Andrew M. Cuomo**

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[www.facebook.com/GovernorAndrewCuomo](https://www.facebook.com/GovernorAndrewCuomo)

Twitter: @NYGovCuomo

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**Whole New York Senate**

Twitter: @nysenate

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/NYsenate/info?tab=page\\_info](https://www.facebook.com/NYsenate/info?tab=page_info)

**New York Assembly:** (the Assembly has it separated out, GOP and Democrats)

Twitter GOP: [@NYS\\_AM](https://twitter.com/NYS_AM)

Twitter Democrats: [@NYSA\\_Majority](https://twitter.com/NYSA_Majority)