



CNYSBA NEWS

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students

LaFayette CSD: Four Schools, Three Buildings, Two Nations, One Goal: Excellence!

The LaFayette Central School District is located at the crossroads of Central New York in the heart of apple country. While LaFayette is well known for its annual Apple Festival and for celebrating the rich traditions of lacrosse from our neighbors on the Onondaga Nation, our community is proud of the rich educational opportunities at each of our schools.

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Enjoy the Summer!

We hope you enjoy the summer as COVID-19 restrictions are being lifted. Our Newsletter will resume in September. In the meantime, please visit our new website CNYSBA.org. The site has been transformed to handle the latest phones, tablets and technology, and will serve as a useful tool going forward.



New Board Member Governance Workshop

Once again, the Central New York School Boards Association in association with our sister organization, the Statewide School Finance Consortium, presented a series of workshops for new school board members.

This year new board members spent three days soaking up top information from some of the leading experts in the education field.

CNYSBA would like to thank each of the presenters who dedicated their time for the training. Guest speakers included Dr. Rick Timbs of SSFC, Kate Reid, Bond Schoeneck and King, Colleen Heinrich from Ferrara Fiorenza, and Don Budmen from Ferrara Fiorenza. CNYSBA’s Executive Director, Derrick Dorsey hosted the event.

Presentations covered legal and ethical responsibilities of board members, as well as key issues such as *what New York requires of board members*, as well as *the importance of a close relationship with the school attorney*.



SSFC Director on the Summer and Upcoming Fall

It has certainly been an interesting year for school districts, their students, parents, faculty, and staff! But it is the hard work of our elected volunteer school board members that also deserves recognition. Working during a pandemic and with the related school district educational and financial issues have often involved more hours of dedicated work, problem-solving and communications under difficult and significantly fluid situations by school boards and school board members.

Throughout my many years as an educator I cannot think of a time more difficult for these elected volunteer representatives of children and their community. Those of us who work with school boards and school board members appreciate the dedication, sacrifice, and service they have displayed and modeled for all of us during these trying times.

The spring brought much needed financial relief to school districts in the form of state aid and substantial Federal grants. School Boards will again be pressed into service to ensure that long-range financial planning provides that realistic educational and financial goals are met during this period of abundance.

While this largess is certainly a saving grace these funds must be spent prudently over time to best advantage each district and their similar and unique circumstances. As with all windfalls, the funds will run out and districts need to be in the best position possible to continue to prosper and succeed when the inevitable fiscal cliffs arrive.

I have no doubt school board members will continue to provide tremendous leadership as we look forward to the end of a difficult school year and the renewed promises of the next.

Another key portion of the event focused on child abuse reporting in an educational setting, as well as protocol for the handling of personnel within a school district. New board members also reviewed *confidentiality*, *executive session* and *public vs private communication*.

Photos from this year's workshop



Don Budmen from Ferrara Fiorenza reviews with the Board members the Legal and Ethical Responsibilities of Board Member

[Do you have something newsworthy? Contact Renee Stone.](#)

We'll feature it here!

Email rstone@cnysba.org



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We are proud to serve students from the Onondaga Nation at each of our schools. LaFayette CSD is one of three school districts in New York State that operates a school on a sovereign Native American Nation. The Onondaga Nation School is a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade public school that follows New York State requirements and instructs Native students in Onondaga language and culture.

Instruction in this

indigenous language continues for high school students that graduate from the Nation School. Students have the opportunity to celebrate their culture by attending ceremonies at the longhouse. During the pandemic, the Onondaga Nation Council of Chiefs, *Clanmothers* and *Faithkeepers* requested that the school remain closed for in person instruction. Staff members quickly switched to a fully remote learning model in March of 2020 and have provided online instruction during the past school year. The district provided hotspots for internet access and digital learning devices for every student since the switch to remote instruction. We look forward to welcoming our students back for a summer program and in the fall as conditions improve.

LaFayette Big Picture School provides personalized, internship based instruction for students in grades 9-12. Big Picture students spend Tuesdays and Thursdays working at various internship locations within the surrounding community. Through these experiences, students get to see the world as their classroom and learn firsthand what it means to be college and career ready. Even with the challenges created by COVID-19 this school year, Big Picture students logged over 3200 hours of real world learning. Big Picture students also have the chance to attend classes at Onondaga Community College through the OCC Early College program. Big Picture students work to identify what they are passionate about and create individualized goals and learning plans to keep learning purposeful and meaningful. Required content is learned through project work that impacts the student and the community. Although hundreds of projects were completed this school year, a few notables were a sensory pathway for one of our elementary schools, bed frames built for community members without a bed, food drives, improvements made to a community garden, and the building of a maple sugar shack. LaFayette Big Picture School provided in person instruction, five days a week, along with a remote learning option for the entire 2020-2021 school year.

Students at Grimshaw Elementary partner with a variety of community organizations to give back. Our students write to nursing home residents and break records when it comes to fundraising for worthy causes such as Jump Rope for Life. During the pandemic, Grimshaw Elementary provided in person instruction, five days a week, along with a remote learning option for the entire 2020-2021 school year.

While this past year has proven to be incredibly difficult for students, families, and school staff members, LaFayette has lived out our mission statement of putting students first. Whether students were learning from home to keep loved ones safe or coming to school buildings five days a week, our staff members and school community stepped up to face this challenging time head on. We look forward to brighter days ahead for our community and our world. We know that our LaFayette Lancers will leave our doors inspired, empowered, and prepared to achieve excellence.

CNYSBA Board Roundtable, June 3, 2021

Featuring Ralph Singh and Elizabeth (Betsy) Conners

The school year's final CNYSBA Member Roundtable was held on June 3rd and it featured the Wisdom Thinkers Network, Ralph Singh and Elizabeth (Betsy) Conners, with an introduction by Michael Eiffe.

The event focused on creating a climate and culture in schools that supports and welcomes all students.

If you missed the event, watch the video here.



Video Presentation

Roundtable June 3, 2021

Van Duyn Principal Eva Williams Named NYS Elementary Principal of the Year



Van Duyn Principal Eva Williams has been named the 2021 New York State Elementary Principal of the Year! Selected by the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS), Principal Williams was chosen for her commitment to excellence, her dedication to meeting the academic and social needs of her students, and her connections with staff, families and the greater community.

In her eight years leading Van Duyn Elementary school, Principal Williams has implemented frequent two-way communication with parents, cultural and climate practices including restorative circles, incentives for students to actively engage in learning, and opportunities for families to learn strategies for helping their children at home. Under her leadership, Van Duyn has moved from a school in New York State 'priority status' to 'in good standing' in just five years. Her school also saw the greatest increase districtwide in ELA and math scores on the NYS assessments for two consecutive years!

"Her strong leadership skills, including her ability to create a positive climate for teaching and learning, focus on high expectations with attention on cultural responsiveness, and building a solid knowledge of academic skills with her staff makes her school a model for excellence in the SCSD and New York State," Melissa Evans, SCSD Executive Director of Elementary Schools, said.

Pre-COVID, Van Duyn hosted more than 80 Family Fun in Learning Nights, providing dinner, schoolwide data information, and an engaging activity that allows staff to engage with families.

"She has been very supportive to parents like myself in the school setting as well as in the community. She has an excellent relationship with the parents and takes an interest in the educational needs and progression of each student. My children have been able to perform very well in their studies since she's very attentive to every student," Van Duyn parent Serena Harris said.

"Eva has been out front, not only in the way she led her own family engagement program at Van Duyn but publicly for the rest of us in the profession. She personifies all that is right about staying intentionally connected to an institution that helped to shape her life's path," Van Duyn Instructional Coach Valerie Reese added.

“We are exceptionally proud of Principal Williams,” Superintendent Jaime Alicea said. “Eva has long been committed to bridging the gap between home and school, creating connections between school staff, families and community organizations to ensure that the needs of each student are met. Her passion for supporting her students, families and staff is unparalleled. Eva is an example of the excellence we are striving for in the Syracuse City School District, and she is most deserving of this honor.” Congratulations to Principal Williams!
 -Submitted by Syracuse City School District

Our CNYSBA Video Series, “You Do What for a Living?” Will Return in September

We’re happy to announce that we will be continuing our video series, “You Do What for a Living?” following the summer break. The series features successful Central New York graduates, who decided to live and work here at home, and they all have one thing in common: they love their jobs. Our last installment featured Jillian Blake, a Civil Engineer at Barton and Loguidice in Syracuse. She discussed how she had no idea what she was going to do when she graduated from high school. So, she went to college for engineering and now is in a career path



Jillian Blake
Civil Engineer
Barton & Loguidice

Bill Keeler
CNYSBA

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