



# CNYSBA NEWS

**Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students**

## Overall, Most School Budgets Passed Across New York State

There may have been some close calls, but school district budgets passed overwhelmingly across New York State and entirely in Central New York.

Budgets passed in Onondaga County, Cayuga, Madison, Oswego and Oneida.

Some school district budgets across New York did fall victim to the vote on Tuesday night.

In Sullivan County, Roscoe Central School District voters rejected an 11.54% tax increase, Because the increase exceeded the Tax Cap, passage required a supermajority, or 60%. The final tally was 141-136, but not enough to meet the supermajority standard.

The Cortland City School District's \$54 million proposal was rejected by just 91 votes, 543-452. Cortland's budget came with a 9.5% tax increase.

Get the latest results from Tuesday's votes, along with proposition results and the winners of Board of Education seats at [syracuse.com](http://syracuse.com).



## Syracuse CSD Students Earn Seal of Biliteracy By Syracuse City School District

As 33 SCSD students cross the stage at their high school graduation this June, they will be able to boast a special seal on their diploma: a New York State Seal of Biliteracy.

This is no easy feat: the seal is challenging to earn, requiring students to demonstrate intermediate high proficiency in English and a required level of proficiency in a world language.

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This includes earning an 85% or better in English and a world language course; completing a home language arts program with an 85% or better; earning a set score on an approved assessment in English and a world language; demonstrating successful completion of coursework from a nation outside the U.S.; and completing and presenting a culminating project in English and a world language that demonstrates proficiency in interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication.

These 33 students, representing Corcoran, Henninger, ITC, Nottingham, and PSLA at Fowler, did just that. Since November, the students worked on a presentation that they recently presented to a group of panelists at the SCSD Professional Development Center. They were also joined by elementary and middle school students who are currently in the SCSD Pathways to the Seal program, who were there to cheer them on. The younger students had their own rubrics to grade presentations, and asked questions of the older students as they presented.

“I liked learning about the different machines students get to use in the P-TECH program,” Seymour 5<sup>th</sup> grader Yanelis Matos-Rodriguez, who speaks English and Spanish, shared. “It was really different to hear them speaking in other languages. It was hard to understand! When one of them spoke [Kinyarwanda], some of the words sounded similar to Spanish words, but different. I liked seeing them because it makes me believe in myself that I can get a [Seal of Biliteracy] when I graduate. I think it will show that I’m proud to be bilingual!”

The graduating seniors showed their proficiency in Arabic, Karen, Dari, Spanish, Kinyarwanda, Somali, French, Tigrinya, Bosnian, Swahili, Rohingya, and English.

“I wanted to earn the Seal of Biliteracy as a way to honor the Arabic language,” PSLA at Fowler senior Alaa Laila explained. “I used this as a way to help me step out of my comfort zone and become more confident in my identity as an Arab woman. The English part was easy for me, because my topic was identity. The Arabic part was a challenge, both putting together the Arabic PowerPoint, and coming up with a topic! I ended up talking about food – specifically, national dishes and traditions and how food really connects us to our memories and experiences. Having the Seal of Biliteracy will look cool on my college applications and on my resume. But more importantly, it makes me appreciate the Arabic language. I battled in the past with my identity, and I suppressed my Arabic identity. This process has really made me appreciate my heritage, where I come from, and who I am.”

For Corcoran senior Mohammad Jafari, his topics – the Hazaras community, and gender and equality in Afghanistan – weren’t the challenge so much as re-learning his home language, Dari.

“It was hard for me to learn English at first,” he noted, of when he first came to America from Afghanistan in 2021. “Once I came to Corcoran, it became easier. There were so many people to talk to and I had the opportunity to practice. That kind of made me forget my language – Dari – because I wasn’t using it. The Seal of Biliteracy has helped me maintain it – I had to learn to write and speak it all over again. But it’s important to me to speak both languages because the more languages you speak, the more you can communicate with others! Now, I can communicate with family and friends back in Afghanistan, and I can also translate for community members here who aren’t able to speak English.”

Mohammad believes the Seal of Biliteracy will help him moving forward as well. He plans to study for a year at OCC before transferring to a four-year school. Ultimately, he hopes to attend Harvard to study Civil Engineering – a dream he has had since childhood.

ITC senior Gakuru Tumukunde, who presented about the P-TECH program at ITC, as well as the differences between schooling in the United States versus Uganda, has similar hopes.

“I haven’t ever done a whole project in my home language,” he shared. “And I’ve been here in the United States for almost eight years! I was never really fully fluent in Kinyarwanda, so it was cool learning to read and write it. This Seal of Biliteracy experience has helped me connect with my culture. It’s meant a lot to my mom, as well – she was a teacher. I know being bilingual will help me in my career because I’ve already translated a couple of times for people, and now I can continue to do so in my career.”

The New York State Seal of Biliteracy is intended to help affirm the value of diversity in a multilingual society while also identifying for employers high school graduates who have biliteracy skills. It is also a way to help recognize the value of world and home languages, while preparing students with skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives.

We’re so proud of all of this year’s Seal of Biliteracy candidates for their hard work!

*Read more at [www.SyracuseCitySchools.com](http://www.SyracuseCitySchools.com)*



## **End of the Year Financial Management Tips**

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*By Dr. Rick Timbs*

Hopefully as of this reading your budget has passed, and you are finishing out Fiscal Year 2022-23 and heading to Fiscal Year 2023-24.

There are a couple of things to keep in mind as we finish one financial year and move to the next.

How have audits from the Office of the State Comptroller of school district finances across New York State informed your district's financial decisions and its relationship with the school district's auditor?

The Comptroller has the duty and has continued to exercise that duty to audit school districts.

*See the Comptroller Audit topics listed to the right.*

## **Comptroller Audit topics include:**

- IT Asset Management
- Fixed Assets
- Medicaid Reimbursements
- Non-student Network User Accounts
- Claims Auditor
- Separation Payments and Leave Accruals  
Overtime
- User Accounts and information Technology
- Contingency
- Online Banking
- Unused Leave Payments and Leave Accruals
- Foster Care Student Tuition
- New Hire Paperwork
- Check Signing and Online Banking
- Fuel Inventory/ Fuel Purchasing
- Extra-Classroom Activity Funds
- Comptroller's Audits: The Issues
- Procurement
- Financial Condition Management
- Fund Balance Management

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The most often cited by the Comptrollers audit for Financial Condition Management and Fund Balance Management are these issues:

1. Never Used Appropriated Fund Balance or Exact Same Appropriated Fund Balance
2. Violation of RPTL §1318 consistently and by a large amount
3. Inappropriate Reserves (Invented, Wrong, Unnecessary or Unapproved Reserves)
4. Excessive/Inappropriate Encumbrances
5. Over Funded Reserves
6. Lack of Use of Reserves
7. Capital Reserve Issues (Deposits, Effective Period)
8. Inappropriate Budgeting to Creation of Consistent Large Surplus
9. Inappropriate Budgeting (Over/Under) Revenue to Expense Deltas
10. Inappropriate Budgeting for Expenses
11. Over taxation
12. No Reserve Plan
13. No Board Approval on Transfers to Reserves
14. No Evidence of Long-Range Planning

The end of the year is a great time to coordinate your work with your auditor to align the district practices with issues often raised by the Comptroller.

Use your Auditor to:

Cut through the accounting and get them to “translate” items into real suggestions to maintain a healthy district financial condition long term.

Ask questions- Is “this” a good thing? How important is “this”? What are our options to do “this” better?

Ask them to be totally honest and forthcoming!

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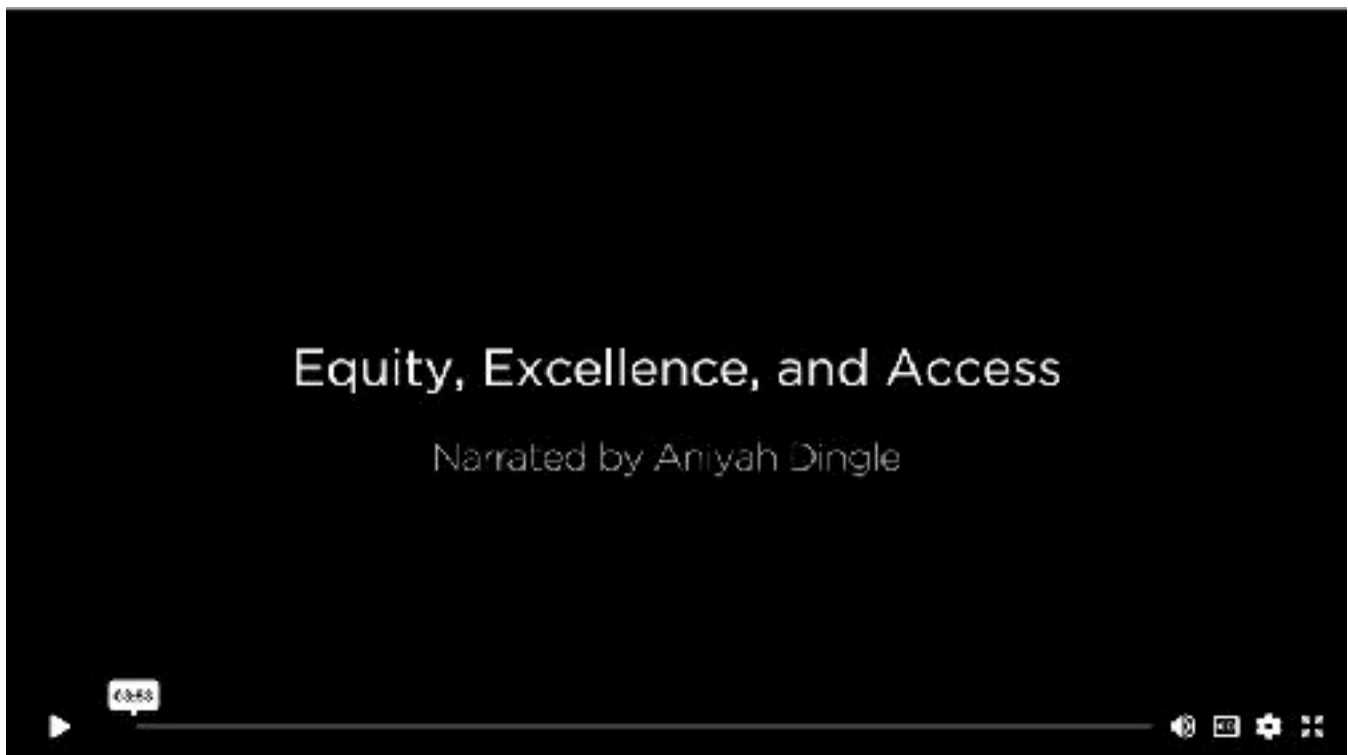
Other suggestion I always suggest are to:

1. Annually reevaluate Reserve and Fund Balance amounts for sustainability and liabilities:
  - a. Further Build Use Reserves to cover potential escalations in expenses.
  - b. Be aware of the restrictions on specific Reserves.
  - c. Develop a Reserve Plan and articulate it just before the Board of Education approves the subsequent year budget for voter approval; make significant transfers by June 30; follow up with any additional transfers after the district audit.
  - d. Confer with your Financial Advisor (if they offer this type of service) and Auditor on Reserve recommendations.
  - e. Further Build and Use new Capital Reserves to ensure Building/Educational Integrity and Eliminate Tax negative impact of Capital Construction; Use Capital Reserve or use cash to purchase buses, technology, and equipment, etc.
  - f. Calculate and Manage Fund Balances and “carryover funds.”
2. Some uses of Federal Grant Funds (CRRSA/ARPA) could be problematic.
  - a. Capital Expenditures and timeliness.
  - b. Exhibit caution with use of new Federal Grant Fund streams: CRRSA/ARPA (Federal Fiscal Cliff 2023-24, 2024-25)
  - c. Notice how these Federal Grant Funds are used as they may either build fund balances or lose fund balances.
3. State Aid: Plan for some unknowns – State Aid Values Change over time- Under Budget
4. Beware of possible State Fiscal Cliff 2024-25
  - a. Foundation Aid magnitude of increase; what conditions need to exist for your district to anticipate any increase in Foundation Aid into the future?
  - b. Will Expense Driven aid continue in current law?
  - c. Be cognizant that Expense Driven aids require vigilance.
    - i. Note the relationship between the cost of items that are eligible for aid and when the aid will arrive.
    - ii. Follow output reports to keep an eye on submissions for aid.
    - iii. Make sure appropriate staff input data for aid (Public and Private Excess cost aid for instances) are well trained, competent, and timely in their submissions.

*Dr. Rick Timbs is the Executive Director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium*

# Video: Equity, Excellence, and Access

The Board of Regents and NYSED are committed to making New York’s schools warm and welcoming places for all students. In this video, New York students explain that learning becomes possible – and joyful – when they are seen, heard, and valued for who they are. Click on the video to view.







# CNYSBA 2023 Annual Dinner

Date, Time, Location, & Cost

May 24th, 2023 @ 5:30pm  
The Lodge - 4355 State St Rd  
Skaneateles Falls, NY 13153  
\$50.00 per person

## MENU

Pesto Pasta, Maple Smashed Sweet Potatoes, Steak, and Chicken Saltimbocca.

## DETAILS

5:30 Social Time  
6:00 Welcoming Remarks  
6:15 Dinner  
7:00 Board Member of Achievement Awards  
7:30 Keynote Speaker- Randy Wolken  
8:00 Closing Remarks

Registration Deadline: May 2, 2023

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)



**Visit the New SSFC Website.**

# **[www.SSFCdata.org](http://www.SSFCdata.org)**

*Get the latest data and school finance information from Dr. Rick Timbs.*

The Statewide School Finance Consortium (SSFC) is an organization of more than 400 New York State public school districts whose mission is to bring equity to the distribution of New York State educational aid. SSFC membership is largely comprised of school districts from average and low-wealth communities that receive a disproportionate share of state funding in comparison to high-wealth regions of New York. The reform of the state aid process will help ensure that all of New York's children receive the same educational opportunities regardless of the wealth or location of their community.



**Have your students or district accomplished something special that you would like to share? We would love to feature them in our newsletter.**

Email us: [Ashley@cnysba.org](mailto:Ashley@cnysba.org)



The Central New York School Boards Association offers all trainings required for newly elected board members

Did you know that all newly elected school board members are **required** to take Governance Training, Child Abuse Reporting in an Educational Setting and Finance Training within their first year? If elected, start your term learning and understanding everything you need to know to be a successful board member by taking the trainings offered by CNYSBA

**The Central New York School Boards Association is offering all three State Mandated Courses.**

**All classes must be registered through your District Clerk**

Registration is located on our website at: <http://cnysba.org/calendar-of-events/>

**Governance Training**

(Two day class - both classes are required to obtain your certificate)

**Governance Training is being offered in June**

*Wednesday, June 7th, 2023*

*6:00p - 9:30p*

*Saturday, June 10th, 2023*

*9:00a - 3:00p*



**Child Abuse Reporting in an Educational Setting** (Takes place within the Governance Training)

*Wednesday, June 7th, 2023*

*6:00pm-9:30pm*

**Finance Training (tentatively)**

*Saturday, June 24th, 2023*

*9:00 am - 3:00 pm*



# 2023 VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE FORUMS MULTI-DAY SCHEDULE

from Central New York School  
Boards Association and  
Statewide School Finance  
Consortium

CNYSBA and SSFC would like to invite you to register for any of our upcoming 2023 Legislative Forums. These events are FULLY REMOTE and will be 90 mins in length and consist of a presentation from Guest Speaker Dr. Rick Timbs, President of Statewide School Finance Consortium (SSFC). Also, the event will include time for Questions and Answers with your local Legislatures.

*Did You  
Miss  
These  
Legislative  
Forums?*

*Click on  
the links  
below  
to watch  
the video.*

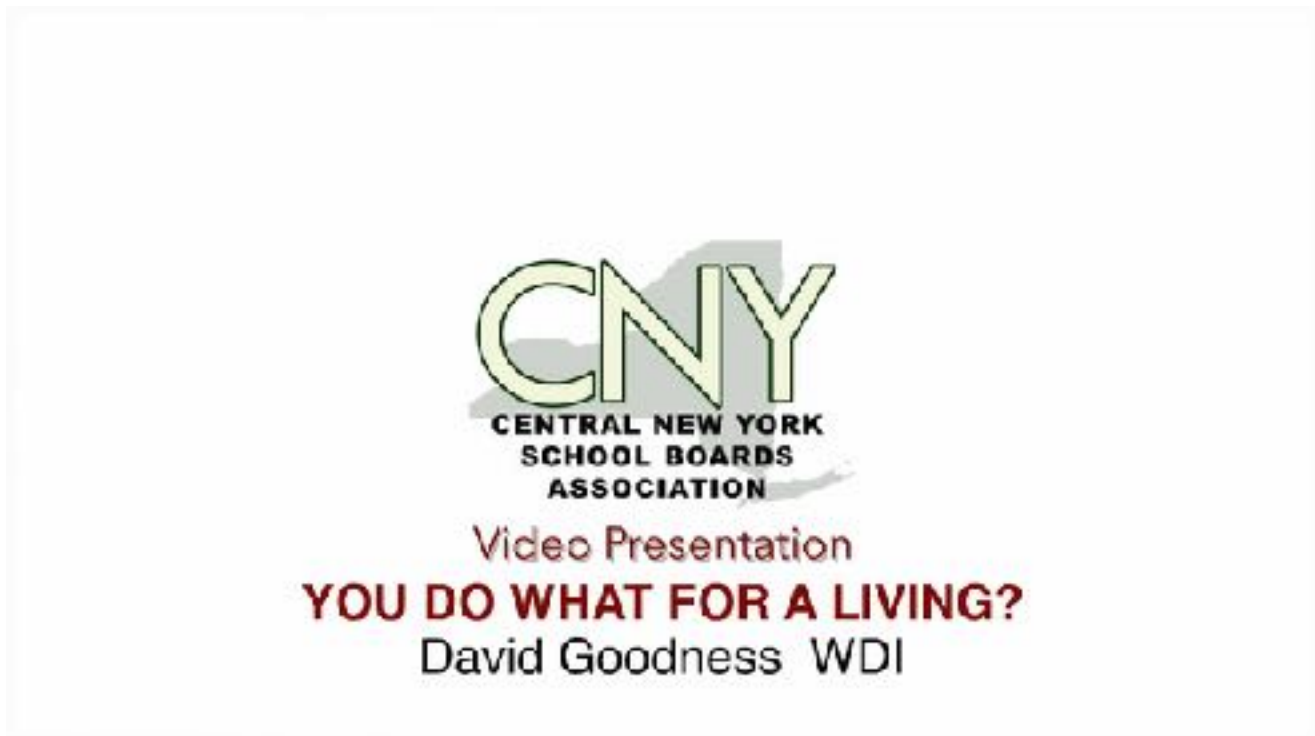
[OCM BOCES 2/4](#)

[CAYUGA-  
ONONDAGA  
BOCES 2/11](#)

[TST BOCES 2/11](#)

# You Do What for a Living?

**Watch our video segment, You Do What  
for a Living? to learn about David  
Goodness of WDI. (Click on the video  
below to view)**



Click on the Video Above to View

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