

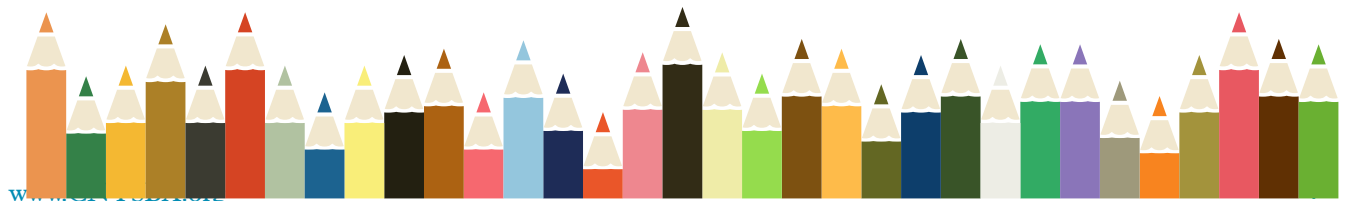


CNYSBA NEWS

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students

** Special Edition **

Everything We Know About the Zero-Emissions Bus Mandate



NYSERDA'S OVERVIEW OF ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS ROADMAP

The New York State [Electric School Bus Roadmap \(Roadmap\)](#) [\[PDF\]](#) presents an overview of the key challenges, costs, funding mechanisms, and policy options involved in the effort to transition all school buses in New York State to zero-emission operation by 2035. This ambitious goal, as established in the April 2022 state budget, is driven by a strong commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance air quality for New Yorkers.

For the purposes of the Electric School Bus Roadmap (the Roadmap), “ESBs” refers to both battery-powered and hydrogen fuel cell-powered electric buses that meet the definition of zero-emission buses. However, there are no hydrogen fuel cell-powered school buses currently available or expected to be available in the next few years, so the Roadmap is focused on battery-powered buses. Future versions of this Roadmap may include more discussion of hydrogen fuel cell-powered buses as the market develops.

More information about NYSERDA electric school bus programs and resources can be found at NYSERDA's [Electric School Bus](#) page and by signing up for NYSERDA's [Electric School Bus email list](#).



Bill Stribrny is with Kajeet, Inc of McLean, which installed WiFi for student use in the eight new electric buses. (WTOP/Kristi King)

Zero-Emissions (ZEB) bus mandate... 1 more questions and concerns than carefully researched and quantified answers and reassurance

By Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director SSFC

Hey, who doesn't want to see more use of clean energy on the planet? School districts filled with fleets of clean energy buses is certainly a worthy goal given enough time, efficient and effective buses, and the resources to purchase them, transform transportation facilities and hook it all up to a fully functional power grid with the capacity to make it all work.

Based on the conversations I had with NYSSBA convention goers from last month, the most important, prevailing, and compelling sessions were about the Zero-Emissions Bus (ZEB) mandate. A myriad of sessions included NYSSBA personnel, bus manufacturers and power company representatives. The panels discussed and fielded questions about the new mandate.

My interactions with school board members, superintendents, and business officials over the last few months have proven to me that there is an understanding of the possible benefits of clean energy school transportation systems. Yet, there is more mystery and trepidation over the implementation, cost and timeline associated with this mandate than any mandate in recent memory. The information I received from convention goers and others who attended regional meetings on this topic did not ameliorate those concerns.

Continued on Next Page

The major themes I have gleaned from school leaders can be categorized into apprehension about issues and considerations that are associated with the following themes:

- **Has there been a comprehensive, reliable, and valid study that includes the: Financial** implications of the ZEB mandate for **school districts** in every region of the state?
- **Financial** implications of the ZEB mandate for the **State of New York**?
- **Logistic, Political, Educational and Human Resource** implications of the ZEB mandate for **school districts** in every region of the state?

Here are some of the things we really must know:

- How much is this going to cost school districts, and New York State? To my knowledge this has not been calculated and/or disclosed.
- Will the cost of this mandate affect school district and New York State Long term financial health? I have no evidence that these costs are included in NYS budget forecasts.
- Will it affect the state's ability to fund Foundation Aid increases for example? State funds are finite, and this is a real concern.
- Can all school districts afford the increased costs associated with this mandate, or increased contracted service increases? Every school district is in a different place, financially.
- Do power companies, bus companies, contractors, vendors and those who work in school district transportation departments have the resources, ability and staff to achieve this transition within the mandated time period? I know of no study that answers this question.
- Will the timeline and cost of the mandate hamper any school district's ability to purchase, service and maintain these new bus fleets with our current labor force so as to minimize interruptions of service? I know of no study that answers this question.
- Will the timeline and cost of the mandate hamper any contractor's ability to purchase, service and maintain these new bus fleets with our current labor force so as to minimize interruptions of service? I know of no study that answers this question.
- As a practical matter is it likely or possible that the functional life, often know as period of probable usefulness (PPU), of the ZEB buses will outlast the financing mechanisms (BANS or BONDS) used to purchase them and/or the Transportation Aid used in support their purchase? I know of no study that answers this question.
- In short, is it likely or possible that school districts could still have debt on a bus they no longer own because the length of debt is longer than the life of the bus as school district try to match amortization schedules with state aid schedules? If so, will Transportation Aid be continued on a bus no longer owned by the school district? I know of no study that answers these questions.

- Is it really possible to financially and logically replace, make operational and fulfill the transportation needs of school districts of about 50,000 school buses by 2035? I know of no study that answers this question.

There are practical matters that need review.

- If the purchase of ZEBs will be supported by Transportation Aid and the improvements needed at Transportation Facilities or the construction of new Transportation Facilities to store, service and maintain these buses will be supported with Building aid:
- Does the New York State Education Department Office of Facilities Planning have the resources for evaluation and granting of the perhaps over 300 of applications for building permits for transportation facility construction projects in a timely manner so that all projects can be completed and operational by 2035? I know of no study that answers this question.
- What will be the bidding climate under these conditions and how will interest rates fit into these calculations? This will be anyone's guess.
- Is there public support for this mandate? What happens if voters, who by law determine bus purchases and the approval of constructions projects deny school district the ability to move forward on this mandate because on these incompatible legal requirements? We have already school district voter seen rejections of ZEB bus purchases for example.

We at the Statewide School Finance Consortium (SSFC) continue to view this initiative as in the “more needs to be figured out” category. There is still much to discover including its effect on each school district long rang financial plan, fund balances, reserves and other fiscal considerations including but not limited to Transportation Aid and Building Aid. There is a growing list of questions and concerns that need to be studied and then addressed.

This is a work in progress for both New York State and School Districts.

For my video on this topic for the Central New York School Boards Association for to the following website to view it [October 2023 Electric Bus Roundtable w/ Dr. Rick Timbs | CNYSBA.org](#) and download the PowerPoint [PowerPoint Presentation \(ssfcdata.org\)](#) that accompanies the video. It could be useful as you search for the “how” of the “how are we going to do this”?

Be Well,
Rick

Rick Timbs is the Executive Director of Statewide School Finance Consortium and President of RG Timbs Inc.

CNYSBA ROUNDTABLE

ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS MANDATE

“WHAT WE ALL NEED TO KNOW” with DR. RICK TIMBS

DON'T MISS THIS ONE!



OCTOBER 25, 2023

5:30 - 6:30 PM

- This is a virtual event
- Dr. Rick Timbs will present a crash course on the Electric Bus Mandate for New York Schools
 - Is it feasible
 - How do we pay for it?
 - What questions should we be asking?
 - How do we prepare?

CNYSBA
click here
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Did You Miss It?

Did you miss the video presentation by Dr. Timbs on ZEB?

You can watch it and download the Powerpoint by [clicking here](#).

Jeffrey Matteson Appointed State Education Department Senior Deputy

The State Board of Regents and State Education Department Commissioner Dr. Betty A. Rosa today announced the appointment of Dr. Jeffrey A. Matteson to Senior Deputy Commissioner for Education Policy. In this role, Dr. Matteson will oversee the Office of P-12 Education and the Office of Higher Education. The Senior Deputy Commissioner



serves as a member of the Commissioner’s Leadership Team and provides guidance, analysis, and direction in achieving the strategic goals of the State Education Department.

Board of Regents Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. said, “Dr. Matteson will play a critical role in ensuring that all students have

access to high-quality instructional opportunities and graduate ready to succeed in life after high school. Dr. Matteson’s record of working collaboratively with teachers, parents, and school leaders, and unwavering commitment to the betterment of education, will benefit our state’s students and the Department alike. The Board and I are pleased to welcome Dr. Matteson to the Department and wish him well in his new position.”

Commissioner Rosa said, “We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Matteson as our new Senior Deputy Commissioner for Education Policy. His extensive background as an administrator and educator will play a pivotal role in advancing our mission to raise the knowledge, skill, and opportunity of all people in New York. Dr. Matteson’s wealth of knowledge and dedication to educational excellence will undoubtedly be an asset to our team as we work together to shape the future of education in our state.”

Dr. Matteson's career spans 35 years as an educator, beginning as a social studies teacher and assuming roles as a principal, superintendent, and most recently as District Superintendent of the Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Dr. Matteson's contributions have extended beyond the localities in which he has worked. He has been a valuable member of various state workgroups, offering expertise on critical topics such as graduation measures, computer science education, work-based learning, and ESSA implementation, among others.



In addition to his administrative roles, Dr. Matteson has shared his wealth of knowledge as an educator at the college level and as a dedicated doctoral thesis advisor. He also assumed the role of chair of the BOCES District Superintendents, where he played a pivotal role in leading the state's response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Matteson's impact on education extends nationally, as he actively participated in the National Board Certification workgroup and provided invaluable insights during the TEACHNY roundtable discussions.

Dr. Matteson holds a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University in Virginia, an M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Castleton State College in Vermont, a B.A. in Social Studies from SUNY Cortland, and an A.A. in Liberal Arts from SUNY Morrisville.



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

Visit the New SSFC Website.

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.

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Charging Forward: New York's Costly Rush to Electrify School Buses

A Costly Transition

Currently, 95 percent of the nation's school buses run on diesel.[vi] Only 5,000 out of the estimated 500,000 buses are electric, as of November 2021. Electric school buses have upfront costs more than double that of diesel buses. The electric buses cost around \$300,000 to \$400,000[vii] with similarly sized diesel buses going for around \$125,000 to \$150,000.[viii]

The price of electric buses is projected to decrease over time as higher demand promotes innovation and more fully developed supply chains.[ix] But this suggests that the first school districts to acquire electric buses will be at an economic disadvantage, as they will purchase the least-advanced models at the highest prices. School districts would be wise to wait until electric bus technology is more advanced.

The anticipated future lower cost of electric school buses also depends on a projected decline in battery costs and the achievement of efficiencies of scale in component markets and manufacturing.[x] But the CEO of electric vehicle automaker Rivian recently noted that, "all the world's [battery] cell production combined represents well under 10 percent of what we will need in ten years . . . meaning 90 to 95 percent of the battery supply chain does not exist." [xi] Given the increased demand for critical materials for batteries for both electric vehicles and electricity storage, the limited mining of battery minerals world-wide, and China's current domination of refining of these critical materials, the future cost of batteries is highly unpredictable.

[Click here to read the complete Report.](#)

We'd Love to Hear What You Think

We would love to hear the topic you would like to see featured at our next CNYSBA Roundtable.

Which topic(s) would you like to see featured at the next roundtable: *

Name (optional)

First Name

Last Name

School District (optional)

School District

Submit Feedback

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NYS Sen. Joe Griffo Calls for Moratorium on electric School Bus Mandate

As school districts in New York grapple with how to deal with a state mandate requiring all new school buses purchased be zero-emission by 2027 and all school buses in operation be electric by 2035, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, is calling for a moratorium on this deadline until this policy can be reexamined and a more reasonable and realistic approach determined.

“This is a large mandate on schools and many, particularly smaller and more rural districts in upstate, are going to struggle with it,” said Sen. Griffo, who did not support this initiative. “There needs to be reasonable timelines and expectations and it must be affordable or else we will see taxpayers burdened even more. By suspending this mandate, we can gather additional input from all stakeholders – something that the legislative majorities have failed to do too often when it comes to policies that they support and pass - and figure out the best and most realistic approach to accomplish the objective that has been laid out.”

In an effort to provide relief to schools and local governments who have been handcuffed by unfunded state mandates, Sen. Griffo has again introduced legislation (S1444) that would impose an immediate moratorium on unfunded state mandates and would require that any state-mandated program imposed on municipalities and school districts be funded by the state.

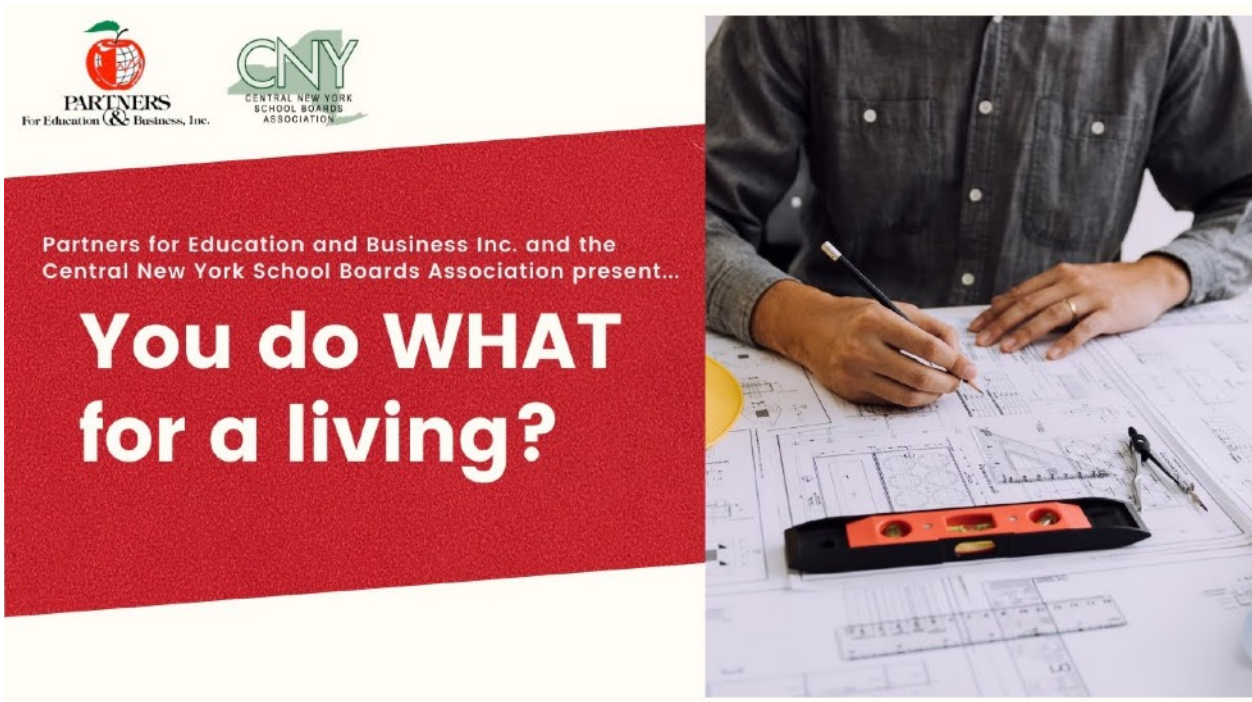
The legislation also would establish a mandate review council to review existing state mandates on local governments and schools. This will help eliminate unnecessary, onerous and burdensome mandates, further easing the fiscal constraints that such policies have on local governments, school districts and taxpayers.

The bill is currently in the Senate’s Standing Committee on Local Government.

“Local municipalities and school districts already face enough fiscal challenges that they shouldn’t be burdened further because of mandates from New York State,” Sen. Griffo said. “My bill seeks to protect our municipalities and school districts from unfunded mandates and allows local officials to reduce costs and set their own priorities.”

You Do What for a Living?

Watch our video segment, You Do What for a Living? to learn about Chef Eric Smith, of Giovanni Foods. He's the Director of Culinary Research and Development and Corporate Executive Chef at Giovanni Foods. The interview is hosted by Kathy Birmingham of Partners For Education and Business.



Click on the Video Above to View

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