



CNYSBA NEWS

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students

DID YOU MISS OUR BOARD REFRESHER ROUNDTABLE?

It featured Dr. Rick Timbs of SSFC, and Colleen Heinrich, ESQ of Ferrara Fiorenza PC. You can get all the info and watch the video of the roundtable here. [Just click this LINK.](#)

CAN WE FEATURE YOU?

Has your District, Students, Staff, or Business been involved in or accomplished something great lately?? CNYSBA would love the opportunity to brag about the impact our members are making in our next newsletter. Please contact Executive Assistant Ashley Stoltz by email at ashley@cnybsa.org to submit your article or obtain more information!



Slam Dunking Stress: Mental Health Takes Center Court in Klinik Kids Program

“Ready for that rematch?” Grant 8th grader Dominic Davis asked one of his coaches as he entered the gym after school.

“You know it!” the coach replied.

Dominic has something to prove: the previous week, his coach had beat him 5-0 in a game of basketball, and he was ready to make his comeback.

Thanks to the Klinik Kids program, SCSD elementary and middle school students have enjoyed the chance to engage with professional basketball players, coaches, and trainers from around the world. Over the course of six weeks of sessions, the students participate in basketball drills and competitive games, enhancing their skills and strengthening their mental fortitude. Perhaps more importantly, thanks to a partnership with an organization called Half Hood Half Holistic, the students are also introduced to mental health and wellness concepts.

“The biggest piece of Klinik Kids is introducing that mental health component,” Kashif Hameed, affectionately called ‘Coach Kash’ by his students, shared. “Especially in underserved areas, where the waiting list to receive mental health services is so long. We want to hook them with basketball and help them improve those skills, but our primary focus is introducing those concepts that will help them regulate day to day.”

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Each session, in addition to the basketball instruction, students are introduced to concepts including gratitude, meditation, paced breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, goal setting, and more – all in an engaging and fun way.

“Not only are they getting better at basketball and building those skills, they’re also building their community and learning about mental health in a real life setting,” Klinik Kids Mental Health Lead Rachel Johnson, founder of Half Hood Half Holistic, explained. “They may not all become pro ball players, but they’ll all remember this as a formative part of their life... it’s all about positive affirmation and positive reinforcement.”

Last year, the Klinik Kids program was rolled out in four SCSD schools... to such success that this year, it has expanded to reach eight! Now, students at McKinley-Brighton, Webster, Seymour, Grant, Dr. Weeks, Delaware, STEAM at Dr. King, and Syracuse STEM at Blodgett are invited to participate in the free program each week.

“If you’re locked in, say ‘locked in!’” Coach Kash shouts to a gym full of students huddled around him.

“Locked in!” they all shout in response.

“If you have Klinik Kids on your shirt, that means you’re part of this family. And that means we don’t tear each other down – we build each other up. Say ‘build each other up!’”

“Build each other up!” the students shout enthusiastically.

That positive messaging is part of the program’s appeal for students.

“It’s an amazing opportunity,” HW Smith 6th grader Lovell Sims, who participates in the program at McKinley-Brighton, shared. “I love basketball, and the sense of community here is so good. It’s a healthy environment. If we come in and we’re in a bad mood, one of the coaches will help us feel better. I just love it. Every day I come back, I learn more and I do better. This really makes me feel like I can do anything!”

“I love to play basketball with my friends,” Grant 7th grader Angel Viamontes added. “I want to work on my basketball skills! But at Klinik Kids, we also learn about the importance of wellness and taking care of ourselves. They train us on how to pass and shoot, and also why we should stay hydrated and how to take deep breaths to stay calm. Being here helps me be better in life. It’s taught me how to control myself and my emotions when things are tough.”

Klinik Kids participants also have the opportunity to receive special prizes and participate in special experiences. Late this fall, for example, school administrators at each participating location were asked to select one student to represent the group on a trip to New York City – where they were invited to meet 2016-17 NBA MVP Russell Westbrook. Students were treated to seats in the VIP skybox, and then had the chance to meet players, watch the game, and take pictures with Mr. Westbrook himself.

What a wonderful opportunity to help students improve their physical and mental health – thank you to the Klinik Kids team for offering this experience to our students!

Submitted by the Syracuse City School District

Prepare yourself for the upcoming budget season, lobby season and perhaps a visit from the Comptroller.

By Dr. Rick Timbs

As all of you are aware as you read my articles, I am a strong proponent of long-range financial analysis and planning for school districts. To that end I offer the following this month.

As we await the report or recommendations from the Rockefeller Institute we should be examining the potential areas of revenue uncertainty. Foundation Aid formula alterations that are anticipated will not really occur until April 1, 2025, or hopefully soon thereafter, when the state budget is passed. This fact alone will be disruptive to budget development leaving Boards of Education with little time to make budget adjustments once, at least temporarily, Foundation Aid is to some degree, resolved with the passage of the state budget.

I suggest that all districts review a couple of scenarios in preparation for the meeting that Boards must finally approve a resolution that identifies the district's budget subject to voter approval. With that in mind it must be clear that the 2025-26 budget forwarded to voters is the first step into a new paradigm where most districts will find increased limitations on the growth of revenues while simultaneously experiencing the initial wave of what will be significantly increased expenditures.

To be clear, the understandable reluctance to increase taxes, and the lowering of interest rates on school savings accounts coupled with the inability of school districts to generate and replenish fund balances after the loss of major Federal grant funding streams will be problematic. This reality will clash with a new expenditure reality.

The new expenditure reality will see a grater demand for more programing and that means more staff and that means more costs. As a result of the latest inflationary trends, staff costs have escalated as collective bargaining contracts have been renewed. Add to this, at least in



significant portions of the state, major escalations in health insurance premiums and legacy costs. All of these have the ability not just to increase but to compound increase.

I predict for most of you a growing imbalance between revenues and expenditures with the latter growing the quickest. This means more reliance on fund balances which include not just reserves but cash on hand and any monies you can glean from an existing budget.

Budgeting is part smart calculations, part intuition, part experience, part guessing and another part luck. The budget must contain recently created or annually maintained fund balances just in case. Just in case there is an unpredictable increase in the need for programing or populations of students with special needs which appears to be a statewide trend. Add to that perhaps an increase of students that want to join the growing Career and Technical Education (CTE) ranks, or there may be technology replacement needs and upgrades, safety and security shortfalls recently discovered, unanticipated infrastructure failures (think boiler malfunctions, HVAC glitches, bus lift failure). And then there are unanticipated staff leaves, sickness, and the like, that require greater use of substitutes and support staff. I won't expound on the potential for any number of human tragedies or calamities that could strain a budget to the limit.

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What else?

But something else currently clouds our ability to truly enact a budget that represents long-range financial analysis and planning. It is a great uncertainty. The Zero-Emission Bus Mandate is still active and there is really no indication it will be delayed, altered, or abandoned. We face a quandary.

If we proceed to develop financial plans to fully implement the mandate we must significantly adjust our financial understanding of the costs of this implementation schedule and gauge the awareness of and support of the district residents at the same time. Some districts have embraced the Zero-Emission Bus mandate and others have rejected it even after they were guaranteed large grants to offset the fiscal impact of the move.

This is not only a financial situation it is a political one. No district wants to lose the support of their voters nor their belief that the Board and administration will act in their best interests.

Over the last month or so I have attended a series of meetings, information sessions and webinars about Zero-Emissions Buses.

The topics included:

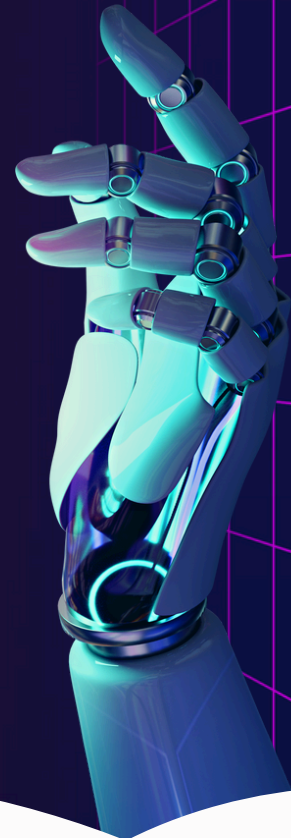
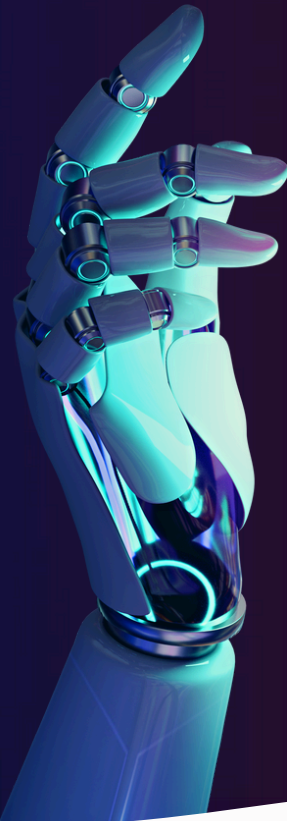
- The mandate
- The need for a study to determine how the buses could be used relative to your routes and other district characteristics.
- The preparation of the bus maintenance staff for the transition and continued implementation
- The preparation of bus drivers
- Items related to the needs within a transportation facility.
- Related transportation and building aid as applicable.
- The ongoing availability and variety of grants to assist districts as they engage, prepare, and implement the 2027-35 Zero-Emission Bus mandate.
- Gaining support from the public

There is no lack of effort by NYSERDA, or the State Education Department from pointing to the opportunities provided by the implementation of the Zero-Emission Bus mandate. Their encouragement is laudable, their data impeccable, their positive outlook undeniable. But their participation is required because of their innate role in the mandate. They are agents of state policy and doing their job to exact the benefits of the mandate that are, without a doubt many, as they provide support and resources..

But for school districts the obstacles are numerous. Just wrapping your head around the notion of replacing tens of thousands of buses by 2035 is mind boggling. (Estimates I've heard at the sessions I attended range from 45,000 to 55,000 buses of distinct types and sizes.) And it's not just replacing the buses, it is a total transformation of transportation facilities with costly capital projects that take time to plan, get state approved, bid, constructed and reports filed. Then there's the plans for when a bus breaks down; you just don't tow these back to the bus garage, you need to carry them back on a flatbed. Then there's the interface with first responders because if these catch on fire, as remote as it may be, firefighting these buses is quite different from the past. Don't forget, training for mechanics and bus drivers.

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CNY STEM SCHOLARSHIP



CNY STEM SCHOLARSHIPS



The CNY STEM Scholarship Program supports Central New York high school seniors pursuing college degrees in STEM fields. Administered by Partners for Education & Business, Inc. (PEB), the program aims to build an inclusive STEM workforce, highlight local career opportunities, and retain local talent. Scholarships are awarded based on a number of criteria. Participating companies are encouraged to offer a paid internship opportunity following the student's sophomore year of college.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications open in November and close in mid-March. Top candidates are selected by sponsoring companies using a standard rubric and scheduled for virtual interviews coordinated by PEB. Company representatives conduct the interviews and choose scholarship recipients based on both applications and interviews. Final decisions are announced via email in early May.

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST

- Current High School Senior
- Planned College Major:
 - Architecture
 - Computer Science
 - Engineering
 - Math
 - Physics
- Required Cumulative Average: 85+



INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING?

Scan the QR code or visit cnystem.com for more info!

But there's more. Will the "grid" be there for the transformation? As a quick aside, trucking companies and municipalities are under a similar mandate. And according to folks who run trucking companies and run municipalities, they too will have a challenging time addressing and instituting a similar mandate on their enterprises. Additionally, as new business locations and new housing are constructed additional strain on the "grid" will occur. So, the "grid" will have to be bigger than just for school districts.

Think of another consideration. What will occur when about 300 to 400 school districts try to purchase new ZEB buses at the same time, or they submit plans and specifications to SED for building permits at the same time, or they bid the capital project at the same time? All of these will be real problems, and more expensive problems, and make the success of this mandate less likely.

Lobbying

There is no doubt that the Zero-Emission Bus mandate will be a heavy lift for a school district financially and politically. This is where the lobbying comes in. We must get this mandate altered in such a way that it is more achievable if still deemed worthwhile as an initiative. We can't wait any longer. There is a time lag that must be considered between public approval for district initiatives, for the purchase of these buses and reconstruction at transportation facilities. Further, the inflated effects of the law of supply and demand must be addressed, financing and other cost factors solved and the local politics of it remedied, and quickly. State government created this situation, only state government can solve it.

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The Comptroller

Many of you have seen the handwriting on the wall. You recognized the revenue to expense disparity early and have purposefully saved for the eventual set of "rainy days" to come to your district. The problem is that with Real Property Tax Law §1318 (The 4% cash limit), as well as limitations on the opinions and interpretations of the use of restricted reserves, are all holding us back from preparation for our no doubt expensive future, we are caught in a Catch 22. The legislature, Governor and Comptroller have not provided relief for districts to create the needed larger "rainy day funds" to protect their future,

Do you save the money and perhaps experience a critical and by some characterizations provided to me, unnecessarily nasty Comptroller audits? Or save funds anyway to create future support for the children under your charge? How as a Board of Education and as community leaders, instilled with the trust that you will commit to your oath of office the generally requires you maintain a logical and sustainable district fiscal condition and a robust educational program for your community's children, create the require homeostasis?.

We are all looking for a report or recommendation from the Rockefeller Institute, the subsequent reaction of the Governor and the legislature, but there is much more to consider.

Be well,

Rick

VIRTUAL TAX CAP & TAX LEVY ROUNDTABLE EVENT

INFORMATIONAL SESSION HOSTED BY:



JOIN **CNYSBA** AND DR. RICHARD TIMBS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE **STATE WIDE SCHOOL FINANCE CONSORTIUM (SSFC)** TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NYS TAX CAP, TAX LEVY, AND MORE.



DECEMBER 4TH, 2024



6:00PM-7:30PM VIA ZOOM



INFORMATION

Dr. Timbs will discuss What factors can alter the Tax Cap/Levy?, What control does a district have over the Tax Cap/Levy?, and More. He will also address the questions participants sent in prior or asked during the event.



HAVE QUESTIONS?

Do you have questions about the topic that you would like answered during the event?

Please send all questions to **Ashley Stoltz**, Executive Assistant of CNYSBA via email.



REGISTER TODAY!

Register for this event today by clicking the link below or going to our website directly. Questions can also be submitted with registration.

<https://cnysba.org/cnysba-events/>



www.cnysba.org



www.ssfcddata.org



ashley@cnysba.org

Falcon Ambassadors Strengthen the Sense of Community at PSLA at Fowler



Once a week during last period, a group of 15-20 seniors gathers with the school deans at PSLA at Fowler. They talk about upcoming events and how they can help.

New this August, the Falcon Ambassadors, as the students are named, have volunteered to get involved with all schoolwide events. They gave tours and talked about their Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs at the Freshman Orientation in August; they volunteered at the Back to School BBQ in September; and they guided parents to classrooms and answered questions at October's Curriculum Night.

“They help out with everything,” Dean of Students Quentin Scott explained.

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At a conference of professional educators last year, Mr. Scott heard staff from several other schools nationwide express how student mentoring programs were transforming their schools – so he brought it back to PSLA this year!

“As staff, we understand that sometimes students don't feel comfortable coming to staff with concerns,” Mr. Scott added. “Our Ambassadors help bridge that gap between students and staff. At PSLA, we have a strong focus on college and career readiness after high school. Our hope is that our Ambassadors will use this as experience as a resume builder for college and for job applications.”

Staff sought out good students who can sometimes fall under the radar, who are athletes, or who are heavily involved in their CTE programs. They also requested teacher recommendations.

“For me, it's about making a difference in the community,” senior Abdulahi Omar, a Law Enforcement



student, shared. “I get to be that helping hand. Everyone needs friends to lift them up in high school, instead of drag them down. Plus, it looks good on my college resume!”

Abdulahi hopes to study Political Science next year, with a minor in Pre-Law.

“When I was a freshman, I needed something like this to guide me,” senior Bra Aly, a Fire Rescue student, explained. “It can be so helpful to hear from someone who's not a teacher. In the lunch room, we invite the freshmen to join us. The freshmen see the teachers shouting us out in the hallway.. they look up to us. I like being able to show them that even if you had a rough start to the year, you can still turn things around.”

The benefits of the Falcon Ambassador program have extended far beyond just the freshmen, with staff noting the difference in behavior of the senior class as well.

“The freshmen conduct themselves differently around seniors,” Mr. Scott said. “They step their game up. And the seniors – some of whom were tearing up the building as freshmen – they have really developed a sense of pride through what they're doing. It gives them a chance to make an impact on the school.”

“The children are out future,” Dean of Students Nastassia Clarke added. “This group is a great representation of what our future will hold. This experience has given them great leadership skills.”

We're proud of the students who are serving as the first group of Falcon Ambassadors and can't wait to see their positive impact continue as the program expands!

Submitted by the Syracuse City School District



You're invited to learn more about the

CNY STEM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

DEC 9 • 3:30 - 4:30 PM • OCM BOCES



CNY STEM Scholarship Information Session

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9 • 3:30 - 4:30 PM • OCM BOCES

You're invited to join fellow teachers and counselors to learn more about the CNY STEM Scholarship program and how you can support high school seniors pursuing a college degree in a STEM-related field.

What is the CNY STEM Scholarship Program?

The program aims to build an inclusive and equitable STEM workforce in our community, create awareness among students and their families of the rewarding STEM career opportunities with local companies, and keep our hometown talent local after college graduation. The scholarships are based on applicants' academic achievements and extracurricular activities, as well as the essay and an interview. Each scholarship provides an internship.

Program Milestones:

110 Scholarships awarded.

\$1,068,000

Scholarship dollars awarded.

[Discover more](#) about the CNY STEM Scholarship Program.

Your participation and influence is invaluable to building awareness amongst students and their families about the CNY STEM Scholarship Program.

REGISTER NOW to attend and support students pursuing STEM-related fields

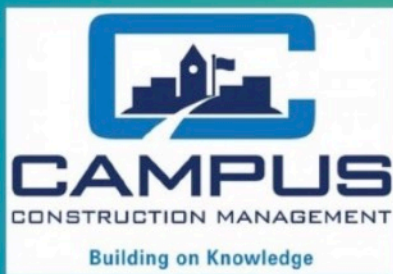
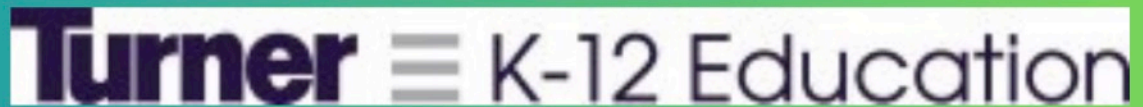


For more information, email pebteam@macny.org.



CENTRAL NEW YORK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Appreciates the Support of Our Business Sponsors:



UPCOMING CNYSBA EVENTS

December 2024

December 4th, 2024 – Round-Table Event – Tax Cap / Tax Levy Informational Session - 6:00pm-7:30pm – (Virtual)- [Click here to register.](#)

January 2025

January 13th, 2025 – Round-Table Event – Refresher The Budget Process for Board Members - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change* – (Virtual)

February 2025

February 6th, 2025 – TST BOCES Legislative Forum - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change – (In-Person)*

February 8th, 2025 – OCM BOCES Legislative Forum - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change – (In-Person)*

February 13th, 2025 – CiTi BOCES Legislative Forum - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change – (Virtual)*

February 15th, 2025 – Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Legislative Forum - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change – (Virtual)*

March 2025

March 26th, 2025 – Round-Table Event – Tax Cap / Tax Levy Informational Session - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change – (Virtual)*

April 2025

April 2nd, 2025 – Round-Table Event – Recruiting/Retention/Staffing Difficulties - *Time TBD – Date Subject to Change – (Virtual)*

May 2025

May 21st, 2025 – CNYSBA 42nd Annual Dinner – *Time TBD* – The Lodge in Skaneateles – In-Person.



www.SSFCdata.org

thankful
AND
grateful

*From All of us at
CNY SBA and SSFC -
Happy Thanksgiving!*