



# CNYSBA NEWS

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

## 5 CNY School Districts Reject Budgets; 2nd Votes Expected in June

There are five school districts in Central New York which rejected their school budgets during the vote on May 20, and one of those is in Onondaga County.

Central Square rejected a 6.8% tax levy increase, which needed a 60% super majority margin, by just nine votes. A recount performed by the school board confirmed the results.

Now, the district is looking to decide on how to proceed, which could mean a second and final vote coming in June.

[Read the complete story here from syracuse.com](http://www.syracuse.com)



## Budgets, Referenda, and Voter Support

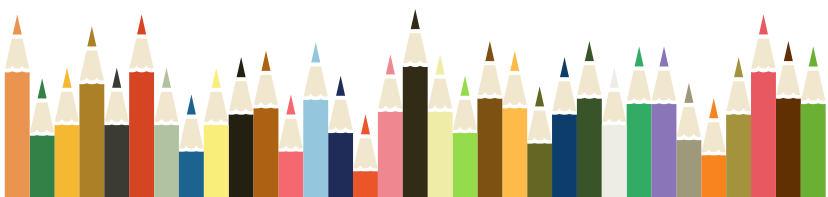
*By Dr. Rick Timbs SSFC, RGTimbs Inc.*

Budget season is over for most of us but not everyone prevailed unfortunately.

To those of you who passed their budgets and secured the ability to buy busses and capital projects  
**CONGRATULATIONS!**

But there are school districts whose budgets failed, and/or they were unable to buy buses, particularly electric buses.

*Continued on Page 3*



**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)

*Continued from Page 1*

The New York State School Boards Association has reported that “voters approved 97% of school district budgets” And further, that the “passage rates for budgets within the tax cap was 99% and 60% for budgets requiring tax cap overrides.” Additionally, “statewide, 42 districts sought approval to override their property tax caps this year... Of those seeking override, 25 budgets passed and 17 failed, a 59.5% approval rate.”.

NYSBBA goes on to further state that “school districts were able to limit their tax levy increases to an average of 2.61% statewide by holding the proposed spending increases to 3.66%.” As I look at these simple statistics it creates a bit of concern for me as I look forward to the future of school district finance.

There are lessons to be gleaned from all the NYSSBA statistics noted above.

First, care should be taken to avoid the supermajority, 60% voter approval requirement because it is a heavy lift. Even if your district did not seek a super majority this year or in years past, is there one in your future?

There is no substitute for continuous long-range financial analysis and planning. All long-range analysis and planning require specifically articulated school district strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the district’s finances and educational programs. This demands tough decisions that must be made and in a timely and thoughtful fashion. Also keep in mind that things that happen in school finance and within the implementation of our educational programs can occur unexpectedly, are no one’s fault, but nonetheless force deep analysis of options and swift action.

Second, messaging by the school district must reach district residents. The analysis and implementation of a plan must be understood and embraced by district residents, so the voters are “on board” not just a recipient of the information. Even if your school district is not eyeing a potential supermajority situation, these steps are still necessary.

Third, let’s not forget that some districts are really struggling or about to start struggling financially based on critical factors of school finance. Expenses are escalating faster than revenues. The cost of health insurance, pensions, salaries, and essential programs specially designed for students with special needs are beginning to outstrip the increases in revenues of all types, including state aid.

Competition to secure teachers in key areas of our instructional programs, building administrators, business officials and superintendents has never been more visible now than in recent memory, at least to me. The complicated matter of trying to find qualified candidates for the operations and maintenance of the school buildings as well as a cadre of bus drivers to meet the needs of each school district is also identified as a statewide problem.

Fourth, there are a myriad of demographic issues in every district from declining enrollment, to increased number of students with special needs, from and aging resident populations who may be perhaps skeptical of the costs of modern school district finances and their missions, to high expectations by parents to provide all types of programs, course offerings and activities, from the family and student emotional and mental needs and other support issues, to the reasonable wherewithal of the school district to provide them.

School district complex systems of education, finance, governance, hierarchy in a largely public setting are difficult to contribute to, manage and lead. They are subject the scrutiny from multiple settings and points of view both aspirational and parochial simultaneously.

I am happy for those of you whose budgets passed, and I wish the best for those school districts that fell short in May, but let's all reach out and support each other as the next few years could be a challenge for all of us.

### **On the Foundation Aid front**

There were changes to Foundation aid, including a more recent census data asset, and the substitution of "economically disadvantaged" data set in the place of and exclusive Free and reduced-price lunch counts. The latter data set needs more scrutiny but appears to be a move in the right direction. There were also changes to the state sharing ratio calculations to help higher needs districts. A change to the Regional cost index, while an attempt to help Westchester County school districts does nothing for anyone else and will end up making future changes undesirable.

But most of these were the easiest improvements to accomplish. More needs to be done. Although the sparsity factor can help many rural districts, I contend it does not help enough and simple incremental changes to that formula could have been a big help. Thoughtful incremental change is all we have ever requested for Foundation Aid improvement and most recently the Rockefeller Commission. But state government truly never embraces the idea. Instead, after exhaustive efforts to get them to commit to improvements, they historically move at a snail's pace or sometimes not at all. But I must acknowledge improvements were made.

We must renew our effort to improve the Foundation Aid formula. I'm gearing up right now. I've still got a big list!

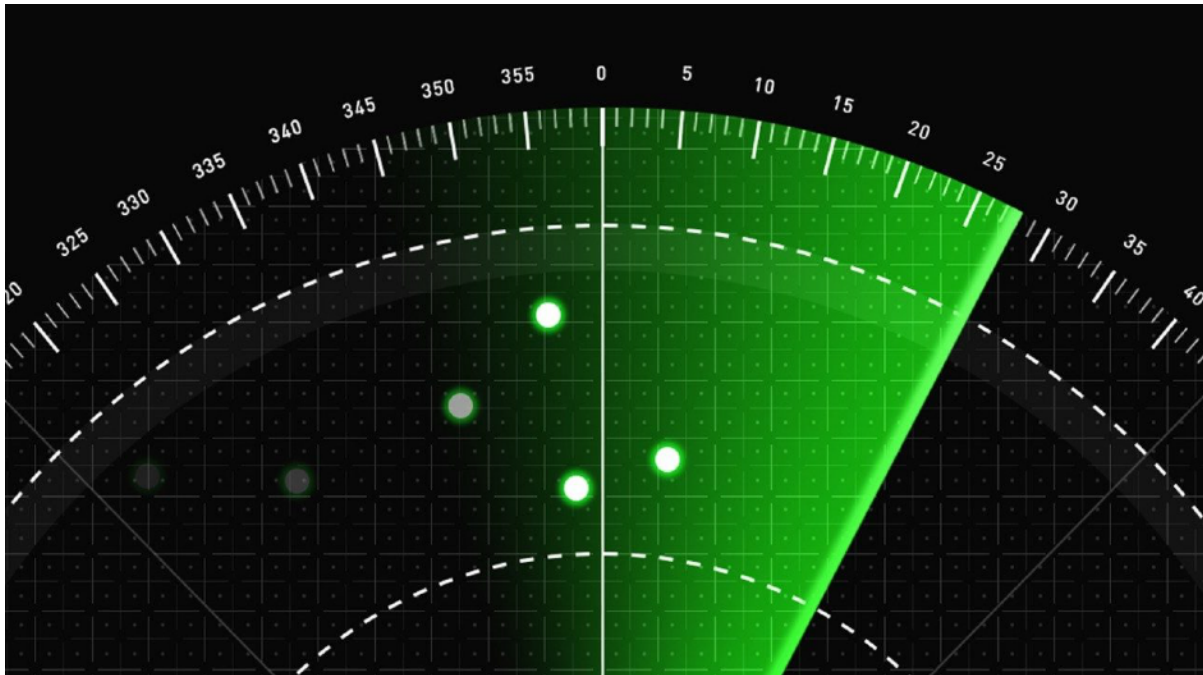
Be well,

Rick





# Keep These Events On Your Radar



## May 2025

Last Call!!! May 29th, 2025 – CNYSBA 42nd Annual Dinner –  
5:00pm to 8:00pm – The Lodge in Skaneateles –  
\$60/pp – [click here to register](#).

## TBD Events for 2025 - 2026

DATE TBD – Round-Table Event – Mental Health Awareness –  
(Virtual)

DATE TBD – Round-Table Event – Recruiting/Retention/StaFing  
DiFiculties – (Virtual)



# Corcoran Fashion Club Provides Outlet for Future Fashion Leaders



“If Pinterest was a person... that’s her!”

Corcoran senior Janzel Santa laughed amicably as he pointed to Fashion Club Advisor Amorie Green, noting her impressive DIY skills and eye for design.

During Janzel’s freshman year, there was an after-school club where students could learn about fashion history – but he wanted to see it remixed – he wanted the opportunity to do hands-on projects and show his own creativity. Janzel plans to major in fashion design and photography at college next year, with the hope of eventually becoming a magazine photographer. So, his sophomore year, he approached his English teacher, Ms. Green. With her support, they formed the Corcoran Fashion Club, now in its third year.

Once a week after school, the group gathers to make friendship bracelets, tie dye, decorate tote bags, and more. Each meeting starts with a group conversation about the hopes, goals, and plans for the Fashion Club.

This year, for example, the group hopes to implement a bigger project tied into the school's Black History Month celebration. Last school year, a local organization donated sewing machines to their group, and now their goal is to create upcycled fashion that they can display through a fashion show at the event.

"I really like fashion, so when I heard about the Fashion Club this year, I had to join," junior Olivia Smith said. "I'd love to be able to start getting fabrics and start making clothes. My goal is to become a fashion designer one day. Our school doesn't have anything else like this – it's given me something other than cheerleading that I feel passionate about."



In the past, the group has even gone on a field trip to go thrift shopping together.

"That was definitely my favorite thing we've done so far," Janzel recalled. "It was really fun to check out the stores, and we made it a competition to see who could make the cutest outfit. A lot of times, school is all about academics or all about sports. Creative outlets can be limited during school hours, so this group gives us another place to express ourselves. My hope is that we can start using the sewing machines so those who take over the club in future years can learn about sewing and actually make outfits."

As he speaks, his classmates nod in affirmation, their excitement clear.

"It's an important space to create," Ms. Green shared of the club. "It gives them a wind down and a space to mentally decompress after the hustle and bustle of the school day. It gives them a place to talk to each other and create and have that outlet."



## 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