

CNY CNYSBA NEWS

CENTRAL NEW YORK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students



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Webster Student Council Creates School's Behavior Expectations

In grade-level assemblies, Webster students learned about this year's behavior expectations for students in the hallways and on the stairs, in the cafeteria, in the bathroom, in the classroom, on the bus, and on the playground.

They learned the actions they can take to help keep them safe, respectful, responsible, and ready to learn.

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Last school year, the Webster Student Council – elected by their peers – was given the important task of drafting their own set of behavior guidelines. These guidelines were later approved by school staff; and to start this school year, the group created a presentation to share with the entire school community.

“This is the first year that the students created the behavioral matrix,” Webster AIS teacher and DEB Lead Katie Cleveland explained. “The students were so thoughtful and they engaged in some incredible conversations about what they thought the expectations should be and how to word them so they were easily understood by all students. We are so proud of our student leaders!”

Students noted that they wanted to keep the guidelines accessible to all and used the standard rules like ‘no running’ as a basis for their list.

“I had spent four years in elementary school when I was asked to do this, so I knew I’d be able to contribute some good ideas,” 5th grader Aimeek Wemene shared. “I hope we created rules that kids will actually follow! It feels good to do something for my school – I feel proud to have my voice heard. Being on Student Council is fun, because we’re part of the school’s leadership. My goal is to help other students be successful!”

“It was nice to be chosen to help come up with the behavior expectations,” 5th grader Ruby Broadnix added. “Kids can get tired of hearing adults telling them the rules, so it was nice to be able to talk to them ourselves... even though we were really scared to present to the whole school!”

We’re proud of the Webster Student Council leaders for taking ownership and being leaders in their building!

Finally.... Thanks to a wonderful collaboration between the Manufacturer’s Association of Central New York, SRC, Inc, National Grid, and the United Way of Central New York, some lucky Dr. Weeks 3rd graders recently became engineers for a day. In celebration of NYS Manufacturing Month, representatives from SRC, National Grid and MACNY read the book All About Smart Manufacturing and then invited students to participate in a tower building challenge!



While We Are All Trying Our Best... There is Something Else Going On as We Approach This New Budget Season

By Dr. Rick Timbs



While we are all trying our best to keep our budget stable taxes affordable and programs robust there is more going on than just what is going on in our school districts. Our school districts right now have a lot to celebrate; we have done an impressive job of educating children, making sure families are taken care of, and the community is proud of their school district. But we rely heavily not only on local taxpayer funds but also state and federal funds. And this is something we are going to have to keep an eye on... state and federal funds.

In the most recent Office of the Comptroller report by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. Di Napoli, he points out his concerns regarding state funds. The report is entitled **Report on a State Fiscal Year 2026 Enacted Budget and First Quarterly Financial Plans** dated August 2025. His introductory remarks are a cautionary message:



Even without accounting for federal cuts, the Financial Plan paints a challenging picture, indicating a softening economy and spending growth that have increased the State's budget gaps to a cumulative total of \$34.3 billion for the Financial Plan period. When some of the enacted federal cuts to healthcare and nutritional assistance are added to the already-high

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high out-year budget gaps, the State is facing gaps relative to spending projections that are comparable to those faced in April 2009 – when the State was reeling from the Global Financial Crisis. The recent release of the First Quarterly Update to the Financial Plan has reinforced these concerns.

With the topic of **Growing Budget gaps and structural imbalance** the state report says:

According to the Division of the Budget's (DOB) FY 2026 NYS Enacted Budget Financial Plan (the "Financial Plan"), SFY 2026 All Funds disbursements are projected to total \$254.4 billion, compared to \$249.2 billion in All Funds receipts. On a year-over-year basis, All Funds disbursements are projected to grow by \$12.9 billion (5.3 percent) while revenues are projected to increase by \$241 million (0.1 percent). State Operating Funds (SOF) disbursements are projected to grow by \$12.4 billion (9.3 percent) and General Fund disbursements by \$16.8 billion (15.5 percent) in SFY 2026.

...The rise in projected budget gaps do not take into account any financial impact from the federal funding changes – signed into law by the President on July 4, 2025, subsequent to the release of the Financial Plan – and is instead attributable to (1) downward revisions to the economic forecast, and in turn, projected revenues; and (2) increases in projected spending. On July 25, 2025, DOB released the First Quarterly Update to the FY 2026 NYS Enacted Budget Financial Plan, which largely hewed to the Enacted Budget projections.

These data are based on a series of assumptions that do not always play out but are highly probable. It should be no different for school districts. Long range planning should be part of our annual routine as we examine our history of revenues and expenditures and try to predict with a certain amount of realism where those expenditures and revenues are going over the next five years.

What should school districts do?

Interestingly the predicted imbalance between revenues and expenditures In the predicted state budgets looking out over a number of years rings true for school district budgets as well, particularly over this next fiscal year. Many of my workshops have contained references to the fact that expenses are growing at an alarming rate compared to revenues for school districts. The result will be a tapping of fund balances and reserves over time. These predictions in planning are essential so that informed decisions can be made to ensure school district financial potency over the next five years.

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The Revenue Side of the Budget

Obviously, our major revenue streams are taxes and state aid. Control over state aid is exceedingly difficult. Although we may try to maximize it as best we can, the formulas are just set in stone. There is some leverage with taxes, and the tax cap becomes an important part of our analysis. Within the tax cap calculation, we cannot control inflation, we cannot control the growth of our tax base and in many cases the existence of PILOT agreements, however we do have control over our local capital exclusion. We have to concentrate on that to make sure that we can keep the tax gap as level as possible. Taxpayers do not like undulating tax caps going up and down.

So basically, we do not have a lot of control over revenues into we deny ourselves revenues by going under the tax cap.



Fund Balances and Reserves

Recent interest earnings have helped many school districts as they have invested wisely over the last two years by placing any unneeded funds based on their cash flow and high interest-bearing accounts. How long those high interest rates will continue is anyone's guess.

There are some districts that have not only significant fund balances, but they have been able to use their reserves to their advantage particularly using capital reserves for such things as capital improvement projects, purchases of vehicles, buses, and equipment. Additionally, they cleverly use capital reserves for such things as classroom furniture that is not normally aid eligible inside a building project. The wonderful thing about capital reserves is that you are paying cash- no interest payments- full benefit to the district. It is also important to note that capital reserves require voter approval to create and voter approval to expend money from, which aids in the transparency issues faced by many school districts regarding finances.

Every school district should have a board of education approved reserve plan and it should be renewed annually.

The Expense Side of the Budget

Throughout the most recent COVID era we have seen a tremendous increase in expenditures as districts have hired additional staff and competed for staff to negate the harmful effects Covid had on our students' success. From around 2021 through the current school year districts have tried to make up for the loss of learning time due to COVID and that has come at a cost that has been in many cases supported almost completely by federal funds. However, now that the federal funds have been completely exhausted, school districts must examine their staffing patterns and enrollments to begin to right-size their expenditures relative to the general decline in student populations, yet a growing influx of students with special needs.

For almost all school districts in the state of New York there has been a significant enrollment decline over even just the last five years. Therefore, many policy makers and those who study education finance who are not educators, are quick to point out that many school districts appear to be over-staffed. The degree to that which that is true would be determined by every school district but there is no doubt the cost of staff is expensive. And there are a number of reasons for it. There's key competition to try and secure staff for certain positions including but not just bus drivers, maintenance mechanics, groundskeepers, and the like but also dual certified teachers, teachers of foreign languages, and higher-level science and math teachers. And the competition is keen, therefore the price/cost/expense is going to go up.

Regarding staffing, also consider employee/retiree benefits. Over the years there have been significant increases in pension costs for both the ERS and TRS pension systems, as well as recent health insurance premiums, Social Security costs and post-retirement benefits. These alone can have a significant impact on a budget over the next five years.

Summary

With revenues moving in inches, we see expenses moving in feet. That means the district will need to rely more on fund balances and reserves. During the COVID era there were significant opportunities for school districts to build reserves and fund balances and for those that did they will stay financially healthy longer; for those that did not, they will begin to struggle sooner than the rest.

We must renew our effort to improve the Foundation Aid formula. I am gearing up right now. I have still got an extensive list!

Be well,

Rick



RURAL SCHOOLS ISSUES FORUMS ARE STATE WIDE!

- October 23
New York City
- October 28
Plattsburgh
- November 3
Newark
- November 4
Canandaigua
- November 5
Orleans Niagara
- November 6
Wayland-Cohocton
- November 11
Central New York (via Zoom)
- November 12
Fulton Montgomery
- November 12
Herkimer
- November 17
Chautauqua (in Ashville)
- November 18
Painted Post
- November 19
Ellenville
- November 24
Saratoga County
- December 3
Jefferson Central School



WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

RURAL SCHOOLS ISSUES FORUM

**November 11, 2025
6:00pm – 8:00pm**



VIA ZOOM - REGISTER AT THE LINK BELOW!

<https://bit.ly/cnysba-zoom>

To be sure that state and federal leaders are provided the most recent and relevant information about the needs, challenges and ideas of our state's rural communities (and the schools they support), The Rural Schools Association is partnering with the Central New York School Boards Association to host a rural issues forum.

We hope to hear from school leaders, business community leaders, higher education officials, as well as community members, students and parents. We will note all of your comments and incorporate them into a policy brief and legislative platform.

Because we cover a large geographic area, this forum is being held over Zoom. Let's make sure Central New York is front and center in state and federal policy-join us!

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS IN ADVANCE AND READ WHAT OTHERS HAVE SHARED AT RSA'S DIGITAL THOUGHT EXCHANGE!

Simply scan the code or visit <https://bit.ly/ruralforum> to participate in our online Thought Exchange.

Your feedback will help guide the efficient and effective use of resources in support of rural students and education as we continue to work on behalf of rural communities.



There is no cost for this program thanks to a generous sponsorship from New York State Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR).



STEAM High School



The City of Syracuse, the Syracuse City School District, and Onondaga County are teaming up for the area's first-ever STEAM high school. It'll feature a STEAM-focused curriculum and is open to students from SCSD and any Central New York school district.

Endorsed CTE Program Concentrations (Majors & Minors)

- Business Entrepreneurship
- Construction Management
- Data Analytics
- Entertainment Engineering
- Animation & Gaming
- Robotics/Automation
- Semi-Conductor Manufacturing Technology
- Visual & Performing Arts

All high school students are eligible to participate.

- Baldwinsville
- Cazenovia
- Chittenango
- Cincinnatus
- Cortland
- DeRuyter
- East Syracuse Minoa
- Fabius-Pompey
- Fayetteville-Manlius
- Homer
- Jamesville-DeWitt
- LaFayette
- Liverpool
- Lyncourt
- Marathon
- Marcellus
- McGraw
- North Syracuse
- Onondaga Central
- Solvay
- Tully
- West Genesee
- Westhill
- City of Syracuse

Key Points

- A NYS Public High School
- Open to Any Rising 9th Grader (2025-26)
- No Charge to Parents or Students
- BOCES Aidable
- State-of-the-Art Facility
- College Credits and Nationally Recognized Stackable Industry Credentials at No Cost to Students
- Internships + Mentorships

Scan to Request More Information



Contact Jody F. Manning, Executive Director of the STEAM school, at jmanning@scsd.us, Dan Straub, Regional STEAM Principal, DStraub@scsd.us, or your child's school counselor for more information.

LIVE2LEAD



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Coach, Speaker,
Author, and Former
NFL Player



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Top 50 Business
Thinker in the World



JOHN C. MAXWELL
#1 Leadership Expert
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Bananas and Creator of
Banana Ball

A ONE-DAY LEADERSHIP RETREAT:

A John Maxwell Broadcast & Discussion

LIVE2LEAD is a leader development experience designed to equip you with new perspectives, practical tools, and key takeaways. You'll breathe new life into your leadership during this information-packed event.

Join us as David Freund leads the live discussion and guides us through a day of growth. You'll learn from world-class leadership experts and return to your office ready to implement your new action plan and lead with renewed passion and commitment.

DAVID FREUND

Chief Leadership Officer at
MACNY, The Manufacturers
Association



Presented by MACNY,
The Manufacturers Association.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7

9AM - 3PM

THE LODGE IN SKANEATELES, NY



CENTRAL NEW YORK SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION



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OF DIRECTORS FOR CNYSBA



HELP



FILL OUR **VACANCIES**

ARE YOU....?

- Involved with a current CNYSBA Member School District?
- Currently a sitting Board of Education Member for a District or BOCES?**
- Passionate about supporting public education across the CNY region?
- Able to attend VIRTUAL Board Meetings via Zoom?**

VACANCIES:

CAYUGA-ONONDAGA BOCES

***** 3 OPEN SEATS *****

CORTLAND-MADISON BOCES

***** 2 OPEN SEATS *****

TOMPKINS-SENECA-TIOGA BOCES

***** 1 OPEN SEAT *****

INTERESTED? , QUESTIONS?, WANT TO LEARN MORE?

EMAIL THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - DERRICK DORSEY TO DISCUSS THIS OPPORTUNITY FURTHER!!!



DERRICK@CNYSBA.ORG



CNYSBA 2025

NYS Mandated for New Board Members

FINANCE TRAINING

NOVEMBER 8TH, 2025

This is a one-day training for New Board of Education Members that is held at CNYSBA office located at 5788 Widewaters Parkway Syracuse, NY 13214. A certificate of completion is provided to all participants and district clerks upon completion.

Topics Discussed:

- ✓ What the Law Requires of Board Members
- ✓ Internal Auditors & Audit Committee
- ✓ Preventing and Detecting Fraud
- ✓ Internal Controls & Risk Assessments
- ✓ The Budget Process
- ✓ Understanding Reports and Monitoring Your Districts Financial Condition

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FOR MORE INFO :
www.cnysba.org

**WE WANT
TO FEATURE
YOU!**

IN OUR NEWSLETTER!

We are looking for our members to submit a student, staff, or company highlight for our newsletter.

Did a student(s) in your district do something amazing?

Did a staff member go above and beyond?

Did or is your company doing something great in our community?

We want to showcase all the great things that our members are doing to make an impact!

**WANT MORE INFORMATION? INTERESTED IN SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE?
EMAIL US AT ASHLEY@CNYSBA.ORG**



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Investing in Leadership, Education, and Community Success

At the Central New York School Boards Association (CNYSBA), our Business Partners are more than sponsors—they are trusted allies in our mission to strengthen public education. Their generous support fuels professional development, leadership training, and resources that help school board members rise to the growing responsibilities of serving their communities.

A Shared Commitment to Public Education

Our Business Partners represent a diverse network of companies that share a deep commitment to the future of public education. Each partner brings unique expertise and services that directly benefit our school districts—whether through legal guidance, construction excellence, insurance solutions, or innovative design. We are proud to recognize and work alongside these organizations whose values align with our mission

Support Those Who Support You

We encourage our members to explore and connect with the businesses that make our work possible.

By choosing to work with CNYSBA Business Partners, you are reinvesting in the strength and success of Central New York's schools.

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