



CNYSBA NEWS

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students

NYSSBA: Delegates Respond to Issues of the Day

*Including AI, Financial
Literacy, Vouchers*

*By Matt DeLaus, Government
Relations Council*

School board members representing hundreds of member school boards participated in NYSSBA's 106th Annual Business Meeting, conducted for the sixth year in a virtual format. On Oct. 16, 2025, delegates supported incorporating financial literacy and artificial intelligence into K-12 curriculum statewide, with state support for implementation of both.

Delegates also re-adopted a position to oppose proposals that would provide tuition tax credits or educational vouchers that benefit private or parochial schools.

Continued on Page 6



Here Are Some Thoughts as We Prepare for a Legislative Initiative

By Dr. Rick Timbs

There is no doubt that the 2026-27 school budget year will be difficult for both school districts, the New York State legislature, and governor.

Continued on the next page





Foundation Aid

- The foundation amount must be updated significantly to include the vast expansion of services schools are required to offer. We also recommend the efficiency filter be eliminated to ensure a true average cost educating students is included.
- The CPI factor used in the formula should be changed to a 5-year average CPI for the Northeast Region.
- English Language Learner counts should be weighted in the formula based on the level of services required to assist the students to reach proficiency. The weighting should start at .75.
- The nine Regional Cost Indexes should be replaced with the National Center for Education Statics Comparable Wage Index for Teachers (CWIFT). This factor is a more accurate representation of the local labor market.
- The Income Wealth Index would be more reflective of district wealth if the floor were removed from the formula, therefore this change should be made.

- The formula should allow for flexibility to select varied weightings of the CWR depending on the mix of property and income wealth factors in a district.

In addition, there are factors that should be improved upon study, or possibly removed, if proven to benefit school districts, from the foundation aid formula.

Such as:

- Students with Disabilities – the costs associated with meeting the needs of this population are not currently fairly funded by the state or federal government.
- In any case, the weighting is not reflective of the actual cost of educating these needy children. The weighting should start at 2.0.
- Portions of the formula to meet their intended purpose, need improvement to appropriately help school districts.
- Sparsity – the impact of the cost of the education of students in a rural area is not being accounted for in the foundation aid formula. The formula needs to be significantly improved to yield a factor that truly helps rural school districts.
- Remove all caps from the formulas that begin to would diminish needed and improved weighting to ELL, economically disadvantaged, or any other measures of poverty.
- Set asides for things like community schools or other initiatives should not come from the foundation aid amount allocated to a district for regular operations.
- Any renewed recommendations around the use of fund balance over the 4% allowed by law to be applied against save-harmless allocations while other districts

Continued on the next page

are allowed to retain 10% fund balance is not acceptable. This will result in a greater reduction in aid to higher need schools.

- We reject any recommendations to remove save-harmless funding from the formula.
- Save Harmless school district should be provided with funding improvements to match the rate of inflation.

Expense Driven Aids

- Aid categories such as Transportation, Building, and BOCES should continue to be fully funded as the services are critical to the operation of the school district. The aid amounts are related to district spending and poverty levels in a community.

Fund Balance

- School Districts are currently allowed to maintain up to 4 percent of the following year's budget in unrestricted, unallocated fund balance. The Government Finance Officers Association recommends that public entities retain at least two months (or 16 percent) of operating expenses to ensure the sustainability of programs.
 - Leaders in school districts are particularly concerned about long-range sustainability, and districts would benefit from the ability to maintain rainy day funds to weather unforeseeable impacts to their budgets and would therefore support a change to legislation that allows a 10 percent fund balance.

Zero-Emission Buses

- In the 2023 enacted state budget, there was a new mandate placed upon schools to move to zero-emission school vehicles (including buses) by 2035.
 - While some school districts have successfully navigated the financial and other factors that have enabled them to meet this mandate to date, a vast majority have not.
 - Leaders have expressed their concerns over the cost of required changes to facilities, equipment, operations, and the level of electrical consumption. There is also concern about the viability of using zero-emission buses over our large, challenging geography.
 - The technology for zero-emission buses is evolving quickly, and school districts could be able to move in this direction in a safer and more efficient way, with additional time for implementation.
 - We would support additional feasibility studies and full-district transportation pilots to understand the long-term implication and cost of this mandate.

Continued on the next page

- State funding should be granted for planning and studies related to this law.
- The 100% implementation requirement should be revised.
- Districts should be allowed to move to low-emission buses rather than zero-emission buses, if this is a more feasible approach due to limitation around purchase, routing, or power sources.
- State approved amortization and lease terms should be aligned with the expected useful life of a new vehicle. The movement from 12 years to 8 years was not enough.
 - The Rockefeller Institute recommends full funding by NYS.
- Building aid must allow for updates to infrastructure to meet this requirement. This includes updates to garages, parking lots, and bus depots.
- Establish a pathway for districts to comply with the law in the event of a failed bond vote to purchase zero-emission buses.
- This initiative must be pushed back ten years.

New Mandates

- School leaders recognize the need to address the changing educational environment through updates to regulations and legislation. These updates often have financial implications for school districts. As updates are contemplated and enacted, appropriate levels of funding for districts should be provided to meet these regulatory and legislative mandates.

I want to acknowledge the substantial contribution of the **ONC BOCES Regional Legislative Committee Agenda from October 2025 to this newsletter article.**

Be well,

Rick



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.

The re-adoption of this resolution is especially timely given the ability of states to opt into the recently created federal voucher program.

The closest vote of the evening involved a proposal that, if passed, would have directed NYSSBA to advocate for reducing the number of required lockdown drills from four to two. This position, which was recommended by the Resolutions Committee, was ultimately voted down with 53% of delegates opposed. As was the case for the entire meeting, delegates spoke passionately for and against the resolution. But in stark contrast to political discourse across the country, the debate was civil and always focused on serving students, staff and communities.



One of the most lopsided votes of the night concerned whether NYSSBA should "advocate for school board members to be recognized for their service via a locally authorized property tax exemption." Only 6% of delegates voted in favor. This is reminiscent of a separate proposition that was voted down in the 2022 Annual Business Meeting, which would have authorized school board members to receive a stipend for their service.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, three newly proposed resolutions received 95% or more support. All looked to ask the state, either directly or by empowering districts, to address rising costs:

- Authorizing districts and BOCES to create health insurance reserve funds.
- Increasing reimbursement rates for out-of-district special education placements to reflect true and current costs.
- Maximizing the effectiveness of the New York Liquidation Bureau with respect to Child Victims Act claims.

Other adopted resolutions that look to address rising needs and cost pressures direct NYSSBA to advocate for necessary funding for A/C and subsequent electrical needs in all public school buildings. Also, delegates instructed NYSSBA to call on the state to explicitly authorize BOCES to establish and maintain workers' compensation reserve funds.

Other resolutions were adopted that ask the state and federal governments to expand the authority of schools by allowing districts to serve whole milk in school meals and to have the power to authorize a staff member or clinical designee to evaluate, diagnose, temporarily treat and prescribe medications for students on campus, in accordance with state law and parental permissions.

Three resolutions were passed overwhelmingly with no debate. These included proposals to:

- Reform legal notice publication requirements.
- Limit districts' potential annual hold harmless phase out to no more than 2% of their district budget, even if that would extend the length of the phaseout period.
- Establish a budget threshold in the foundation aid formula to protect rural districts with low enrollment covering large areas.

NYSSBA's Resolutions Committee, which is a group of board members charged with reviewing all resolutions and bylaw amendments submitted by member boards of education and the NYSSBA Board of Directors, and whose membership shifts annually, recommended 23 resolutions and did not recommend 11 resolutions. Of the 23 recommended, 22 passed; of the 11 not recommended, two were passed. Also defeated were three proposed bylaw amendments which were not recommended by the Resolutions Committee.

Delegates directed NYSSBA to advocate for up to 30 minutes a day of recess to count as instructional time. Another resolution to make recess mandatory for elementary students was not recommended by the Resolutions Committee but was adopted by delegates after amendments.

Another resolution originally not recommended by the Resolutions Committee but amended and ultimately adopted directs NYSSBA to support allowing reorganization aid to support regional schools and other forms of regional reorganization and collaboration. An additional resolution directs NYSSBA to support legislation authorizing multiple districts to create a regional high school.

Seven positions that were set to expire were re-adopted by delegates. These included positions to:

- Oppose expansion of mayoral control.
- Support enhancing of shared services.
- Address costs and administrative burdens of legal actions related to special education placements and services.
- Incorporate pre-kindergarten funding into the school aid formulas used for K-12 education.
- Direct NYSSBA to develop and make widely available a board policy related to child abuse, including periodic training for all staff.
- Oppose any increases to the authorized number of charter schools in the state.
- Advocate for changes to the statewide testing system, with a collaborative approach to developing those changes.

Delegates also elected the following members of NYSSBA's board of directors to serve as officers: Christine Schnars as president, Rodney George as first vice president and Brian LaTourette as second vice president. Delegates voted to have Thomas Nespeca continue as treasurer.

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

RURAL SCHOOLS ISSUES



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

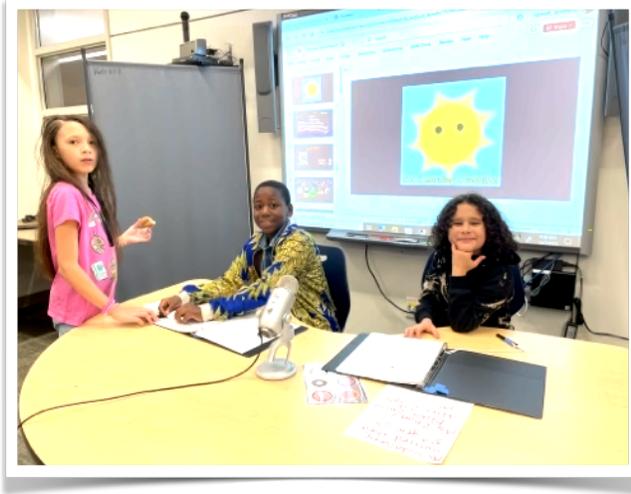
Simply scan the code or visit <https://bit.ly/ruralforum> to participate in our online Thought Exchange.

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.



Dr. Weeks Media Group Shares ‘Late Breaking News’ with School Community

From Syracuse City Schools



“What buses are we waiting for?” a student asked from the news desk in the school library.

“None! All buses are here,” teacher Jennifer Blansett answered.

It was two minutes to showtime, and the Dr. Weeks 5th graders sitting at the anchor desk were reviewing their scripts. At promptly 9:35 am, the camera in front of them would turn on, broadcasting their makeshift studio to the entire school on a live Microsoft Teams video.

“Good morning, Dr. Weeks! My name is Anoki.”

The two student news anchors led the students through the Pledge of Allegiance, the day’s lunch menu, an attendance reminder, interesting holidays (this particular day was National Chocolate Covered Pretzel Day), and the school affirmation. A classmate sat nearby off screen, keeping an eye on the Teams chat to jump in with any breaking news – forgotten birthdays, last minute events, and the like.

“I am optimistic that this experience will help encourage our students to attend school every day,” Ms. Blansett said. “Students who want to be broadcasters have to show that they are serious about school and have good attendance. I am hopeful that students will become better public speakers and improve their reading abilities.”

The students also work together to make decisions about who has what role behind the scenes; and the experienced members of the news crew work to “train” new students joining the team each week.

5th grader Safi Salehe started working with the media group last year when her best friend signed up. She enjoyed it so much that she has stayed an active participant this year.

“I like starting the day here and putting together the news for the day,” Safi shared. “My friends think it’s cool that I get to be on the screen every day!”

Philip Faraja was preparing for his first-ever role as news anchor.

“I wanted to be part of this group because I like to tell people about important stuff happening in our school and I want people to know me,” he explained. “My sisters and brothers will see me doing this and think it’s so cool. It makes me want to have good attendance so I can be part of the show!”

We’re proud of these students for being leaders in their building!

CENTRAL NEW YORK SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION



JOIN OUR BOARD

OF DIRECTORS FOR CNYSBA



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

D.A.S.A



The Dignity Act: From Compliance to Culture With Roseann Bayne

Gain clarity on the true purpose of the Dignity Act. Explore how dignity-centered implementation shifts the focus from punishment to repairing harm, fostering belonging, and improving climate and culture. Learn practical ways school boards can support administrators and educators in creating safe, respectful, and inclusive environments when the Act is implemented with fidelity.

This training is designed for school board members who want to understand their role in ensuring the Dignity Act fulfills its promise of protecting every student's right to learn in an environment grounded in dignity.

Join Us!

Wednesday , Dec. 3rd @ CiTi BOCES

179 County Rte 64, Mexico, NY 13114
Stern Education Bldg, Conference Room #127

A light Dinner will be provided

Food @ 5:30

Program Starts @ 6 PM

RSVP to TCiappa@Oswego.org
by Weds. Nov. 26th





Explore careers in engineering, manufacturing, and science through hands-on activities with amazing local women in these industries!



For: Girls in 6th–8th grades and guests

When: 10–11am, second Saturday of the month, October–May

Where: The MOST, 500 S. Franklin St, Syracuse (Armory Square)

FREE participation and museum admission for students and families



2025–2026 Schedule

OCT 11	Schneider Packaging The Human Superpower Behind Robots	FEB 14	IBEW LU 43 Time to Turn On the Lights
NOV 8	Hueber-Breuer Build the Future: Girls on Site	MAR 14	LOTTE Biologics The Fascinating Science Behind Medicine: A Hands-On Discovery
DEC 13	Cornell Cooperative Extension Madison County Very Berry DNA: Farming, Forensics & Future Scientists	APR 11	Crouse The Most Amazing “Machine” is Closer Than You Think! (It’s You!)
JAN 10	Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo & Budmen Industries Questions, Creatures, and Conservation	MAY 9	INFICON Spark & Stitch: Hands-on Electronics



Learn more and register online at most.org/future-women-in-stem



**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**



BUSINESS PARTNERS

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.

CURRENT CENTRAL NEW YORK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION BUSINESS PARTNERS



AUCTIONS INTERNATIONAL

BOND SCHOENECK & KING



CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT GROUP

C & S COMPANIES



EASTERN SHORE INSURANCE AGENCY

FERRARA FIORENZA



KING & KING ARCHITECTS



LECHASE CONSTRUCTION

TURNER CONSTRUCTION

