



CNYSBA NEWS

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students

So, You Want to Be a Board Member?

Zoom Event

Coming Up in

April

Have you or someone you know thought about becoming a Board of Education Member for your local school district?

Are you wondering what a Board of Education does and what kind of commitment it takes to become a board member?

Contact CNYSBA Executive Assistant Ashley Stoltz today at 315-463-1904 to register now.



School District Budget/ Legislative Season: So much to think about... Part 2

By Dr. Rick Timbs

One House Budgets vs. The Executive Budget: a General Summary

Executive Budget

- Foundation Aid: Funds current formula, with no changes or improvements to the formula
- Offers 1% increase to Save-Harmless Districts
- Funds Opt-in UPK programs with more robust funding
- Mandates UPK full day programs 2028-29.
- No Changes to the Zero Emission Bus mandate
- No funding for prior year claims

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Assembly Proposals

- Foundation Aid: Offers 2% increase to Save-Harmless Districts
- Adds new .65 weighting for Homeless and foster care students.
- Remove PNI Cap of 2.0
- Funds Opt-in UPK programs with more robust funding
- Mandates UPK full day programs 2028-29
- Offers \$100 million for Zero-Emission buses and infrastructure through Sustainable Futures Program
- Offers \$326 million to pay off all current claims prior to the previous year.
- Accept Executive proposal for renewable energy projects.

Senate Proposals

- Foundation Aid: Offers 2% increase to Save-Harmless Districts
- Adds new .12 weighting for Homeless and foster care students.
- Offers increased ELL weighting from .53 to .60.
- Funds Opt-in UPK programs with more robust funding
- Mandates UPK full day programs 2028-29
- Offers to make UPK transportation aid eligible.
- Offers \$100 million for Zero-Emission infrastructure through Sustainable Futures Program
- Provides Building Aid for required infrastructure for storage, charging and operations for Zero-Emission bus mandate.
- Offers \$18 million to restore the proper year claims initiative eliminated in 2022-23.
- Accept Executive proposal for renewable energy projects.
- Increase Capital Outlay limit from \$100,000 to \$250,000.
- Increase Transportation Aid for “High Need“ school districts.
- Increase Library Materials aid from \$6.25 to \$11.33.
- Increase funding to support special needs student to age 22.

Save- Harmless school districts:

The numbers of Save-Harmless school districts have risen over the last few years, despite the most recent changes in the formula for 2025-26 Foundation Aid. Absent significant changes to the underfunded Foundation Amount (Adjusted Foundation Amount (AFA)) as well as other changes such as major increases in weighting of students with special needs (SWD weighting) and increased weighting for students such as the economically disadvantaged and ELL areas for instance, joined with additional financial considerations for homeless and foster care students, Save-Harmless school districts designations for 2026-27 could continue to rise compared to 2025-26.

All school districts:

It is surprising how a solid financial school district budget plan can deteriorate over a truly fleeting period. Please immediately compare long-term revenue vs. expense trajectories in budget assumptions.

Anecdotal data suggests that despite any Foundation Aid or Save-Harmless state aid increases, expense increases in budgets will surpass the revenue gains in Tax cap calculations for a substantial number of school districts. This, over time, will have a corrosive effect on the ability of school budgets to retain and use fund balances, reserves and maintain robust educational opportunities.

Districts must examine the relationship between major revenue streams such as Foundation Aid increases or lack thereof, their tax level limit as expressed by the Tax cap vs. ever increasing expenses particularly related to salaries, pensions, health insurance and the critical educational needs of the growing numbers of high need populations such as students with special needs or those in poverty..

The Bus mandate is still in effect... the state is not listening (they are not acting either!)

There is absolutely no way most school districts can afford this mandate nor in most regions of the state is the power grid ready for this initiative.

My recent studies with school districts points to significant limitations of revenue increases, vs. significant cost increases on the horizon. This spells trouble for school districts long-range. This also makes their ability to buy Zero-Emission buses more remote and financially antagonistic.

As a reminder....Serious Issues Remain

Foundation Aid:

Still Generally Outdated

Still the Wrong Metrics

Still Arbitrary

Increase in number of Districts Save-Harmless?

Homeless Enrollment

Equity Adequacy

School Budgets:

Escalations of Student and Family Mission

Escalation of Costs- Health insurance, Pensions, Labor, Equipment, Capital Work

Depletion of Reserves

Practical Regional Issues

School Labor Force Issues

-

Other state aid and financial initiatives we should shoot for...

- Excess Cost Aids are aid categories that have not been updated in years and continue to be unrealistically frozen or simply without merit in terms of equity. These aids categories should be addressed for equity and adequacy.
- Increase RPTL §1318 to at least 10% ... 4% is SIMPLY TOO LOW!!! How about 10%?
- The state must reevaluate its state aid initiatives every 2 years for equity, adequacy, and sustainability. (The Rockefeller Report Agreed to this type of reevaluation)

Don't give up!

Produce a lobby plan and talking points. I encourage you to seek allies from parents, key community leaders, and others to help you lobby. Often school district residents can provide valuable support as voters toward mutual goals!

See you soon,

Be well,

Rick

ALL STUDENT VOICES MATTER!

EMPOWERING THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

**STUDENT EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER
VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE**

APRIL 15TH, 2026 via ZOOM from 6:00pm - 7:30pm

CNY
CENTRAL NEW YORK
SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION
CNYSBA
Where Our Purpose is to:
**TRAIN, EMPOWER,
ADVOCATE, & MOBILIZE**

www.cnysba.org

REGISTER HERE

EVENT DETAILS:

This event is designed to bring together Student Ex Officio Board Members from across the region for a virtual check-in and open conversation following the initial training held earlier this year. The session will provide a supportive space for student leaders to share their experiences serving as the student voice on their Board of Education, discuss successes and challenges they have encountered, and exchange ideas with peers who are in similar leadership roles. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their work so far, offer insights and suggestions, and continue strengthening the impact of student representation in local school governance.
Because CNYSBA believes that **ALL STUDENT VOICES MATTER!**

2026 CNYSBA LEGISLATIVE FORUM

AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS:

CITI BOCES

- RECORDING & SUMMARY OF ZOOM EVENT
- DR. RICHARD TIMBS (SSFC) PRESENTATION
- LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE ABOVE](#)

C-0 BOCES

- DR. RICHARD TIMBS (SSFC) PRESENTATION
- LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE ABOVE](#)

OCM BOCES

- DR. RICHARD TIMBS (SSFC) PRESENTATION
- SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
- LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE ABOVE](#)

TST BOCES

- DR. RICHARD TIMBS (SSFC) PRESENTATION
- SUMMARY W/ LEGISLATOR COMMENTS
- LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE ABOVE](#)



Student Athlete Development Program

TESTIMONIAL FROM JESSE LONG SCSD ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

The Student Athlete Development Program provided by the Central New York School Boards Association (CNYSBA) has been an extremely valuable experience for our student-athletes. Through meaningful discussions and engaging activities, the program helps our athletes address difficult situations they may encounter in athletics and in everyday life. It provides students with practical strategies for navigating potential racial issues, demonstrating strong sportsmanship, and working effectively as part of a team.

Our students have responded very positively to the program. The facilitator creates a respectful and open environment that encourages honest conversation and reflection. As a result, our athletes have developed a greater awareness of how their actions impact others and have gained tools to respond thoughtfully when challenges arise.

We have seen our students apply these lessons in real time—whether it's handling adversity during competition, supporting teammates, or responding appropriately to difficult moments. The skills they learn through this program help them grow not only as athletes, but also as leaders and responsible members of our school community.

We are grateful for the partnership with CNYSBA and the positive impact this program continues to have on our student-athletes.

Sincerely,

Jesse Long

Director of Athletics

Syracuse City School District

**THANK YOU SCSD FOR THE TESTIMONIAL.
CNYSBA IS THRILLED TO FULFILL OUR MISSION
AND PURPOSE WITH OUR MEMBER DISTRICTS.**



Attention All Members!

**WE WANT TO FEATURE
YOUR DISTRICTS!!**

WE WANT TO SHOWCASE ALL THE GREAT THINGS THAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING TO MAKE AN IMPACT IN THEIR DISTRICTS, COMMUNITIES, AND MORE!

WE ARE ASKING ALL CNYSBA 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?

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



Board Member of Achievement Criteria

Years ago, the **Central New York School Boards Association (CNYSBA)** Board of Directors began a tradition of honoring Local Board Members from each *County School Boards Association* at the Annual Dinner. The County SBAs are Cayuga Onondaga, Cortland-Madison, Onondaga-Madison, Oswego County, and Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga. The person nominated should be a *current or former* School Board Member whose District *is also a Member* of the **Central New York School Boards Association**.

Selection Process

Each County School Boards Association (SBA) named above will select one award recipient to represent their county for the **CNYSBA Annual Board Member of Achievement Award**. Each county association may determine its own process for identifying and selecting its honoree. For example, a county association may invite nominations from its component districts or appoint a committee to review nominations and select a recipient.

Submission of Nominations

All nominations should be submitted directly to the appropriate County School Boards Association for consideration. Please send nomination materials to the designated contact listed below for your county.

County School Boards Association Contacts for Nominations

Cayuga Onondaga SBA - Contact: **Linda Brown**, District Clerk - LBrown@cayboces.org

Cortland-Madison SBA - Contact: **Peg Peri**, President - p.peri28@yahoo.com

Onondaga-Madison SBA - Contact: **Joan Reeves**, President - jrmail.1@icloud.com

Oswego County SBA – Contact: **Tom Ciappa**, President – tcappa@oswego.org

Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga SBA - Contact: **Christina Ward**, President - cward@newfieldschools.org

Each honoree will be formally recognized at the dinner, receive an award with their name/year, and have an opportunity to make some brief comments to the audience of peers. **We would like the name of the Board Member selected by each County School Board Association submitted to CNYSBA, along with a description of their service (explained below) by Friday, May 1st, 2026.**

CNYSBA requests that the criteria stated below be reviewed and considered prior to submitting a nomination:

Nominees do not have to have done all items listed below. However, involvements & dedications like these are what CNYSBA strive to honor

- **Engaged Board Member** – Actively participated in board-sponsored events and represented the board at district and education related functions.
- **Strategic Contributor** – Played a pivotal role in advancing the district’s goals and initiatives.
- **Mentor & Collaborator** – Provided guidance and support to fellow board members, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
- **Commitment to Growth** – Pursued professional development opportunities to enhance board effectiveness.
- **Community Advocate** – Strengthened relationships between the board and the community through active engagement and outreach.

The Central New York School Boards Association (CNYSBA) also prepares a program for this Annual Award Dinner and kindly requests a written description of the honoree from either the County SBA or the honoree’s main district of service. This description will be included in the evening’s program to highlight the honoree’s contributions and accomplishments.

To ensure a comprehensive overview, please include the following points:

- **Local Service:** Detail the nominee’s service as a local board member, including years of service and any significant achievements, leadership roles, or notable contributions.
- **Support for Fellow Board Members:** Describe the nominee’s efforts in mentoring or supporting peers, such as presenting at workshops, participating in CNYSBA activities, or contributing to board development.
- **Legislative Involvement:** Outline any advocacy or legislative efforts the nominee has engaged in, such as participation in CNYSBA or county association legislative events, NYSSBA’s State Legislative Network, or other relevant initiatives.
- **Community Engagement:** Highlight additional community service or civic involvement beyond board duties.

We request a description of at least 250 words and encourage more detailed submissions where possible. Please note that we may need to edit submissions for length and clarity to fit the program format. These descriptions will not only recognize each honoree’s achievements but will also serve as a meaningful keepsake for them.

Past Recipients (by County SBA)

CAYUGA-ONONDAGA COUNTY SBA: *Diana Rynkiewicz (Jordan-Elbridge/BOCES); Jim Cranfield (Auburn); Ruth Sholes (Weedsport); Gilbert Lavallee (Jordan-Elbridge); Russell D. Jorolemon (Weedsport); Rene Jordan (Union Springs), Charlene Murray (Moravia); Michael E. Card (Skaneateles); Barbara O’Connor (Weedsport); Michele L. Sedor (Auburn), Cathy Meixner (J-E), Terry Lamphier (Moravia), Russ Riddell (Moravia & Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES), Maralee Hare (Port*

Byron & Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES), Mary Schooley (Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES), Ginny Kent (Auburn), Irene Stafford (Skaneateles), Melinda Quanbeck (Port Byron), Thomas Gunderson (Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES), Steve Fland (Moravia), Suzanne Fadden (C-O BOCES), Douglas Hart (Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES), Lisa Long (Jordan-Elbridge), Michael McCole (Auburn), GERALYN Huba (Skaneateles), Kathryn Carlson (Skaneateles), Tom Lambdin (Skaneateles), Karen Guerrette (Jordan-Elbridge), Sam Giangreco (Auburn),

CORTLAND-MADISON COUNTY SBA: *Mike Brady (Homer); Walter Hess (Marathon); Ed Fostveit (DeRuyter); Charles Menapace (Cortland); Ted Parker (Union Springs); Mary Ware (Homer); Douglas Cook (McGraw), David Guido (Cortland); Roseann DuBrava (Marathon); Ann Siegle (Homer); Colin Cummings (McGraw), Christine Place (Cortland), Barbara Houskamp (Cincinnatus), Richard C. Peagler (Cortland), Ann Marshall (DeRuyter), Michael Skeele (DeRuyter), Bonni Hodges (Cortland), Sandra Rausa (Cincinnatus), RayeLynn Kurtz (Cincinnatus), Forrest Earl (Homer), Nicole Albro-Sprouse (Homer), Debra Kressler (Cincinnatus), Martin Sweeney (Homer), Sonia Apker (Homer), Peter Bush (Cincinnatus), Bill Pedrick (Homer), Peg Peri (Cincinnatus), Richard Dodge (Cincinnatus), Jessica Latta (Cincinnatus),*

ONONDAGA-MADISON COUNTY SBA: *Dave Manley (F-M); Bill Lund (Tully); Bill O'Donnell (N. Syr.); Harlan Diefendorf (Westhill); Susan Mezey (Marcellus); Jan Greco (Baldwinsville); Anthony Bottar (North Syracuse); Douglas Brackett (Cazenovia/OCM BOCES); Deanna Johnston (LaFayette), Wayne Brownson (OCM BOCES); Sally Richards (Cazenovia); Karen Tiff (West Genesee); Anne Coughenour (N. Syr.), Linda Ervin (J-D), Mary Ann Haley (Tully), Michael J. Masse (F-M), Karen Baracco (West Genesee), John Cucinotta (F-M), Lena Rose Orlando (Solvay), Pat Mouton (Liverpool), Doreen Bronchetti (Westhill), Michael Murphy (OCM BOCES), Laurie Menkin (Syracuse City), Mark Gilbert (OCM BOCES), Catherine Cifaretta-Brayton Ken Steiger (Tully), Robert Crabtree (North Syracuse), Tom Taylor (Jamesville-Dewitt), Pat Body (Syracuse City), V. Ann Wright (OCM BOCES), Debbie Kolod (ES-M), Don Neugebauer (Fabius-Pompey), Lisa O'Reilly (Westhill/OCM BOCES), Marissa Mims (OCM BOCES), Ronald "Shawn" Reyburn (OCM BOCES & Lafayette CSD),*

OSWEGO COUNTY SBA: *Margaret Sprague (Mexico/BOCES); Bill Larrabee (Pulaski/BOCES); William Hamilton (Pulaski/BOCES); Allen DeMey (Hannibal); Mike Engst (A-P-W); Ronald Vrooman (Pulaski), Margaret Weigel (Pulaski); Peter Nowjy (Fulton); Joyce Egan (Oswego BOCES); Mary Ann Phillips (APW), Jean Wise (Fulton), Robbin Griffin (Fulton), Henry T. Bomgren (Hannibal), Marcia Albrecht (Mexico), Donna Blake (Hannibal), Janice Clark (Mexico), John Schueler (Phoenix), Matthew Geitner (Oswego BOCES), John Shelmidine (Oswego BOCES), Dale Young (Hannibal), James Emery (Mexico), David Cordone (Fulton), Casey Brouse (APW), Michael Hale (APW), Darlene Upcraft (Mexico), Mark Matteson (APW), Shawn Clark (APW), Connie Douglas (Mexico), Tom Ciappa (Oswego), Amy Shaw (Mexico Academy),*

TOMPKINS-SENECA-TIOGA COUNTIES SBA: *Janet Mara (Newfield); Gerald Estelle (Dryden); Corey Gettig (Lansing); Nancy Soreng (Ithaca); John Barney (Lansing); Elizabeth Clapp (Dryden); Suzanne Livingston (Groton), Lynne Logan (Ithaca); Arthur Berkey (Ithaca); Edgar Seymour (TST BOCES); David L. Dresser (South Seneca), Paul Streeter (Dryden), Margaret Blomquist (Newfield), Mary Newhart (Trumansburg), Nancy Thane (Groton), Linda Korbel (Newfield), Kathy Zahler (Dryden), Brian June (Dryden), Andy Young (Dryden), Anne Drake (Lansing), Linda Padgett (TST BOCES), Ray Parmarter (Candor), Bradley Grainger (Ithaca), Jim Douglas (Candor), Julie Boles (Lansing), Kathy Zahler (Dryden), Dr. Sean Eversley Bradwell (Ithaca), Douglas Ann Land (Trumansburg), Mike Blake (Candor), Jhoanna Haynes (Trumansburg), Susan Tabrizi (Lansing), Eldred Harris (Ithaca City School District),*

Coming Soon
SAVE THE DATE
CNYSBA 43rd
ANNUAL DINNER



May
20th
Wednesday



MAY 20TH, 2026 5:00PM - 8:00PM
\$60.00 / PER PERSON
THE LODGE
4355 State Street Road, Skaneateles Falls, NY 13153

State Legislators Across the State Pushing for More Access and Funding Upstate For Pre-K

Lawmakers are pressing the state to move faster on expanding Universal Pre-K, saying families across Central New York and other upstate regions are being left behind under the current timeline.

State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblymember Dana Levenberg, both from the Hudson Valley, joined parents and educators this week to call for full statewide funding sooner than what's currently proposed.

Right now, access remains limited. State data shows only about 56 percent of four-year-olds were enrolled in UPK programs last year, largely because there simply aren't enough available slots.

Governor Kathy Hochul's proposed 2026-27 budget includes a \$4.5 billion investment in pre-K and childcare. The plan would make all 3- and 4-year-olds in New York City eligible, but districts outside the city would have to wait until 2028 for full funding.

That delay is drawing criticism from lawmakers who say it creates an uneven system.

"We should not be dividing access to early education based on geography," Harckham said. "Families across New York should not have to rely on lotteries or limited openings to get their kids into pre-K."

Levenberg said the wait is already taking a toll on working families.

"Parents outside New York City are being told to hang on, but many can't," she said. "Childcare is already hard to find and too expensive in many communities."

Across Central New York and other upstate areas, school districts are dealing with rising costs tied to staffing, classroom space, and inflation. Even with a planned increase in per-student funding to \$10,000, some districts say that still won't fully cover the cost of running a program.

At the same time, pandemic-era federal funding that helped support early childhood programs has dried up. Districts say that has made it harder to retain teachers and staff.

Statewide, about 118,000 four-year-olds and 5,800 three-year-olds were enrolled in pre-K last year. Demand continues to outpace supply in many regions.

Supporters say expanding access sooner would not only help children enter school better prepared, but also give families some financial relief and allow more parents to stay in the workforce.

Lawmakers are now urging the state to include full UPK funding statewide in the upcoming budget, rather than pushing that expansion off for another two years.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A BOARD MEMBER?

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE EVENT

OPEN EVENT FOR ALL, PUBLIC WELCOME

ON APRIL 23RD, 2026
VIA ZOOM FROM 6PM-7PM



Have you or someone you know thought about becoming a Board of Education Member for a School District?

Wondering what a Board of Education does? Want to know the process to join a Board?

Join us for an Informational Zoom Session to learn more.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION AS A WHOLE & INDIVIDUAL

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

IMPACTS & REWARDS OF BEING A BOARD MEMBER, & OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION



REGISTER TODAY!!

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Central New York School Boards Association



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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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