CNYSBA NEWS

Train, Empower, Advocate, and Mobilize for Students

PAWS of CNY Bring Smiles and Wagging Tails to Minetto Elementary

Once a month, first graders at Minetto Elementary School take part in a special visit through the PAWS of CNY program, creating a supportive space to build reading skills and confidence.

Students read aloud alongside therapy dogs, helping reduce anxiety and encouraging participation. The experience supports both literacy development and social-emotional well-being, aligning with the Oswego City School District's focus on caring, learning and creating a safe environment for all students.

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A Message of Appreciation as We Head into Summer

By Derrick Dorsey, Executive Director, CNYSBA

As another school year comes to a close, the Central New York School Boards Association extends its deepest gratitude to every board member and superintendent who serves our schools and communities with dedication, integrity, and purpose.

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Public education is strengthened by leaders who willingly invest their time, energy, and expertise in support of students, families, educators, and communities. Whether navigating complex challenges, celebrating student successes, making difficult decisions, or planning for the future, your commitment to educational excellence continues to make a meaningful difference across Central New York.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to this year's **Board Member Achievement Award recipients**. Your dedication to professional growth, continuous learning, and effective governance reflects the very best of educational leadership. We are proud to recognize your accomplishments and your commitment to serving students and communities throughout our region.

To all board members and superintendents, please know that your efforts do not go unnoticed. We see the countless hours you devote to public education, the thoughtful leadership you provide, and the positive impact you have on the lives of students every day.

As summer begins, we hope you find opportunities to rest, recharge, and spend time with family and friends. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to public education and for the leadership you bring to your districts and communities.

From all of us at the Central New York School Boards Association, thank you for your service, congratulations to our Achievement Award winners, and best wishes for a safe, enjoyable, and well-deserved summer.

We look forward to continuing our work together in support of public education in the year ahead.

Have a great summer,

Derrick Dorsey

Click here to view photos from our Annual Dinner

Statewide School Finance Consortium (SSFC) Year End Summary

by Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director of SSFC

This has been (the 2025-26 school year) one of the most fiscally stressful years in the recent line of fiscally stressful years. Let me tell you why I have come to that conclusion.

To me, based on my multitude of financial workshops this year and work with my contracted business clients I have come to categorize school districts into three general categories within the Statewide School Finance Consortium community.

Category 1: School districts concerned for the future

These are school districts are beginning to realize they are not as financially secure looking into the future as they had hoped they would be.

These school districts are recognizing the slippery slope of their maintaining current and predictable future financial practices related to items such as:

- "rightsizing the budget"
- Long-range budget analysis
- Resetting program expectations based on enrollment declines
- Resetting attempts at increased efficiencies to thwart escalating costs
- The planned and careful use of reserves
- The true meaning of an appropriated fund balance
- The management of Real Property Tax Law §1318
- Management of public perceptions particularly related to the tax cap
- Knowing how the tax cap actually works and its implications
- The importance of cash flow

- Succession planning for critical positions
- Ongoing training of board of educations about the nuances of educational finance
- The process of making difficult decisions that includes research, and evaluation related to goals and expectations, a realistic appraisal of current and future conditions and the need for “selective abandonment” of practices or programs that are ineffective, inefficient or no longer practical or affordable

Category 2: School districts that know they are in financial trouble

These school districts have done research, and it clearly indicates that their financial future puts them in jeopardy through a diminishment of educational resources and the inability of their finances to support their mission.

These school districts requested support as they further examine ways to increase their educational and financial survivability over the next few years. The have identified the sacrifices that will need to be made, the outreach that will be required to their communities, and an examination of other options including internal and regional approaches and even perhaps usually as a last effort, mergers to secure the futures of the children under their charge.

Category 3: School districts that have not figured out how much financial trouble they’re in as the future quickly approaches.

These school districts have not had the time, resources or inclination to examine their long-term condition in the light of their mission, community expectations, and their relationship to the financial underpinnings of the district.

These school districts tend to be very vulnerable to the vacillations of taxpayer support, state aid, and the opposing influence of rapidly escalating costs that include but are not limited to:

- Collective bargaining agreement financial obligations
- Pension costs growth
- Medical insurance escalations
- The rising population of students with special needs and the increased cost associated with these important services.
- Staffing patterns compared to enrollment changes
- Community expectations for educational and ancillary programs

My suggestions

Once the books are closed at the end of the 2025-26 fiscal year:

- Look at fund balances from the most recent budget and compare them to previous years.
- Analyze and identify portions of the expense side of the budget that are escalating faster than revenues.
- Analyze and identify portions of the revenue side of the budget and the realistic potential for increased revenue.
- Determine whether fund balances have been used to balance this recent budget
- Analyze and identify the reserves held by the district.
- Determine if reserves held by the District are proper reserves for the future
- Determine if any or all the reserves will be used in future budgets to balance the budget or for their designated purpose.
- Make sure you have a five-year plan for technology, equipment, vehicle, and bus replacement as well as capital projects.
- All projections for escalating expenses should contain something related to the realistic cost of the items and/or inflation.
- Determine whether the district is maintaining enough cash flow so that those items that are unanticipated in the budget will find sufficient financial resources available when they arrive.
- Re-examine debt service schedules and their impact on the tax cap.
- Make good use of your auditor... if you need a message delivered have them deliver the message and support you.
- Use the team approach when analyzing finances, This is not a one-person job. Two heads are better than one and three are better than two.
- Make sure that your analysis is detailed enough to come up with an accurate portrayal of your financial condition currently and forward without wasting time in the weeds.
- Report out the findings of your studies.
- Your report should include findings, implications, caveats, considerations and recommendations.

In Closing

Be prepared for another difficult financial year.

Board members please attend regional NYSSBA and regional School Boards Association meetings. Superintendents please be active in NYSCOSS and regionally. And of course, School Business Officials partake in NYASBO and the regional chapter meeting and workshops.

Work regionally and statewide, learn to lobby and of course:

Attend Statewide School Finance Consortium (SSFC) workshops. If you need one for your regional unit, give me a call, I'm ready!

Be well,

Rick

★ Launch Your Career Real Life Rosies®

Helping women strengthen and advance their careers in the skilled trades

Inspired by the iconic Rosie the Riveter — the cultural icon who symbolized the strength and capability of women stepping into industrial roles during World War II — the Real Life Rosies pre-apprenticeship program carries that legacy forward by opening doors for women in modern manufacturing. As New York State's first direct-entry training program created specifically for women, Real Life Rosies offers a no-cost, hands-on learning experience designed to build real-world skills and confidence.

Support for success:

- **No cost to participate.**
- **Help with clothing and work supplies.**
- **Guaranteed job interviews.**
- **Incentives available when participants reach milestones.**
- **Transportation and childcare available.**

“ **It was just the thing I needed to boost my self-confidence to further my career.**

I gained so much — from soft skills and hands-on training with tools to understanding how robotics work. We toured a variety of facilities and saw firsthand the many sides of manufacturing. The program also helped with childcare and transportation, but most of all, it gave me a sense of confidence I never had before.

- Toni Aho, **Real Life Rosies graduate**

**MACNY does not discriminate against any applicant to the program because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, or marital status. Funding for the program is provided by a grant from Empire State Development.*

What is pre-apprenticeship?

Pre-apprenticeship programs provide hands-on training, foundational skills, and support to prepare participants for careers in industries like manufacturing. They help remove barriers and build confidence for the next step — whether that's a Registered Apprenticeship or an entry-level job.

Next training:

Winter/Spring 2026

SCAN TO REGISTER

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Photo Caption: Kelly Cullinan and her dog Clover with a student.

Kelly Cullinan of SUNY Oswego, who visits with her dog Clover, said the connection with students is what makes the program meaningful.

"Education is a community contribution, and reading with the first graders is such a fun connection to our kids. Clover genuinely gets excited to go to school, trotting down the hallway, greeting all the students," Cullinan said. "I always leave with a new story; first graders are too funny. Clover and I are so very fortunate to be PAWS of CNY members who get to go every month."

For students, the visits have become a highlight of the school month, combining reading practice with encouragement and a sense of community that supports their growth both in and out of the classroom.

OHS Students Take Part in Mad City Money Financial Literacy Simulation

Oswego High School students recently participated in Mad City Money, a hands-on financial literacy simulation held in the OHS cafeteria. The event gave students a real-world experience in budgeting, financial decision-making and managing monthly expenses based on assigned careers, salaries, credit scores and family scenarios.

The simulation was organized with support from Amy Rapin, OHS Work Based Learning Coordinator, along with school staff and community partners, including Empower Federal Credit Union.

Students rotated through stations representing housing, transportation, banking, childcare, utilities and unexpected expenses while working to balance needs, wants and a monthly budget. The experience is part of OHS's commitment to authentic learning and career readiness.

"Mad City Money taught me valuable skills that will benefit me in adulthood," said Lilana, an OHS student participant.

Katarinna, another student participant, reflected on the learning experience.

"I definitely believe that the Mad City money simulation was a beneficial experience! I found it difficult and confusing at times but that is par for the course with what to expect in real life! This experience has helped me to be a little more prepared and to have a better idea as to what I can expect as I venture out into the real world," she said.

Other students noted unexpected outcomes as they worked through their budgets. "I thought I was bankrupt but I was rich," said Olive.

The goal of Mad City Money is to give students a safe, realistic environment to practice financial responsibility before entering adulthood. Events like this support the Oswego City School District's mission to empower and engage students to guarantee their successful future and reflect its vision of equity and excellence for each student, along with core values such as learning, innovation and community connections.


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

CNY CENTRAL NEW YORK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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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.

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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

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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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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

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