

MCSBA in Albany



Shown on the NYSED main staircase are –
BACK ROW: Beckie Schultz (MCSBA), Colette Morabito (ER),
Gene Mancuso (HFL), Bob Cook (RH), and Vincent Antonicelli (ER);
FRONT ROW: Marv Sachs (Bri), Marilyn Monkelbaan (Fpt), Lyn
Carragher (Bro), Valerie Baum (Pit), Nancy Pickering (Hil), Renee
Williams (HFL), and Joyce Kostyk (Fpt)

In early December, 27 MCSBA members traveled to Albany to meet with legislative and administrative leaders whose decisions affect public education in NYS. Among those officials were representatives from the Governor's Education Division, the NYS Division of the Budget, the NYSED, and legislative leaders.

Issues discussed included Foundation Aid, measures of poverty, need to separate teacher evaluations from state test scores, opposition to vouchers, lack of promised mandate relief, shortages of professional and support staff, need for tax cap flexibility, need to remove BOCES superintendent salary cap, BOCES preK education reimbursement, homeless classified students, and plans for implementing ESSA.

More Albany photographs on page 5.



News Scope

MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
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President – John Piper, Penfield CSD
Vice President – Mike Suffoletto, Webster CSD
Past President – Mark Kokanovich, Brighton CSD
Treasurer – John Abbott, Monroe 2 – Orleans BOCES
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From our president: Making a difference

In recent conversations with members, I have heard frustrating comments about the Election Day results, saying that it will be harder than ever to make a difference in public education going forward. Trust me; you will continue to make a difference for our students.

Several years ago while working in Syracuse, I experienced my first interaction with public schools. Our organization was invited to learn more about a new group, The Foundation to Advance Arts and Athletics in City Schools. Dramatic arts and athletic funding cuts had begun in the Syracuse public high schools, and this organization had been formed to raise funds to replace those cuts in arts and athletics.

They approached us with an idea: a high school basketball tournament at Syracuse University. With the support of our organization, an eight team high school basketball tourney was held. Four high school teams from the Syracuse district and



John Piper

four others from NY City, Albany and Buffalo competed. The tournament continued for a number of years and raised thousands of dollars for public schools.

Several years later, I ran into the athletic director of a school from downstate that had participated in the tournament. He told me about one of their players who had received a basketball scholarship from a large university. He noted that prior to participating in our tournament, the player was not considered for a scholarship from any major colleges, but with the opportunity to showcase his talents at our event in front of college recruiters, he had been noticed.

The athletic director went on to say that the tournament had changed that student athletes' life and that the player still wore our tournament tee shirt as a reminder of his success.

Unknown to you, I'm sure, are many similar stories of student success in your district, as a direct result of your role as a leader in education.

Know that you are making a difference. *John Piper*

From our executive director: The New Normal?

The Presidential election this November has been unlike any that I have experienced in my lifetime. I have wondered as I have read about the uptick in incidents of bullying and harassment, people being banned for life on airlines for verbally attacking other's viewpoints, and leaflets being dropped in the dead of night on driveways expressing hate, if this will now become our new normal. So, the other day while we were stopped at a crosswalk in a mall parking lot allowing shoppers to cross, it shouldn't have surprised me that when we rolled forward to move on, that the car opposite us wishing to make the left in front of us, made an obscene gesture at us for not acquiescing to him. But, frankly, I was surprised.



Sherry Johnson

In contrast, two weeks ago, on a lovely fall November day, 300 students from schools across Monroe County came together at the Greece Athena Performing Arts Center to talk about race and relationships. Student leaders who had experienced a previous student summit, drafted, designed, set up and ran the entire program. Students from suburban schools, Rochester City schools, private and parochial schools attended and were celebrated. Students new to the summit learned first and foremost the difference between a "nonracist" and an "antiracist". The ROC2Change hash tag was live and Twitter feeds were posted on the large screen in the auditorium.

The focus for this particular student summit was on relationships that included the policing community, and officers from every branch of our public safety agencies were in attendance. While there were other adults in the auditorium, they were periphery to the conversation and the purposeful activities that the students engaged themselves in. These were primarily juniors and seniors in our high schools having critical conversations that many adults in our society today would be too uncomfortable to ever participate in. The police officers in attendance divided themselves among the student groups and worked in professional concert to provide information, support and understanding of their role to serve and protect while at the same time listening to experiences, concerns and fears of young adults who want more than anything to have an opportunity to work, play and live in an inclusive society free of some of the heavy burdens they carry. Some of the most poignant moments were in the videos that the students played on the large screen that described in graphic detail the emotional toll that hurt plays on our souls.

This is the third such student summit and each one brings more students to them. There are already three more planned and it is anticipated that attendance will grow each time. The hope of these young adults is that one day these summits will no longer be necessary and that the work they are doing now will help create a society where living together inclusively is the norm and not the exception. That is the new normal I wish to imagine.

Sherry



Student Summit, November 2016

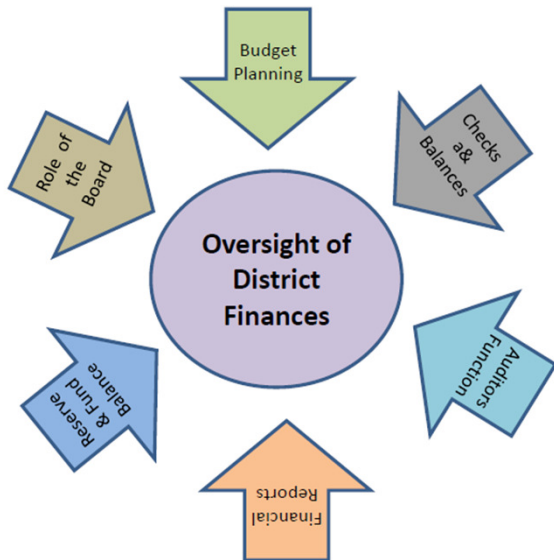
FAR LEFT: Superintendent Kathleen Graupman (Gre) opening the session.

LEFT: Superintendent Jeff Crane (WI) reviews origins of the summit with "Gateway to Change" students from Ferguson, Missouri.

BELOW: Student participants returning from lunch to share ideas from morning small work group sessions.

ABOVE: Greece students who organized the November Student Summit.

RIGHT: Police officer with a student work group at the conference.



RIGHT: Finance seminar presenters Ray Wager, Matt Stevens, Bruce Capron, Lou Alaimo, Rick Wood and Tom Nespeca.



Fiscal oversight training for new district leaders

On November 19 new board of education members from 15 districts in our region met with school business officials to discuss school board responsibilities for fiscal oversight. This 6-hour program is mandated by state law and MCSBA has been approved by the NYSED as a provider. The schedule included the following topics and presenters:

Role of school boards and administrators in financial planning and oversight, by NYSSBA Treasurer Tom Nespeca, and Member, BOCES #1 BoE;

Budget planning, by Rick Wood, Executive Director of Business Operations, Spencerport CSD;

What financial reports tell, by Matt Stevens, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Fairport CSD;

Checks and balances to prevent misuse of resources, by Louis Alaimo, Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Chief Negotiator, Brighton CSD;

Auditor functions (claims, internal, external), by Raymond Wager, CPA;

Fund balance and reserves, by Bruce Capon, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations, Honeoye Falls-Lima CSD.



LEFT: Participants Elizabeth Hallmark (Rochester) and Karen Tomidy (Batavia).

BELOW: Rodney George (Avon), Julie Welch (Avon), Lloyd Ruffle (Greece), Michael Valicenti (Greece), Greg Kincaid (Spencerport), Annmarie Strzyzynski (Rush-Henrietta), Russell Byer (Hilton), Dan Legualt (Brockport), Thane Wright (Attica), Tammy Gurowski (Webster), John Slenker (Alexander), Carolyn Stahl (West Irondequoit), Vincent Antonicelli (East Rochester), Marci Hosford (Fairport), Steve Hogan (Churchville-Chili), Mark Hilburger (Hilton), and Kristen Brumbaugh (Hilton).



Albany photo album



Advocacy trips to Albany involve hiking between bus stops and multiple office buildings. Shown in the top row on their way to meetings are –
LEFT: Marci Hosford, Marilyn Monkelbaan, Joyce Kostyk, and Brett Provenzano, all of Fairport.
CENTER: MCSBA President John Piper (Pen), Brett Provenzano (Fpt), Brian Freeman (Web), Marilyn Monkelbaan (Fpt), Marci Hosford (Fpt), Valerie Baum (Pit), and Ann Carmody (Web).
RIGHT: Members on way to Assembly Education Committee Hearing on ELL Tom Putnam (Pen), John Piper (Pen), Brett Provenzano (Fpt), MCSBA VP Mike Suffoletto (Web), Bob Cook (RH), Rene Williams (HFL), and Barb Babiarz (Pen) in front.

ABOVE and RIGHT: Members meet with SED staff: Chris Suriano, Assistant Commissioner of Special Education Policy; Joanne La Crosse, Coordinator of Policy and Professional Development for Special Education; Christina Coughlin, Coordinator of Education Management Services; and Brian Chechnicki, Director of Education Finance.



LEFT and BELOW LEFT: Members meeting with Jere Hochman, the Governor's Secretary For Education; Dan Fuller, the Assistant Secretary for Higher Education; and Terry Pratt, Assistant Council.

Members at this meeting included Mike DeLaus (B1), Ann Carmody (Web), Brian Freeman (Web), Valerie Baum (Pit), Mark Elledge (Pen), Vincent Antonicelli (ER), Marilyn Monkelbaan (Fpt), Ken Graham, (RH), and Gene Mancuso (HFL).

BELOW RIGHT: Shown meeting with staff from the NYS Division of Budget are Mike DeLaus (B1), Marci Hosford (Fpt), Jill Reichhart (Bro), Brett Provenzano (Fpt), and Barb Babiarz (Pen).



Diversity & race relations



LEFT: Jeff Crane , I.E. Co-Chair Amy Thomas(Pit), James Norman, the Rev. Dr. Marvin Mc Mickle, and Information Exchange Committee Co-Chair Gary Bracken (Spe).

At their November 9 meeting, members of the Information Exchange Committee learned more about some area programs seeking to support diversity and improve race relations.

Jeff Crane described the origin the first Race Summit in West Irondequoit that was planned with assistance from high school students from Ferguson, Missouri who were part of a group called “Gateway to Change.” Momentum from the first summit led to others in Penfield and Greece this year, and three more through 2018. In each case students from one summit are training new students to organize the next summit and build capacity within and across communities to address racism.

The Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle, President of Colgate Rochester Divinity School and Co-Chair of the Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, followed with an introduction to the Rochester Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI). He noted that the driving force for establishing RMAPI was Rochester had the third highest poverty level in the nation per capita and that 24 % of the children in the city were living in extreme poverty. He discussed major obstacles and key questions for overcoming poverty:



ABOVE: Jeff Crane (WI) describing the student-led anti-racism efforts in West Irondequoit and other districts.

- * Issues of trauma that re-inforce poverty;
- * Community building (funding, asset development) needed to strengthen communities;
- * Structural racism (systems/structures, public policy) that reinforces mistreatment of some citizens and steps to alter policy in an equitable direction.

James Norman, President and CEO of Action for a Better Community (ABC) and Co-Chair of the Rochester Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative, highlighted the work of the Facing Race, Embracing Equity Initiative (FR=EE) that began in 2012. FR=EE encourages candid, respectful, and inclusive dialogue on race to eliminate structural barriers that maintain racial inequity. Among the issues driving the initiative are how to prevent social negatives of race, and how to build social equity in a race conscious community.

BELOW: The Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle discussing the Rochester Anti-Poverty Initiative program with school board members and administrators.



He discussed how the initiative has been collaborating with several local school districts and other groups to expose and improve upon inequities in housing, health care, job and economic opportunities and the juvenile/criminal justice systems. The initiative has provided \$10,000 to support student and public viewing of the documentary, “I’m Not a Racist... Am I?” with dialogues to promote deeper understanding. He also highlighted an \$8.2 million dollar grant FR=EE received to promote health care careers for low income students which has involved 20 community partners training and placing 1,000 individuals in health care system jobs.

Legislative Committee activities

Legislative Committee members practice advocacy skills

At their November meeting, Legislative Committee members reviewed procedures for planning and conducting meetings with elected officials, then practiced the procedures via short meetings with faux officials. Acting as lawmakers and representatives of the Division of Budget for the session were MCSBA President John Piper (Pen), Dr. Kenneth Graham (RH), Mark Kokanovich (Bri), and Julie Christensen (Ken).

RIGHT (from top to bottom): Legislative Committee members practicing their advocacy skills during their training session.



Members meet with Senator Funke staff members

MCSBA members met in November with Senator Rick Funke's staff -Jesse Sleezer, District Office Director, and Matt Nelligan, Chief of Staff from his Albany Office. Discussion included pros and cons of the upcoming budget season, foundation aid needs, and predicted impact of projected deficit for this year on next year.

LEFT: Sherry Johnson (MCSBA), Stacy Beaumont (EI), Bill Evans (WI), Joyce (Fpt), Jesse Sleezer, Matt Nelligan, Amy Thomas (Pit), Valerie Baum (Pit), John Abbott (B2, EI), Catherine Dean (Pen), Colette Morabito (ER), and Beckie Schultz (MCSBA).

A look at the expedited 3020-a process

“Disciplining Tenured Employees- An Altered Landscape” was the topic discussed during the November meeting of the Labor Relations Committee. Leading the discussion of the modified 3020-a process was Douglas Gerhardt, Esq., Partner, Harris Beach, PLLC.



ABOVE : Labor Relations Committee Co-Chair Tom Abbott (Hil) with presenter Douglas Gerhardt, Esq.

LEFT: Douglas Gerhardt speaking to meeting participants.

Highlights from Gerhardt’s presentation included:

- * Boards of Education should not hesitate to file 3020-a charges if they feel more than a counseling memo is warranted for an employee. Not all 3020-a proceedings lead to termination.
- * Real changes to the 3020-a process occurred in 2015. Now most cases are completed in 125 days or less, limiting pay outs to employees for salary and benefits. Hearing officers are not paid for more than 125 days without extenuating circumstances.
- * Boards should assess the potential outcomes, know the desired end and evaluate potential costs; 3020-a proceedings are less costly if they are settled rather than going to a hearing.
- * A service to hand deliver charges to the employee can maximize time for the process. The clock starts on the 125-day process when the school board votes to charge the employee.
- * A new section of 3020-b is in place for ineffective teaching.

- * Board clerks play a critical role in the process by uploading key notices and forms to SED through the TEACH system. Timing of the stages of the process is tightly controlled.
- * Selection of hearing offers is shortened and employees can no longer request a panel of hearing officers.
- * It is critical to make sure the investigation is thorough and the chain of custody for evidence is not corrupted.
- * Consider attorneys as investigators unless the HR director is experienced in this area.
- * The law now allows suspension without pay and an expedited hearing process for teachers charged with physical or sexual abuse of a student.
- * Boards of Education should proceed with part 83 filings if there is any doubt as to whether to proceed or not. There is no downside to doing this



MCSBA Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, February 11, 2017

9:00 am – 11:30 am

The Lexington

390 and Brooks Ave

Please Join us for This Important Opportunity



Be a voice for our students!

Register by February 4,
by calling 328-1972
or emailing Mary at
Mary_Talbot@boces.monroe.edu