



Meeting locally with state lawmakers

More than 110 school board members and administrators met with nine members of our legislative delegation to Albany as well as with aides from two other lawmakers to discuss issues of common concern to all MCSBA-member districts.

BELOW: MCSBA President John Piper, Assemblyman Mark Johns, Senator Joseph Robach, Senator Michael Ranzenhofer, Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Morelle, MCSBA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Lisa Ireland (Bro), Assemblyman Stephen Hawley, Senator Robert Ort, Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, Assemblyman Harry Bronson, Assemblyman Joseph Errigo, and MCSBA Legislative Committee Co-Chair Mark Elledge (Pen).

More information and photos on pages 4 – 6.

Tricia Turner Photo





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From our president: An Extraordinary Exchange-50 years later

In January, Penfield superintendent, Dr. Tom Putnam, received a not-so-ordinary email. The message was from a Penfield graduate inviting Dr. Putnam and myself to the 50th anniversary celebration of the Penfield High School –Madison High School student exchange. The graduate, David Honig, informed us of a unique school exchange in 1967, in which 25 students from Madison high school in the city of Rochester began a week of attendance at Penfield High School, living in the homes of Penfield students. The following week, 25 students from Penfield attended Madison while also living in the homes of Madison parents. All of the students were enrolled in grades 10-12.



John Piper

Unknown at the time, was that this exchange marked the first of its kind anywhere in the US, when a school district underwent desegregation upon the initiative of the students. This exchange, we learned, paved the way for the still-successful Monroe County Urban Suburban Program, the nation’s oldest voluntary program of this nature.

Dr. Putnam and I were thrilled to be a part of the extraordinary celebration that took place on January 30. Prior to the event a 50-year-old time capsule was opened revealing documents and

student newspapers from both high schools chronicling the exchange. Approximately 30 persons—participants, supporters, and former members of the Student Union for Integrated Education—attended the celebration and we all received copies of the time capsule papers. More important, however, was meeting and interacting with the former exchange students who all had stories to tell. We in turn informed the group regarding the current initiatives in our schools involving students, including the “I’m Not Racist Am I?” initiative. The group was thrilled at the programs in place and the surging success of the current Urban Suburban Program.

I learned from two of the Penfield graduates’ present that this was a student initiative that was originally rejected by the then high school principal, and in turn the students petitioned the superintendent, Elmer Peck, and the board of education. After a contentious board meeting, packed with parents, the approval was given by a 5-2 board vote. The graduate also told me that the board president was her father! History was underway, but sadly, over the next two years the district budget was not approved on the first vote, and the five board members voting in favor of the exchange, had all been voted off of the board within three years.

Today, more than 50 years later, it can be said that much has been accomplished, but have attitudes changed? As school board members we must remain cognizant of our responsibilities for education of the whole child, in all Monroe county schools.

John Piper

RIGHT: John Piper (standing 2nd from left) and Dr. Tom Putman (standing at the far right) with graduates of Madison and Penfield High Schools who participated in the student-organized student exchange program between the schools in the 1960s. Former Rochester Mayor William Johnson is standing 3rd from right.



From our executive director: The Case for Public Education

Public education plays a critical function in the wellbeing of our democracy. If we do not have an educated citizenry, our security and cherished way of life would easily perish. To guard against this requires that we be laser focused on delivering the highest quality education to ALL children in order to provide for the greater good. It also demands that the cost of delivering this high quality education be transparent to the tax payer funding it.



Sherry Johnson

With the increase in scandals in the charter sector, the Federal Office of the Inspector General recently reported that “charter schools and their management teams are not effectively monitored by the Department of Education for the risks they pose”. The Department of Education had to admit that this risk of lax oversight extends to state education departments as well.

But, even with this acknowledgement, a very likely scenario under the new Administration is that traditional public education will be just one option for families to choose from. Many areas of the country have experienced an erosion in the quality of the local school district where charters co-exist. This drives away parents with resources to private schools. All other families are left to navigate a system of charters who compete for their children.

Many of these families lack the positive educational experiences to make sound choices and are even less likely to understand how to challenge a different system that isn't meeting the needs of their child. Those children without any advocates are segregated in a traditional public system that struggles to provide the necessary resources to raise them up.

Schools should not be in competition with one another and parents should not have to vie for a place in what they hope will be the best school for their child. No child should ever have to suffer the consequences of losing out in a competitive market and no family should have to move to provide their children with a high quality education. True choice is when every choice is the best choice for ALL children.

We believe that, like any other critical service, public education must be given the resources to provide a free, quality education for each and every child that families can rely on and taxpayers can weigh in on. Choice currently exists in many of our locally controlled public schools and this is where it should reside; within this framework for all to see, all to participate and all to rally around the outcome.

MCSBA will continue to provide our members with the necessary tools to advocate for quality public education and the vital role it plays in keeping our economy strong and our nation secure.

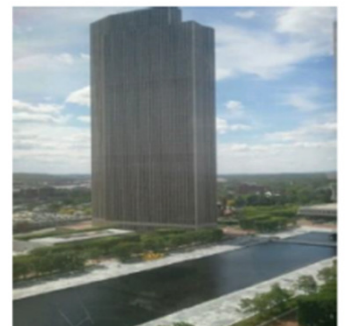
Sherry

A Time to Educate & Advocate

Two-day trip to Albany on March 6 – 7

All board members, superintendents, and district administrators are encouraged to participate.

To learn more, contact Mary Talbot at mary_talbot@boces.monroe.edu.



Legislative Breakfast Highlights



LEFT: Legislative Committee Co-Chairs Mark Elledge (Pen) and Lisa Ireland (Bro) introducing lawmakers.

RIGHT: Superintendents Kimberle Ward (GC) and Dr. Deborah Leh (WC).

FAR RIGHT: MCSBA Executive Director Sherry Johnson reviewing issues.



Issues discussed with our Albany delegation

Foundation Aid issue

The Governor's budget proposal allocates \$25.6 billion for education, which is \$961 million or 3.9% over last year.

The Foundation Aid increase is \$427 million or 2.6%. The Governor's proposal moves the foundation aid formula to a flat increase model.

The governor says that the CFE money owed to schools has been paid back. This would result in \$157,079,667 being withheld from MCSBA member school districts based on the CFE decision.

Other budget issues

□ STAR – the Executive Budget freezes STAR reimbursements, shifting the tax burden from the state to school district residents, especially retirees and families that had previously qualified for STAR exemptions. The Governor believes that the property tax credit and relief credit has “diminished the necessity to grow the STAR benefit”.

□ The Governor wants to retain the “millionaire’s tax” for 3 years until 2020. The current rates are due to expire after 12/31/2017. If the current rates are able to remain, they will generate an additional \$700 million next year and \$3.4 billion in 2018-2019.

□ Expanded Pre-K for 3 and 4 year olds adds \$5 million – The Executive proposal consolidates Priority Pre-K, the Expanded Half-Day Pre-K grant program and UPK. Also, districts have to comply with certain quality indicators to receive the funds. Additionally, the Governor has now added himself into the list of those who will receive the reports on these programs.

□ The budget authorizes BOCES to establish two Recovery High Schools, one upstate and one downstate. Schools enrolling students in a Recovery HS would be eligible for BOCES aid and BOCES would be allowed to enter into agreements with the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services or any other organization that would fit the purpose.

□ SED will receive \$601 million with continued funding of \$8.4 million to create and print more tests, \$800,000 for the Office of Religious and Independent Schools, and \$800,000 for the Office of Family and Community Engagement. The Budget also establishes an Inspector General to oversee SED and receive and investigate complaints from any source regarding fraud and other ethical misconduct.

□ The budget proposes a new tier of Charter School Transition Aid to provide public school districts with support making tuition payments to charter schools (this kicks in only after at least 2% of a district's population is enrolled in charter schools). There is also a supplemental tuition piece that allows charters to receive a per pupil allocation.

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Legislative Breakfast Highlights

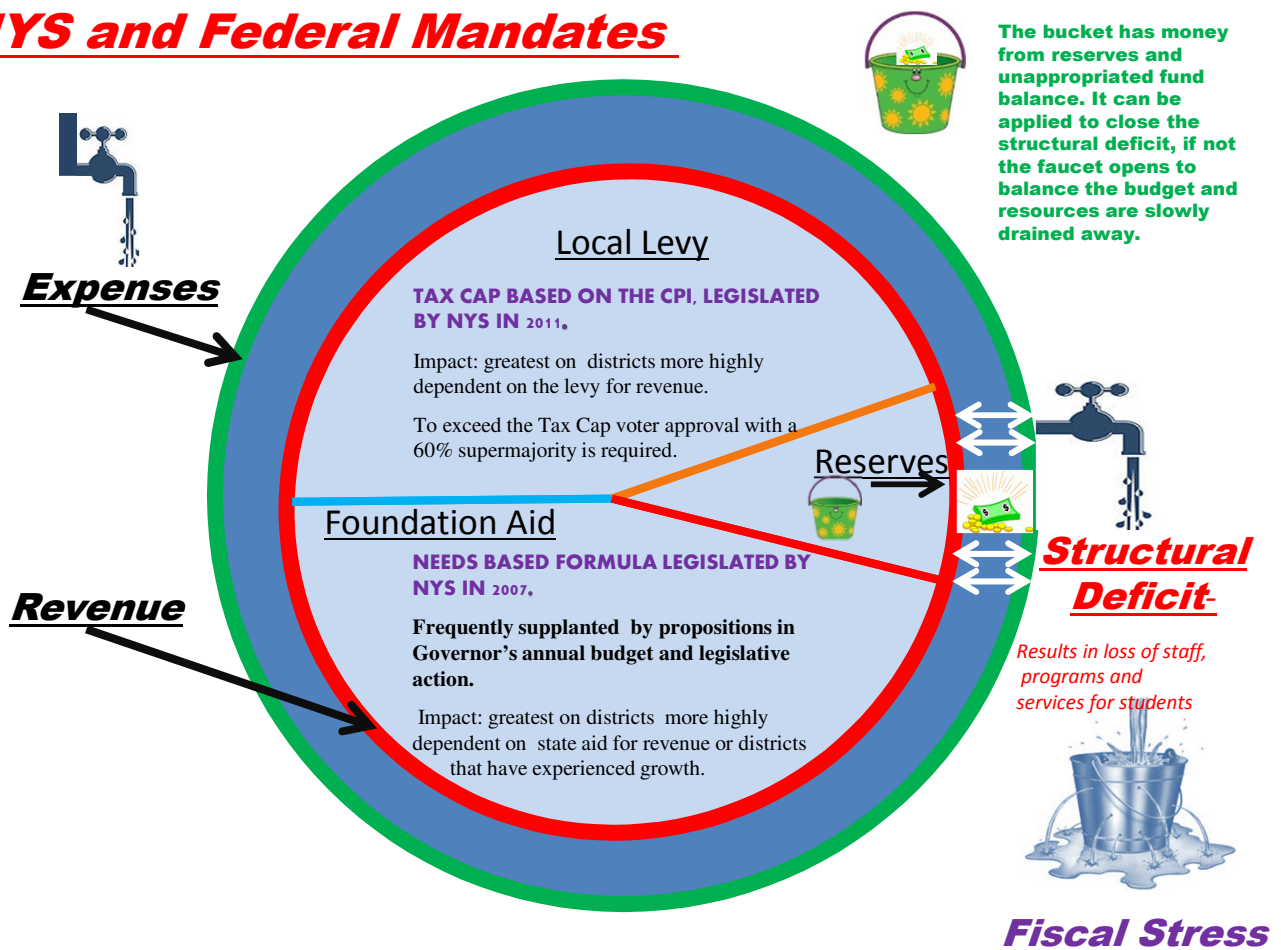


ABOVE: Panel of lawmakers who addressed educational leaders at the MCSBA legislative breakfast: Assemblyman Stephen Hawley, Senator Robert Ortt, Senator Michael Ranzenhofer, Senator Joseph Robach, Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Morelle, Assemblyman Joseph Errigo, Assemblyman Harry Bronson, and Assemblyman Mark Johns.

BELOW: Graphic used during the February 11 Legislative Breakfast to illustrate the effects of state and federal mandates on local school districts and the communities they serve

Impact of Current Funding on School Districts

NYS and Federal Mandates



Legislative Breakfast Highlights



ABOVE: Cynthia Elliott (Roc), Vincent Felder (Assemblyman David Gantt aide), Elizabeth Hallmark (Roc), and Everton Sewell (Roc).

BELOW: Bob Cook (RH), Frank Nardone (CC), Lori Orologio (CC), Assemblyman Harry Bronson, and Marvin Stepherson (GC).



ABOVE: Mike Delaus (B1) with back to camera, Mike Pero, (Pit), Mike Doughty (Gre), Trisha Turner (Kolb aide), Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, and Suzanne Casey (Web) with back to camera.

BELOW: Assemblyman Joseph Errigo, Peter Sullivan (Pit), Irene Narotsky (Pit), and Nicholas Picardo (Ken).



RIGHT: Marty Cardona (Fpt), Damon Buffum (Fpt) with back to camera, Assemblyman Mark Johns, David Green (ER), Vincent Antonicelli (ER), and Sora Sachs (B1).



ABOVE: Valerie Baum (Pit), Jesse Sleezer (Senator Rich Funke aide), Brett Provenzano (Fpt), and Dr. Bruce Capron (HFL).

RIGHT: Karen Hatch (Bri), Louis Alaimo (Bri), Nancy Pickering (Hil), Adam Geist (Hil), Bill Maloney (Gre), Terry Melore (Gre), Romeo Colilli (Gre), Frank Oberg (Gre), and Senator Joseph Robach.



ABOVE: Jim Musshafen (WC), John McNulty (Ranzenhofer aide), Senator Michael Ranzenhofer, and Dennis Laba (B2).

BELOW: Laura Whitcomb (B1), Assemblyman Joseph Morelle, Karen Hutch (Bri), and Marv Sachs (Bri).



ABOVE: Terry Ann Carbone (Bro), Senator Robert Ort, and David Gibbardo (Spe).

BELOW: Julie Christensen (Ken), Kathy Dillon (CC), and Assemblyman Stephen Hawley.



RIGHT: Kim Snyder (WC); Keith Bryan, Senator Patrick Gallivan Budget Director; and Sean McCormick (RH).



Computerized testing

The switch to computer-based state testing was reviewed during the February 8 Information Exchange Committee meeting. Leading the discussion were **Michelle Ryan**, Assistant Superintendent for Accountability, Assessment and Technology (B1, B2); and **Bridget Harris**, MAARS Coordinator (B1, B2). Their comments included:

- The current school year is the first for voluntary administration of computer-based testing, with a goal of full implementation by 2020.
- New acronyms include computer-based testing (CBT), paper-based testing (PBT) and New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA).
- Testing windows are slightly larger for the 2016-2017 school year in some cases.
- Grades 3-8 testing remains a requirement under ESSA, but modifications have occurred to shorten the tests.
- A sampler of the CBTs is available at <https://ny.nextera.questarai.com/tds/#practice>. More are expected to be released in March. The sampler shows tools available to students for answering and submitting questions.
- Proctors can monitor student progress real time for CBTs. Tests are downloaded to individual student's computer so students can progress even in a network failure.



ABOVE: Information Exchange Committee Co-Chair Gary Bracken (Spe) in the center, with presenters Michelle Ryan and Bridget Harris.

- Options exist for transitioning to CBT: districts can begin CBT with field testing. NYS's motto is "As fast as we can, as slow as we must".
- To begin CBT the district must verify technological readiness through a survey. A variety of supports are available to districts to prepare for the transition to CBT. Documentation from Quester is good.
- NYSAA is somewhat adaptive. There are many options to entry into the assessment based on the student's skills and tests may now be read to students. Tests called "testlets" are in multiple 10-12 minute sections that don't have to be completed on the same day. Successive "testlets" given are based on the results from the previous "testlets".



MCSBA Seminar for Potential School Board Members Saturday, March 18, 2017 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. The Lexington Hotel

Now is the time to encourage thoughtful members of your community whom you respect to consider school board membership.

Suggest to them that they attend the MCSBA Seminar for Potential School Board Members to learn what is involved with campaigning and serving.

Impact of \$15 minimum wage on district budgets

At its February meeting, the Labor Relations Committee received an update from Lisa Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, Monroe One BOCES, on the impact of the \$15 minimum wage on district budgets. Highlights of her presentation included:

- * Minimum wage increases are phasing in from \$9.70 as of December 31, 2016, reaching \$12.50 as of December 31, 2020, and increasing to \$15.00 per hour on an schedule to be determined by the NYS Department of Labor and the Director of Budget.

- * The positions effected by the increase include Clerical, Custodial/Maintenance, Food Service Workers, Teacher Aides/Paraprofessionals, Bus Drivers/Bus Attendants, Summer Help, and Substitutes.

- * There are potential impacts to school districts even if their employees are not eventually covered. These included job trade out, the ability to recruit and retain employees, as well as pressure for salary increases from staff.

- * Positions such as bus drivers, bus attendants, and para professionals have been historically hard for BOCES to staff and retain even before the legislation was enacted.

- * Budgets will have to adsorb new costs and lawmakers must be made aware of the impact of this legislation.

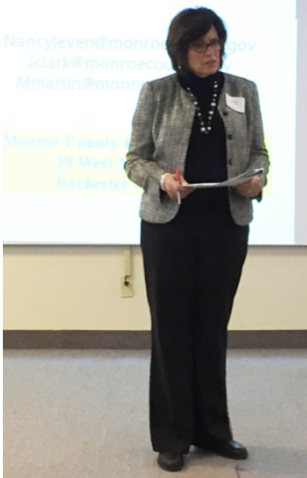


ABOVE: Labor Relations Co- Chairs Peter Forsgren (Fpt) and Tom Abbott (Hil) with presenter Lisa Ryan of Monroe One BOCES.

BELOW: District leaders at the Labor Relations Committee meeting.



District clerks prepare for the 2017 vote



ABOVE LEFT: District Clerk Ann Barrows (Gre) reviews steps to prepare for the annual school district school board and budget vote.

ABOVE RIGHT: Election Commissioners Tom Ferrorese and Doug French leading discussion.



ABOVE: Clerks from across Monroe County and surrounding areas at the Board of Elections Training Center.

District clerks from our region, Monroe County and beyond, met at the Monroe County Board of Elections Training Center in January to discuss experiences with electronic voting machines and to prepare for using them again for the 2017 school board and budget voting.

Monroe County Board of Elections Commissioners Tom Ferrorese and Doug French reviewed issues involved with electronic voting in 2016 as well as services the Board of Elections offers for clerks before, during, and after the vote. Board of Elections personnel demonstrated the use of the machines for new clerks.

This was the 34th MCSBA workshop planned by and for district clerks. The planning committee for this session included Cathy Andersen (EI), Ann Barrows (Gre), Cynthia Cushman (Web), Mary Torcello (CC), Roni Walker (Pit), and Sara Williams (Mt. Morris).