

## MCSBA members in Albany



A number of school board members and top administrators from MCSBA member districts travelled to Albany on March 5 and 6 to discuss items of interest to public education with lawmakers and key staff people. Shown with the Albany skyline behind them are advocacy participants (left to right): Peter Forsgren (Fpt), Marv Sachs (Bri), Judy O'Leary-Sargeant (Fpt), Richard Cunningham (Gre), Lynn Fulmore (CC), Willa Powell (Roc), Mark Elledge (Pen), Joyce Kostyk (Fpt), John Piper (Pen), Sherry Johnson (MCSBA), Nancy Pickering ( Hil), Briana McNamee (NYSSBA), Bob Cook (RH), Sean McCormick (RH), Valerie Baum (Pit), Damon Buffum (Fpt), and Tom Nespeca ( B1). The picture of members was taken after Briana McNamee of NYSSBA provided MCSBA members with an update on current education issues at the state level.

More about the Albany trip appears on page 5.



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## From our executive director: **SINCERITY**

How do you honor someone who has spent her entire life in the sincere pursuit of public service? It is rare that we find such people who are willing to selflessly give up any aspect of a personal life to extend themselves long past the age of retirement. In this day and age, it is even rarer to find an individual, who is able to do so without stepping into the multitude of quagmires that can easily end a public career.



**Sherry Johnson**

Sincere, dedicated and passionate leadership is in short supply in Washington right now. When I was there this past February, it was clear to me that we have a broken system that if not repaired quickly will continue to denigrate our power, our prestige and ultimately disintegrate our ability to self-govern. We need leaders, now more than ever, who work for the people they represent in a manner that benefits the greater good, who can collaborate and who understand that the true threats for the American way of life are from those who choose to divide us so that they can work their own agenda while we are in disarray. Louise understood what we should be fighting for and although her fight is over, her legacy needs to burn ever bright for those who follow in her footsteps.

Louise Slaughter was an unapologetic, progressive woman always ahead of her time. She engaged her keen mind, her unrelenting passion and her southern humor with a voice that demanded to be heard. She earned the respect of colleagues and constituents time and time again and never lost her sense of purpose along the way. And, whether or not you agreed with her positions or her platform, no one could argue her sincerity. And that is why she will not only be missed by those who had the privilege to know her and love her, but for all of us who now mourn for what we have lost in her extraordinary leadership.

I will choose to honor her as I work every day to lead this organization of dedicated public servants. The great poet Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate; to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” Louise did all of that and more but it was her sincerity to make that difference that has benefited us all.

*Sherry Johnson*

Louise was a true friend of public education. Our meetings with her were always delightful, but she was also fully aware of our priorities, she understood our issues and was happy to debate anything that she wasn't in total agreement with. Open to information, she was interested in being educated. At the end of our meetings, she always thanked our members for the work that they were doing on behalf of the children in our community because she understood the sacrifices that are made in service to others.

When I was given the tremendous honor to lead MCSBA, I received many notes of congratulations, but the only letter that I received from any State or Congressional leader was from Louise. It was personal and highlighted my service to the Churchville-Chili board of education, spoke of the great work of MCSBA and then personally signed. I was touched then and now it will be an important keepsake.



Congresswoman Louise McIntosh Slaughter



# From our president: Once Again, GUN Violence

Once again, after a deadly school shooting in Florida, discussion has turned to how to stop the next shooting. Some have called for new laws to make it harder to buy weapons. Others have suggested that there should be more guns in school; in the hands of qualified teachers and/or staff. The argument goes with proper training, a teacher becomes the first line of defense, and would be able to react much faster than any police officer who isn't on the scene. Parents would rather know their children are safe, or at least have someone trying to protect them, rather than knowing there is a shooter in their child's school and there is no one else in the building who has a gun to protect anyone.



Mike Suffoletto

As National Rifle Association CEO, Wayne LePierre, put it following the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, "The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is with a good guy with a gun." Basically, if more people are armed, they can stop violence before it gets worse or prevent it altogether.

As an Association, we strongly suggest any policy a school board adopts, should be evidence-based. Is there any good research on the effect of arming teachers, or the effect of putting more security in schools? Based on the evidence we do have, there is enough to suggest that putting more guns in schools could actually make gun violence worse.

Research, compiled by the Harvard School of Public Health's Injury Control Research Center, contends that after controlling for variables such as socioeconomic factors and other crime, places with more guns have more gun deaths.

Even when people are armed, that doesn't mean they properly respond to a mass shooting. Multiple simulations have demonstrated that most people, if placed in an active shooter situation while armed, will not be able to stop the situation, and may in fact, do little more than get themselves killed in the process.

According to the FBI's report on active shooter events, only about 3 percent were stopped by a civilian with a gun. Unarmed civilians actually stopped more incidents – about 13 percent. Most of the incidents – more than 56 percent – ended on the shooter's initiative, when the shooter either killed himself or herself, simply stopped shooting, or fled the scene.

Another relevant data point from the FBI's analysis is the fact Law Enforcement suffered casualties in 21 of the 45 incidents where they engaged the shooter to end the threat, and these people were trained to do this kind of thing full time.

Would more of these shootings be prevented if more people had guns? According to Jesse Wasmer, a guidance counselor, every day for five-and-a-half years he has thought about the moment he tackled a student who had just fired a shotgun into the back of a classmate of a suburban Baltimore high school. "Never have I thought I wish I'd had a gun," Wasmer said.

If school districts are considering arming school staff, they must be aware of the significant responsibilities and potential liabilities that beg the following questions according to Kenneth Trump, (who is not related to President Donald Trump) but is President of the National School Safety and Security Service:

\* Does the school board have appropriate and adequate policies and procedures governing the carrying and use of firearms by teachers and school staff?

\* What type of "use of force continuum" has the school district created for staff to use firearms? How does that stand up in comparison to such standards held for police officers and others who are armed and deployed in a public safety capacity?

\* What types of firearms (type of guns, caliber of weapons, etc.) are staff allowed to carry and not allowed to carry? Will staff carry their own personal firearms or school district-issued firearms? If the school allows staff to carry their personal weapons for the purpose of protecting staff and students, what responsibilities do school boards thereby assume for making sure the firearms carried are functional? Does the school district have regular "inspections" of staff firearms to make sure they are functional and appropriate to policy, and if so, who on the school staff is responsible for that function and what is their level of expertise and training to make such decisions?

\* What type of firearms training does the school district provide on a regular, ongoing basis to those staff it authorizes to be armed with guns? Will the school district build and operate its own firearms range? Who on school staff is qualified to provide such training, operate a firearm range, etc? Will firearms certification and re-certification be added to the school district's professional development training program each year?

\* What type of weapons retention training has been provided to staff who are armed and what steps have been taken to reduce risks of a teacher or staff member being intentionally disarmed by a student or other person, or for having a firearm dislodged from a staff member's control when the staff member breaks up a fight in a cafeteria or hallway?

\* How is the district prepared to prevent and manage situations where teachers and/ or staff members lose, misplace, or have stolen their firearms while on campus?

\* How will the school district manage an accidental shooting that could occur?

\* What is the impact of this type of board policy and practice on the school district's insurance and potential legal liability posture? What is the insurance provider's position and concerns, or will they even insure the district for such a practice?

\* What other options have we considered as school leaders?

If having more guns in more places made Americans safer, then shouldn't we have the safest record in any developed country in the world? Isn't the exact opposite true? The notion that the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun is a myth.

If America wants to confront its gun violence problem, then, as the research suggests, it should look to reduce the number of guns in circulation – not putting more armed people in schools.

# Responding to the opioid epidemic

On March 14, Jennifer Faringer, Director of the Rochester Area DePaul's National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence-Rochester Area, provided members of the Information Exchange Committee with an update on the current opioid crisis in our region. She provided grim statistics on the causes and effects of drug abuse in our region and elsewhere. She provided suggestions for advocacy to reduce over-prescription and to stem the flow of opioids. Ms. Faringer also shared links on addiction and local treatment options:

- NCADD-RA website on all types of addiction, rehab, etc: [www.ncadd-ra.org](http://www.ncadd-ra.org);
- NCADD-RA website on resources and advocacy: <https://ncadd-ra.org/news-resources/resources-advocacy-research/>;
- Monroe County Opioid Task Force: <https://ncadd-ra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NCADD-RA-Opioid-Task-Force-Brochure-2.18.pdf>;
- Monroe County OASAS certified Treatment Providers: <https://ncadd-ra.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MC-OASAS-Certified-Treatment-Provider-Referral-Template-March-13-2018.pdf>;
- Safe disposal of medication: <https://www.monroecounty.gov/ecopark/pharmaceutical.php>.



ABOVE: Information Exchange Committee Co-Chairs Tammy Gurowski (Web) and Gary Bracken (Spe) on either side of presenter Jennifer Faringer.

BELOW: Jennifer Faringer discussing the opioid epidemic with the Information Exchange Committee in March.



LEFT: Presenters Scott Covell and Michael Martone with Labor Relations Co-Chair Irene Narotsky (Pit).

BELOW: Presenters Covell and Martone discussing RASHP2 with the Labor Relations Committee in March.



## Annual RASHP2 Update

At their February 28 meeting, members of the Labor Relations Committee received an update on the regional health insurance cooperative, RASHP2, from Scott Covell, Assistant Superintendent for Management Services at Monroe One BOCES, and Michael Martone, Area Vice President of Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. They reported that:

- \* RASHP2 became self-funded on December 29, 2017. The change did not disrupt client services or change doctor networks.
- \* The 2017 plan performance was better than expected showing a multi-million-dollar surplus, some of which will be used to meet the reserve requirements for the self-funded plan.
- \* The cost and frequency of claims exceeding \$350,000 continues to increase due to health care trends, especially medication costs.
- \* The premium rate for the year is based on the average of two actuarial reviews by Excellus and Arthur J. Gallagher & Company.
- \* Telemedicine is available for some plans.

## Position on school safety being updated



The Legislative Committee created a subcommittee to revise the MCSBA position on school safety. The subcommittee's recommendation will now be submitted for review by the full committee, as well as by the Steering and Executive Committees.

LEFT: Working on the new school safety position are MCSBA VP Lisa Ireland (Bro), Gary Bracken (Spe), Kathy Dillon (B2, CC), Sherry Johnson, and Lynn Fulmore (CC). Subcommittee members not pictured are Vincent Antonicelli (ER) and Joyce Kostyk (Fpt).



# MCSBA in Albany

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About 20 MCSBA members—elected school board trustees and appointed administrative officials—met on March 5 and 6 with state elected and appointed officials in Albany to discuss a number of issues critical to the effective functioning of local public school districts.

With lawmakers and their staff members, the MCSBA delegation discussed:

- \* Insights on education budget proposal,
- \* The governor’s proposed 2% cap on expense based aids (slated for the 2019-2020 budget),
- \* Unfunded mandates,
- \* School safety measures,
- \* Elimination of the need for a super-majority to override the tax cap,
- \* Issues with free and reduce lunch rules,
- \* The Senate’s tax freeze proposal to eliminate school property taxes for Seniors over 70 in the next 10 years.

BELOW: Bob Cook (RH), Tom Nespeca (B1), and Dr. Kenneth Graham (RH) meeting with Assemblyman Harry Bronson.

BOTTOM: Elma Borcilo, Assemblyman Morelle’s Legislative Advisor; Tom Putnam (Pen), Marv Sachs (Bri), Mark Elledge (Pen), and John Piper (Pen).



ABOVE: Judy O’Leary-Sargeant (Fpt), Joyce Kostyk (Fpt), Willa Powell (Roc), Jason Harmon (SED Director Title 1 School and Community Services), and Lynn Fulmore (CC).

BELOW: MCSBA members meeting with Senator Rich Funke, Senator Joseph Robach and an Aide to Senator Robert Ort.



With Jason Jason Harmon, SED Director of Title 1 School and Community Services, the group discussed:

- \* Any updates to the ESSA plan and guidance documents,
- \* Implications for funding for school districts as they make the transition to the new requirements,
- \* New ESSA determination of proficiency,
- \* Suggestions for encouraging parents not to opt their children out of grades 3-8 testing,
- \* Conditions placed on “reward” status for districts based on test refusals,
- \* Lack of need for APPR, with all of the measures taken under ESSA,
- \* Proposed federal cut to Title II, Part A grants to train and recruit teachers and principals,
- \* Strategies to test compliance of charter schools with ESSA requirements,
- \* Suit by the Board of Regents and the Commissioner against the SUNY decision to allow certain charter schools to train their own teachers.

In addition to the meetings pictured, members met with Jamie Frank, the Governor’s Assistant Secretary for Education; and Senators Patrick Gallivan and Michael Ranzenhofer. Since Assembly members Stephen Hawley, Mark Johns, and Peter Lawrence were called into session to discuss school safety, members met with their aides.



# Careers in Education Conference



The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Careers in Education Conference welcomed more than 230 students to Nazareth College on March 14 to learn more about the many career options offered by school districts. Students attending represented 22 districts, 18 of them in Monroe County.

According to the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT), New York State will need 180,000 teachers in the next decade, as 32 percent of current teachers retire in the next five years.

This Careers in Education conference offered concurrent workshops on a variety of topics, such as In-demand careers in educational technology, inclusive education, school leadership opportunities, urban education, career and technical education, school communications and public relations, leadership in autism education, early childhood education, job interviews, school psychologists.

Keynote speaker, Jeffrey Crane (WI) encouraged participants to consider the importance of relationships in education. He invited attendees to determine whether or not they would like to participate in the national walk-out in memory of Florida shooting victims. A small group of interested students helped to plan an outdoor remembrance. About 200 of the participants gathered in silence outside the meeting facility for 17 minutes in honor of the 17 victims. Those remaining inside participated in a discussion led by conference committee chair Dr. Lesli Myers (Bro).

The conference ended with lunch and a college fair during which representatives from 13 public and private colleges in New York State met with students.

TOP: Keynoter Jeffrey Crane (WI) welcoming students.

MIDDLE: Student planning team explaining how the remembrance of the Florida shooting victims would proceed. Next to the student speaker is Dr. Lesli Myers (Bro).

LEFT: Some of the almost 200 students who participated in the 17 minutes of silence in memory of the shooting victims.

BELOW: Some of the 230 students plus their teachers attending the conference.







# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP CONFERENCE

Approximately 650 high school students gathered on March 13 to explore global citizenship in our multicultural world. The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Global Citizenship Conference (GCC) hosted by Nazareth College involved students from 17 high schools in 9 MCSBA districts plus another 8 high schools from districts as far away as Sullivan West, which is southeast of Binghamton. In addition, there were students from Monroe and Genesee Community Colleges and several private and charter schools.

Participants got actively involved right from the start, with a game that served as a social mixer.

The program included several small group sessions on a variety of topics that were organized under the headings of encountering varying faiths, and cultures; globalization and diversity; and where to go from here, all of which supported the theme of the conference: Love Not Hate.

Among the subjects of varying faith communities during the seminars were Abrahamic Faiths; Indian Origin Faiths; Atheism, Agnosticism, and Secular Humanism; and Non-Theistic Traditions.



Other topics covered included:

- \* Women and Gender in Faith Traditions;
- \* Religion in Media and Pop Culture;
- \* Conflict Transformation;
- \* Freedom of Expression;
- \* Equal Opportunity;
- \* Religion and State;
- \* Women in Islam;
- \* Becoming an Ally for Social Justice.

ABOVE: Jeff Crane, West Irondequoit Superintendent, and Dr. Mohammad Shafiq, Director of the Nazareth College Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue, addressing participants.

BELOW: Participants interacting to complete forms that helped them to learn about one another. The two teens wearing MOSAICS t-shirts are Greece students who are also part of a growing group of regional teenagers who support equity and equality.

The GCC is presented by the Nazareth College Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue: <https://www2.naz.edu/interfaith/>.







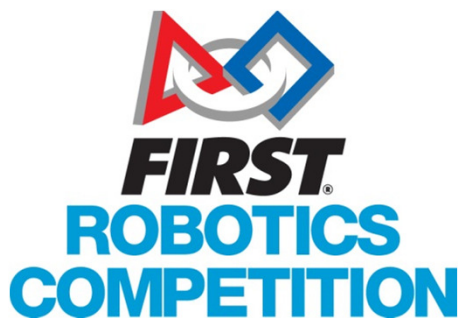
Amanda Fulco photos

Pictures show some of the teens from 38 high schools in our region gathered to discuss issues of racism on March 23.



About 600 students from 38 different schools (public and private) were represented at the March 23 ROC2Change Student Summit on Race which was hosted by Churchville-Chili students at the Wegman's center in Chili. The "ROC2Change" theme for the day was 'Implicit Bias'. Organizers seated the high school students with others they didn't know to help them gain a better understanding about one another and to spark conversations about race.

This is a student designed and facilitated project that has grown with each opportunity. The next summit will be held on November 16, 2018 and will be hosted by the Brighton School District. More information can be found at <https://roc2change.weebly.com/student-summits-on-race.html>.



As part of the 2018 national FIRST Robotics Competition, 50 high school teams from the Northeast United States as well as Ontario, Quebec, Brazil, and China, participated in the regional competition held at RIT March 15 – 17. Monroe County school districts were represented by 11 teams. Among the 8 teams qualifying to participate in the national competition to be held in Detroit on April 25 - 28, were 5 from MCSBA districts: Ranger Robotics (Spe), X-Cats (Roc), Greater Rochester Robotics (CC), Devil Tech (Vic), and Red Raider Robotics (Fpt).

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) inspires interest in STEM by engaging students in exciting mentor-based programs that build STEM skills, inspire innovation, and foster well-rounded life. FIRST Robotics depends on local sponsors as well as interested adults who serve as coaches.

BELOW: Panoramic view of the 2018 FIRST Robotics regional competition at RIT.

