



## MCSBA members meet with state lawmakers



### 2019 MCSBA Legislative Priorities

- ★ School safety \*\*
- ★ Mental Health \*\*
- ★ Full funding of Foundation Aid
- ★ Tax Cap flexibility
- ★ Legislative relationships
- ★ APPR

TOP: Shown welcoming participants and opening the session are MCSBA Executive Director Sherry Johnson, President Mike Suffoletto (Web), and Legislative Committee Co-chairs Dennis Laba (B2) and Joyce Kostyk (Fpt).  
MIDDLE: Congressman Joseph Morelle, Assemblyman Harry Bronson, Assemblywoman Jamie Romeo, Senator Joseph Robach, and Assemblyman Mark Johns.  
BOTTOM: Some of the legislative breakfast participants.

On February 2, more than 90 MCSBA members representing 20 of our 23 school districts met with newly elected Congressman Joseph Morelle as well as our legislative delegation to Albany and/or their aides to discuss issues of concern to public education. Members and lawmakers and/or their aides met first for roundtable conversations. These informal interactions were followed by presentations by elected officials and a question and answer session.

More pictures on pages 4 – 5.

# News Scope

MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
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President – Mike Suffoletto, Webster CSD  
Vice President – Kathy Dillon, Monroe 2–Orleans BOCES, Churchville-Chili CSD  
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*Follow up with our lawmakers after our February 2 meeting with them:*

*Contact the MCSBA office to learn more and/or to register.*

**MCSBA Trek to Albany**  
Monday – Tuesday, March 4 – 5; 10:00 a.m.  
Bushnell's Basin Park 'n Ride



## From our executive director: When Leaders Fail

35 days. The longest shutdown in the history of the most powerful country in the world has ended. During that time, over 800,000 federal employees were either out of work, or had to work without pay. On top of the stress of dealing without the money needed to support their families, was the anxiety of not knowing when this would end. And, if the leadership in Congress and the Administration can't come to an agreement by February 15, the American people could witness, yet again, this extraordinary failure of leadership.



**Sherry Johnson**

There are 435 representatives in the House and 100 members in the Senate that make up the Legislative branch that exists coequally with the Executive and Judicial branches of our government. The legislative branch's primary duty is to make laws, but these members also provide a check on the Executive branch through their control of the budget, as well as their ability to override vetoes and to impeach the President. Those are very powerful checks and yet, our representatives let the Executive branch have untoward control over them. So much so, that not only did those impacted through their work in the service of the government spend over a month in anguish, our national security and our safety were put into peril.

Instead of using the authority that is granted to them by the Constitution, the leaders who had the power to keep government open, chose to walk away from their responsibility and allow for some of the most important functions of our government to cease.

What lessons can we take away for education leadership? Board of education members are policy makers who function as a corporate body in a legislative manner by majority rule. They are also the fiduciary body who develops and oversees the budget. They have the power to hire and to fire the superintendent. Every elected board has a constituent and that constituency has a voice that needs to be listened to.

But, it is the duly elected Board that takes on the ultimate responsibility to make decisions on what they believe is best for the students, the district and the greater community. These are not always easy. Changing transportation schedules, closing a school, redistricting, unpopular personnel changes, cutting courses, increasing class sizes and many other difficult decisions can result in packed board rooms, multiple constituent phone calls, letters, and social media attacks.

Board of education members are called trustees because they hold the public trust. When the going gets tough, these trustees don't throw their hands up, they step up. Because they know that in their role to better the lives of children, failure is not an option. It shouldn't be an option for anyone who holds the safety and prosperity of the lives of others in their hands.

*Sherry Johnson*



# From our president: 2018 Education Research Highlights

Some of you may have seen and listened to NYSSBA's best podcasts of 2018. In the same manner, I thought it would be interesting to look at some of the articles that highlighted major educational research of 2018.



Mike Suffoletto

The first article, published in the *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions* authored by Clayton Cook, Aria Fiat and Madeline Larson, entitled "Positive Greetings at the Door: Evaluation of a Low-Cost, High Yield Proactive Classroom Management Strategy", found that greeting students at the classroom door had both psychological and academic benefits. Results revealed engagement by students increased by 20 percentage points while disruptive behavior decreased by 9 percentage points. Such a simple task – spending a few moments welcoming students, promoting a sense of belonging, giving them social and emotional support – can yield such surprising large benefits. This practice has the potential to effectively add an extra hour of learning to the school day.

Research has made significant breakthroughs in understanding the science of learning, largely through technologies that give a real-time look at what happens in a child's brain as they learn.

For example, researchers used magnetic resonance imaging to demonstrate that children who have the strongest reading skills also have more interactivity between different regions of the brain. This suggests that reading is a whole-brain activity and that growth in reading skills may benefit from a multisensory approach like reading aloud or being read to while looking at the words on the page. This research was published in *Frontiers in Psychology* authored by Gregory Smith, James R. Booth, and Chris McNorgan entitled "Longitudinal Task-Related Functional Connectivity Changes Predict Reading Development."

Confirming that point, a separate group of researchers studied brain networks involved in processing narratives in preschool-age children as adults read them illustrated stories and stories with no pictures, and as they watched animated videos of stories. Brain networks connected with language, visual imagery, and learning were more engaged when adults read

the children illustrated stories; stories without pictures were too challenging, and the animated videos were overwhelming. (Score one for picture books in elementary school!)

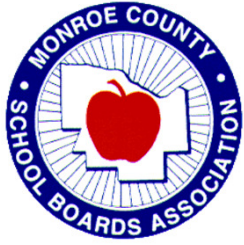
According to the article "Learning From Your Mistakes: Does It Matter If You're Out In Left Foot, I Mean Field?" by Andree-Ann Cyr and Nicole D. Anderson published in *Memory*, trying to guess an answer—and getting feedback on how close the answer is—leads to higher recall rates than simply trying to memorize information, a new study found. When trying to memorize lists of words, participants in the study remembered slightly more than half the words. But if they used a trial-and-error approach and guessed what the words were and then got feedback on their guess, they recalled about eight in 10 words.

Why does guessing improve memory? When students try to answer questions on their own—as opposed to when answers are given to them—they engage in what is known as productive struggle which helps them make sense of what they're learning. Posing questions to students helps them think through a problem, bridging the gap between what they know and what they don't.

Finally, a student's behavior is a much stronger predictor of future success than test scores are, according to a large-scale study encompassing 574,000 ninth graders, published in the University of Chicago Press Journals, entitled "What Do Test Scores Miss? The Importance of Teacher Effect on Non-Test Score Outcomes" by C. Kirabo Jackson. Teachers who helped students improve their behavior (measured by things like attendance and suspensions, course grades and grade repetition) were 10 times as effective at improving their students' graduation rates and grade point averages as teachers who focused on test scores.

What is the takeaway from these studies: Teachers affect a variety of student outcomes through their influence on both cognitive and noncognitive skill. Education research continues to remind us of the powerful impact teachers have on children. This impact is overwhelmingly positive—the studies highlighted here demonstrate how small changes in the classroom can yield surprisingly large benefits.

Mike Suffoletto



# MCSBA Legislative Breakfast Album

**RIGHT TOP:** Assemblywoman Jamie Romeo (Center) with Brian Charles, Ann Cunningham, David Long, Matt Metras, and Jon Hunter, all of West Irondequoit.

**RIGHT BOTTOM:** Carmen Gumina, Maria Rigillo, and Suzanne Casey, all of Webster.



**LEFT TOP:** Phyllis Wickerham, Aide to NYS Senator Patrick Gallivan, and Stephanie Schroeder, Aide to Assemblywoman Marjorie Byrnes, with Jessica Jackson (WC), Caralyn Ross (HFL), and David Francis (HFL).

**LEFT SECOND FROM TOP:** Tyler Sharp, Aide to Senator Robert Ort (center), with (clockwise) Greg Kincaid (Spe), Robert Lewis(Bro), and Debbie Palumbo-Sanders (Vic).

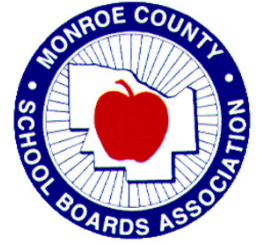
**LEFT MIDDLE:** Bob Fox, Aide to Assemblyman Stephen Hawley (center), with (clockwise) Gary Bracken (Spe), Rachel Kluth (Bro), Dan Milgate (Spe), and Jerilee DeLalla (Bro).

**RIGHT SECOND FROM BOTTOM:** Vincent Felder, Aide to Assemblyman David Gantt (in front of windows) with (clockwise) Dennis Laba (B2), Catherine Coffee (GC), Mike Hettler, Aide to Senator Michael Ranzenhofer, Cheryl Repass (C-C), and Liz Hallmark (Roc).

**RIGHT BOTTOM (Clockwise from center facing camera):** Mary Grow (EI), John Abbott (B2, EI), Kim McCluski (Pit), Helen Deubler, Aide to Senator Rich Funke, Dawn Santiago-Marullo (Vic), David Long (WI), David Ghidui (HF-L), (back of heads) Joe Alati (HF-L), Brian Charles (WI), Maureen Nupp (B1, Fpt), Brett Provenzano (Fpt), and Kristen Elliott (Vic).



# MCSBA Legislative Breakfast Album



LEFT TOP: Joyce Kostyk, Marty Cardona, Brett Provenzano, and Damon Buffum, all of Fairport.



LEFT BOTTOM: Diane McBride (RH), Phyllis Wickerham of Patrick Gullivan's office, and Deb Leh (WC).



RIGHT TOP: Congressman Joseph Morelle (at left) with (clockwise) Aide Dana Vernelli, Joyce Kostyk (Fpt), Peter Forsgren (Fpt), Bob Dickson (B1), Mike Suffoletto (Web), Amy West (HFL), and Tom Putnam (Pen).



RIGHT SECOND FROM TOP: NYS Senator Joseph Robach (center) with (clockwise) Andrea Hinchey Unson (GC), Marv Sachs (Bri), Julene Gilbert (Bri), Mary Caitlin Wight (Gre), Romeo Colilli (Gre), Kathy Graupman (Gre), Jo Anne Antonacci (B2), Tim Dobbertin (B2), Adam Geist (Hil), Casey Kosiorek (Hil).



RIGHT MIDDLE: Assemblyman Harry Bronson (second from left) with (clockwise) Aide Alex Hipolito, Bo Wright (RH), Bob Cook (RH), Carol Stehm (GC), and Beth Nolan (WC).



RIGHT SECOND FROM BOTTOM: Assemblyman Mark Johns (center facing camera) with (clockwise) Marty Cardona (Fpt), Dave Metzger (Web), Jan Strege (Web), Mark Elledge (Pen), Jon Ottney (Pen), and Damon Buffum (Fpt).

RIGHT BOTTOM: Assemblywoman Jamie Romeo (center facing camera) with (clockwise) Jon Hunter (WI), Phil Oberst (EI), Karen Hatch (Bri), Christine Lee (Bri), Ann Cunningham (WI), Sora Sachs (B1), Matt Metras (WI), NYSSBA's Briana McNamee (mostly hidden), and Mark Anson (EI).



# Systemic structures for cultural responsiveness

At the January meeting of the Information Exchange Committee, Dr. Cephas Archie, Chief Diversity Officer, The College at Brockport, reviewed strategies for instituting cultural responsiveness throughout schools and districts.

He discussed points made in the book, *Good to Great* by Jim Collins, a study of successful industries that became great and were sustainable, noting that school board members and superintendents are leaders:

- ★ “Leaders bring people TOGETHER (unite)- modeling acceptable collaborative/inclusive behaviors, establishing, communicating and reinforcing expectations.
- ★ Leaders highlight commonalities (intersectionality)- connections both professional and personal.
- ★ Leaders create intentional spaces and time for inclusive connections to be developed and cultivated.
- ★ Leaders must recognize and encourage inclusive behavior, as well as respond to and challenge exclusionary behavior”.

He provided examples of effective engagement and interaction strategies for working with students—such as culturally relevant curriculum, looking at experiences through multiple lenses, and the importance of learning about other cultures. He gave examples of a Cultural Tool Kit developed by staff and students at The College at Brockport. The tool kit is viewable on the College at Brockport website.

He also discussed the importance of the Platinum Rule versus the Golden Rule when effectively interacting with others from a culture different from one’s own. The Platinum Rule says ‘Do unto others as they wish to be treated’ (which might not be the same for every person within the same culture). He noted it is important to let a person teach you how they wish to be treated.

He also stated that –

- 1) Governing bodies need to develop structures & policies with strategic planning efforts.
- 2) Professional development and training opportunities need to be provided for employees and students.
- 3) Student programing needs to be adjusted to include cultural diversity.



LEFT: Dr. Cephas Archie, The College at Brockport, with Information Exchange Committee Chairs: Jon Ottney (Pen) and Tammy Gurowski (Web).

BELOW: Dr. Archie interacting with Information Exchange Committee members.



# Sexual Harassment Prevention: Recent Changes to NYS Law

At their January 16 meeting, Labor Relations Committee members received an update on changes to New York State law regarding sexual harassment prevention that took effect in October 2018. Sara E. Visingard, Esq. of Harris Beach outlined the major provisions of the new legislation and answered questions.

Among her comments were the following:

All employers must adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy and training program.

Employers must either adopt the NYS Department of Labor model policy or establish one that meets or exceeds the model.

Employers must provide the policy to all employees as they are hired in writing or electronically. Acknowledgement of receipt of the policy is encouraged but not required. Employers are also encouraged to post the policy where employees can see it.

New employees must be trained as soon as possible upon hiring. This training must be repeated annually at a schedule determined by the employer.



Employers must adopt the state’s model training program or produce their own that equals or exceeds the minimum standards in the Department of Labor model.

Employer sexual harassment prevention policies must provide examples of prohibited conduct, information about legal provisions concerning harassment and available remedies, a complaint form, a procedure for timely and confidential investigation of complaints and due process for all involved, statement of individuals’ rights of redress, a statement that sexual harassment is a form of misconduct resulting in sanctions against the perpetrator and managerial personnel who knowingly allow such behavior.



TOP: Presenter Sara Visingard, Harris Beach, with Labor Relations Committee Co-Chairs Irene Narotsky (Pit) and Gary Bracken (Spe).

UPPER LEFT: Committee Co-Chair Irene Narotsky chairing the committee.



LOWER LEFT: Attorney Sara Visingard speaking to members.



## 2019 NSBA Advocacy Institute

School district leaders from across the country gathered for the 2019 NSBA Advocacy Institute in Washington, D.C. in late January. The National School Boards Association, host for the Institute, presented participants with updates on NSBA positions on federal issues before they met with their Congressional representatives to discuss the positions.



ABOVE: Tom Nespeca (B1), NYSSBA Treasurer, at the left, with other school district leaders and Congressman Chris Collins (center) after a meeting during the NSBA Advocacy Institute in late January.

### NSBA's Federal Legislative Priorities include:

- \* Seeking equity and excellence in public education through school boards;
- \* Ensuring that local school boards are part of the national education debate;
- \* Reauthorizing the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act;
- \* Reauthorizing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- \* Supporting America's Public Schools (opposing legislation that diverts public funds from K-12 education through vouchers or tax credits to fund private, religious or home school education);
- \* Seeking Immigration Reform to restore the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program;
- \* Ensuring Student Data Privacy while Promoting Effective Data Use;
- \* Seeking Net Neutrality and Access to Equitable Digital Learning Opportunities.

Among the topics discussed during the Advocacy Institute were:

- \* 2020 Census & Its Impact on Student Counts, Funding, and Poverty in School Districts;
- \* NSBA's Campaign for modernization and full funding of IDEA;
- \* Delivering Workforce Readiness: Districts & Business Partnerships;
- \* Medication Management: Issues and Challenges;
- \* School Safety: The Federal Front, State Actions and Title IV.

## Affiliates network meets at Memorial Art Gallery

In January, former MCSBA members received an update on MCSBA priorities in the areas of student mental health and school safety as well as legislative activities. In addition Marlene Harmann-Whitmore, Director of Academic Programs at the Memorial Art Gallery, described K-12 educational programs at the MAG.

TOP: Marlene Harmann-Whitmore, Director of Academic Programs at MAG, and Margaret Burns speaking during the affiliates meeting.

MIDDLE: Mort Stein, Mark Kokanovich, Dick Pixley Mike Mairoino, and Judy Wadsworth.

BOTTOM: Lisa Ireland, Mike Suffoletto, Barbara Cutrona, Marlene Harmann-Whitmore, Mort Stein, and Margaret Burns.

