

New MCSBA Positions & Priorities for New Legislative Session

MCSBA members will be refocusing their advocacy strategies as both the New York State Senate and the U. S. House of Representatives shift their majorities. MCSBA members will take their concerns and recommendations to officials in Albany and Washington, D. C. in 2019 in hopes that all of our representatives will be supportive of our aims. We will need to meet with new elected officials and their new leadership to argue our case in support of public education.

At the state level, we need to learn how the new majority will affect our major concerns:

- ◆ Foundation Aid constraints and the tax cap are the two biggest impacts on our district budgets. Mandates also continue to drive dollars away from instruction.
- ◆ The Board of Regents has extended the moratorium on the APPR requirements. MCSBA seeks to repeal the APPR legislation because members believe that local control over teacher/principal evaluations will merit the most comprehensive opportunity to measure performance.
- ◆ Charter and private schools should be held to the same standards of accountability as public schools.
- ◆ School safety and security have always been and will continue to be first priorities for our school districts. MCSBA is asking for funding and tax cap flexibility in order to continue to implement best practice additions into current school safety infrastructure and mental health supports.

MCSBA Legislative Priorities in 2019

- ★ School safety **
- ★ Mental Health **
- ★ Full funding of Foundation Aid
- ★ Tax Cap flexibility
- ★ Developing and maintaining legislative relationships, especially with the new political landscape
- ★ APPR

** New MCSBA position papers on school safety and student mental health are found on pages 6 – 8.



News Scope

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COAC working on school safety and security talking points

Seen during a meeting in December are COAC members Sherry Johnson (MCSBA), Kim McCluski (Pit), Kathy Dillon (CC,B2), Lori Orologio (CC) Catherine Dean (Pen), and Mike Suffoletto(Web) as they prepare talking points to be used by district officials to discuss the new MCSBA position on school safety and security.

From our executive director: Resolutions

The word resolution has two distinct meanings. One is to make a firm decision to do or not do something and the other is the action of solving a problem, dispute or contentious matter. In January, we mostly focus on the first definition and vow, firmly, to lose weight, be more organized, or some other meritorious goal. It is why exercise equipment and storage bins are always on sale after the holidays. And, by the end of the month, many of us will become aware, firmly, that these goals can be difficult, if not impossible, to reach. But, we continue to try, because ultimately it is in the effort where we achieve the most benefit.



Sherry Johnson

However, this January, when Congress reconvenes and the State Legislature begins its work, they will propose resolutions of the other sort, for it is their duty to take action to solve the issues before all of us, on behalf of all of us. And, just as you do at your board tables, they will need to work together to agree on what those solutions need to be.

A different dynamic will be in place in both the Federal and State Legislatures. The House of Representatives will be controlled by the Democratic Party, but many of these

individuals will be new to their role and will need, just like new board members, to climb a steep learning curve in a very short period of time. This is also true for the new NYS Senate members for the very same reason.

How these two groups of individuals work across the aisle with their more veteran colleagues will test what will be ultimately achievable. In NYS, with a Democratic Senate, Assembly and Governor, we might expect the work to be more amicable than between the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives, but history has shown us that this isn't necessarily the case. What we do know is that when the American people spoke this past November, it was about refocusing on our common values, getting beyond our differences and working together.

Vince Lombardi wrote that "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." We need to echo and reinforce these words in all of our efforts this year as we begin to resolutely advocate on behalf of public education, beginning with our legislative breakfast in early February, and then with our other opportunities throughout the rest of the year. For, it is in your individual commitment to our group effort, that we are able achieve the most benefit for the children of our community.

Sherry Johnson

From our president: What makes a great school board member

It is that time of year, again, when one makes a New Year's resolution. I wonder how many of us will consider a resolution to become a better school board member. Even if you choose not to make this resolution, it probably is an appropriate time of year to reflect upon what makes a good school board member especially since school board members are entrusted with a community's two most precious resources – its children and its money.

The best School Board members understand that student learning is job one. This means the policies and resources of the district are targeted to promote achievement for all students. School Board members who are committed to the best outcomes for each and every student recognize there is a path to high standards, a rigorous curriculum and high-quality teachers and administrators.

Your success as a board member is inextricably tied to the success of your board. You will be judged by what the Board accomplishes, not by what you as an individual try to accomplish. True, you were elected as an individual, but you work as part of a team.

Thus, the best way to succeed as a board member is to practice collaboration and respect. Boards whose members treat one another with respect tend to be the most effective. Those whose members give in to hostility and animosity tend to get less done. Thus, the best way to succeed is to be part of a strong team.

If you are making a resolution, you might want to consider learning together as a board team. It's not enough for an



Mike Suffoletto

individual board member to learn about effective governance through reading books, attending conference sessions, and studying. Governance teams improve when the team learns together and applies that learning to their work.

Effective Board members, as a team, participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be informed and effective leaders. Members of effective boards come to meetings prepared to engage in discussions, ask questions, and seek clarification. A lot of background information is required to make policy and assess accountability. You should understand your school system's vision, goals, and policies; its current successes, challenges, and opportunities; and the educational environment in your community.

As school boards focus on their continuous improvement—learning together and applying that learning as a board team, assessing their progress, and measuring performance - they set the example and course of action for continuous improvement throughout the school system. This means administrators are improving, operations are increasing efficiency, teaching is becoming more effective, and students are learning more in the classroom.

When board members display better teamwork within the board; demonstrate more cooperation with the superintendent, and have a stronger focus on student achievement, ultimately, the students benefit. Isn't that why we're all in this together in the first place?

Whatever your plans and goals are for 2019, I do wish you the best of luck with them.

Mike Suffoletto



Farewell to our two Irondequoit Superintendents

East Irondequoit Superintendent Sue Allen and West Irondequoit Superintendent Jeff Crane attended their last MCSBA Executive Committee meeting on December 5, 2018. They were feted with a cake and plaques commemorating their service to MCSBA. In addition John Abbott (B2, EI) and Beckie Schultz (MCSBA) provided overviews of their service to their respective districts.

LEFT: Jeff Crane (WI) and Sue Allen (EI) with their MCSBA plaques acknowledging their service.

Upcoming Opportunities to Meet with lawmakers



LOCAL: MCSBA Legislative Breakfast

**Saturday,
February 2, 2019
9:00 am – 11:30 am**

**Penfield Country Club
1784 Jackson Road**



Take advantage of this important opportunity to meet our new legislators and to be a voice for our students!

Agenda:

- 9:00 am Informal Breakfast with members of the NYS Senate and Assembly
- 10:00 am Remarks by Legislators with Q&A
- 11:30 am Adjournment

Register by January 23, by calling 328-1972 or email [Mary Talbot@boces.monroe.edu](mailto:Mary_Talbot@boces.monroe.edu)

ALBANY: Meet with NYS Education and Legislative Leaders

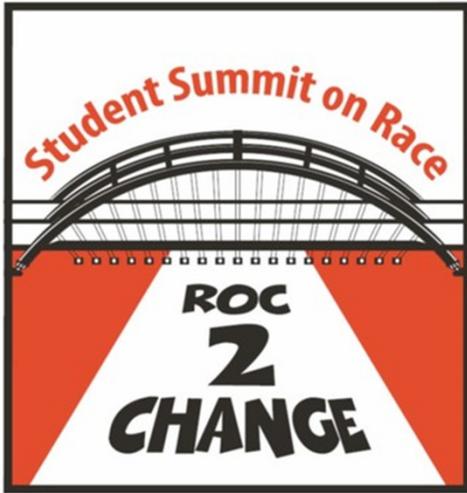
**Monday - Tuesday
March 4 - 5, 2019
7:00 am Monday –
6:30 pm Tuesday**

**MCSBA Bus Trip
to Albany**



Be an **ADVOCATE** for students!
Meet with key legislative and education leaders.
All Board Members, Superintendents and District Administrators are encouraged to attend!

To register, contact Mary Talbot at mary_talbot@boces.monroe.edu by February 14.



ROC2Change student summit on race

Almost 500 students from 40 high schools, both public and parochial, representing more than 20 school districts, met on November 16 to continue discussions on how to live together in a multi-cultural world. (The numbers attending were less than the number registered due to snow days in some districts). This was the seventh summit organized by **ROC2Change**, an initiative of high school students in our region, who plan and conduct the sessions.

At the November 2018 summit, the Keynote Speaker was Dr. Khuram Hussain, Interim Dean of the College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Dr. Hussain spoke on Intersectionality, the theory that social identities, related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination and multiple group identities intersect to create a whole that is different from the component identities.

The most recent ROC2Change summit, sponsored by Brighton CSD, was held on November 16 at the Wegmans Conference Center in Gates. During this most recent summit, students from high schools in our region, both public and private, engaged in facilitated dialogue with peers related to race, racism, privilege, internalized racism, non-racist, and anti-racist. They are working together to develop plans to be the change!

ROC2Change students plan two summits each school year. The schedule for upcoming summits includes:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| March 29, 2019 | Sponsor: Spencerport CSD |
| November 22, 2019 | Sponsor: Pittsford CSD |
| March 27, 2020 | Sponsor: Hilton CSD |
| November 2020 | Sponsor: Fairport CSD |

To learn more, go to

<https://www.roc2change.com/student-summits-on-race.html>



ROC2Change emerged as students from Monroe County began to come together to address race relations in their community.

Our guiding principles include the following:

- “We are in this together”
- Be respectful
- Be present
- Speak briefly
- Speak from your own experiences
- Be mindful of the messages body language can send
- Ask clarifying questions
- Challenge ideas, not people
- Accept conflict and resolution as an opportunity to learn
- Suspend judgement of yourself and others
- Treat the openness of others as a gift
- Honor the confidentiality of personal sharing
- The goal is not to agree, but to gain understanding
- When we disagree, we...
- “Treat people like people.”
- “Listen, listen, listen”
- “Pause. Breathe. Love.”
- “Distract them”
- “Accept”



Keeping our Schools Safe and Secure

The number one priority for MCSBA member districts is to educate students in a safe and secure environment. However; due to limited local resources, we call on both the NYS Legislature and the Federal Government to provide the following supports to help our school districts to continue their critical work of providing safe and secure places to learn, work, and play:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Local Control of any mandated and non-mandated safety and security measures</p> | <p>All MCSBA member districts work to diligently review and comply with mandated safety plans that provide appropriate lockdown and evacuation responses to a wide variety of potential threats. Plans are developed in coordination with local police, fire and emergency agencies to ensure coordinated and rapid response based on evolving best practices.</p> <p>School districts are in the best position to make all security decisions. MCSBA asks that any new legislation or regulation allow for local control and contain flexible funding parameters.</p> |
| <p>Campus Safety Preparedness</p> | <p>Schools must be available and accessible to the communities that support them as well as providing a safe and secure environment for students and staff. Therefore, good security strategies need to employ a layered approach to safety, including passive and active preventative and responsive capabilities.</p> <p>MCSBA members support federal and state research to inform best practices for safety and security in school facilities. Districts could then choose from selection of proven strategies to promote safer schools both when students are present and when schools are available for community use.</p> |
| <p>Fiscally Responsible Safety</p> | <p>School safety is a critical part of a successful learning environment. However, the costs associated with school safety are over and above the traditional costs of providing the learning environment. With revenues from tax levies capped, funds for providing school safety are diverted from the traditional school services.</p> <p>MCSBA asks that the costs associated with school safety and security be excluded from the NYS tax levy cap. We also ask for the immediate release of Smart School Bond Act dollars, which can be used for this purpose.</p> |

Despite the recent frightening events, schools are the safest place children gather. Schools need to remain safe havens for all who enter but also need to be open, engaging and supportive environments for learning.



Supporting the Emotional Well Being of Students

The Monroe County School Boards Association believes that resources to support the emotional, social and physical needs of all children is necessary in order to meet the mission of public education. MCSBA calls on the state legislature to provide the critical funding needed to help all students achieve their potential.

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Concern</u> |
|--|---|
| The demand for mental health services has increased as a result of better information on childhood trauma | <p>There is increased concern regarding the significant numbers of students scoring high on ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) assessments as a result of exposure to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased levels of poverty, • homelessness or home insecurity, • substance abuse, • exposure to violence in the home and/or the community. <p>Trauma undermines a student’s ability to learn by impacting their ability to self-regulate, sustain attention, problem solve, control impulses and manage physical responses to danger.</p> |
| Funding gaps and regulations limit collaborations and undermine social service efforts to help students and families in need | <p>Current funding constraints have left areas that support the critical needs of students and their families overwhelmed and less effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools have had to limit the number of counselors, school psychologists and social workers they hire due to funding cuts and pressures from the tax levy cap. • Funding for behavioral intervention models have been cut even as NYS has highlighted the importance of such programs. • Limits exist for social service agencies’ ability to create mental health partnerships with school districts. Agency budgets have been impacted by incremental increases in the state minimum wage and the need to use operating funds to recruit child psychologists, psychiatrists, as well as licensed mental health practitioners. • Gaps exist for children not eligible for Medicaid funding, but require services not covered by Child Health Plus or are beyond reach for working poor families. • Other barriers currently impede both school districts and the agencies that provide coordinating services from providing early intervention, research-based social emotional learning models, and support services for students and families. |
| Community Schools | <p>Community Schools need a sufficient, long-term viable funding source. The Community Schools model needs to be available at the school building level for districts where demographics meet the poverty criteria.</p> |
| Additional Grant Opportunities | <p>Grant opportunities for mental health awareness, teacher training and coordination of services to families in crisis need to be expanded (ex: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration grants up to \$210 million dollars for Project Aware State Education Agency grants).</p> |

MCSBA members support increased mental health funding and believe that schools should have the option to offer on-site mental health services.

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MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN MONROE COUNTY/ IMPACT ON LEARNING

Data was available from the 2015 Monroe County Office of Mental Health Youth Risk Behavioral Survey showed 45% of students surveyed experienced two or more ACE's with 16% experiencing four or more ACE's. Students with two or more ACE's are recommended for intervention services. Students dealing with trauma are:

- Two and a half times more likely to fail a grade
- Score lower on standardized assessments
- Have more receptive & expressive language difficulties
- Are suspended or expelled more often and
- Are referred to or classified and designated to special education services.

Elizabeth Meeker and Tim Dobbertin, MCSBA Information Exchange Meeting; Complex Trauma & Toxic Stress, January 11, 2017.
 Anne Sherman and Tim Dobbertin, MCSBA Information Exchange Meeting; Taking Action: Building Resilience, November 8, 2018.

NYSCOSS SURVEY OF DISTRICT NEEDS

School superintendents rank increasing cost of mental health related services as a top priority.

Fifty two percent of the Superintendents would increase counseling, social work, mental health or similar student services in their districts if an increase in funding beyond what would be needed to fund mandates was available. This is up from 32% in 2016.

"Losing Ground", *NYS Council of School Superintendents*, October 2017.

Teachers can help students' mental health needs with an array of specific strategies. These, however, are not part of typical teacher training programs and will require professional development on the part of school districts.

Deborah Yaffe, "How K12 is outwitting Anxiety, District Administration, April 9 2018. https://www.nyscoss.org/resources/Publications_94_pg.htm

Increased mental health needs alter teacher practices, often requiring a mindset change to their approach to teaching and may even require structural adaptations to classrooms and school buildings. Such shifts can significantly add to district's costs.

AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

The Office of Children and Family Services is currently reducing the placement of juvenile delinquents in secure residential facilities and instead placing juvenile delinquents with severe and persistent emotional disturbances close to home in non-secure settings under section 4047 of Social Services law. **Pediatric inpatient care for children with high intensity mental health needs is limited locally and behavioral health capacity is at crisis point.**

Talking points. NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health. <http://cbhny.org/crm/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TalkingPoints.pdf>

The Center for Disease Control tabulated data on the number of providers per 10,000 children 0-17 years of age for each county in NYS in February 2017. The data shows:

Of Providers per 10,000 for Children age 0-17 years

| County | Pediatricians | Psychiatrists | Licensed Social Workers | Psychologists |
|---------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Monroe | 12.4 | 6.4 | 44.2 | 19.1 |
| Ontario | 4.8 | 3.5 | 30.2 | 12.7 |
| Orleans | 1.2 | 0.0 | 25.9 | 3.5 |

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/stateprofiles-providers/new-york/index.html>

Unlike any other aspect of Medicaid, **the children's behavioral health system is under-resourced and has insufficient capacity.** Expansion of services was to begin in 2018, but have been delayed for two years despite \$7.5 million being earmarked in previous NYS spending plans for expansion and \$10 million dollars in start-up funding being included but never released. These dollars are desperately required for students in need.

"2018-2019 State Budget-Support Community School-Mental Health Grants" and "2018-2019 State Budget-2-year Delay: NO!, \$15 Million for Children's Services Needed Now!" NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health.

<http://cbhny.org/crm/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CCBH-SPA-Pilot-Bud-Request-020718.pdf>

<http://cbhny.org/crm/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CCBH-CommSchools-Bud-Request-020718.pdf>