

**MCSBA members are invited to attend**

# **MCSBA's 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2021**

**5:30 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.**

**at Oak Hill Country Club**

**(in a covered outdoor space)**

**145 Kilbourn Road, Pittsford**

**Join your colleagues to celebrate  
your accomplishments  
during a most challenging year**

Enjoy Social Time, Entertainment by Pittsford CSD Students, and Dinner  
before participating in the Association's 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Business Meeting.

To learn more, contact [Mary Talbot@boces.monroe.edu](mailto:Mary_Talbot@boces.monroe.edu) or call (585) 328-1972.

Corporate sponsorship for this event provided by : **HUNT** E|A|S



# News Scope

MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
220 Idlewood Road, Rochester, NY 14618  
(585) 328-1972 [www.mcsba.org](http://www.mcsba.org)



President – Amy Jo Thomas, Pittsford CSD  
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Past President – Kathleen Dillon, Monroe 2 – Orleans BOCES, Churchville-Chili CSD  
Treasurer – John Abbott, Monroe 2 – Orleans BOCES  
Executive Director – Sherry Johnson, [Sherry\\_Johnson@boces.monroe.edu](mailto:Sherry_Johnson@boces.monroe.edu)  
Program Director – Beckie Schultz, [Beckie\\_Schultz@boces.monroe.edu](mailto:Beckie_Schultz@boces.monroe.edu)

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## From our president: Welcome Spring 2021



Amy Thomas

Spring is a time of renewal. A time to leave the dark, drabness of winter behind while looking forward to the sunny, colorful days of spring. As I write this column, the forecast for the week ahead includes a day or two of snow, followed by temperatures reaching near 60. This forecast is clearly comparable to the past year, unpredictable!

Do you recall spring 2020? Sheltered in place with our families, schools closed, the world as we knew it came to an abrupt halt. Figuring out how to provide a positive, successful education in spring 2020 is best summarized by the phrase, building a plane while flying.

As I was gathering my thoughts for this article, I referred to the *News Scope* archives and re-read our past president, Kathleen Dillon's message in May 2020, in which she wrote:

"As we move forward, Board members will be having difficult conversations regarding our budgets and the fiscal strain we must all manage. We will need to be creative and forward thinking as we face new challenges. The plans we develop to prepare for the reopening of schools will look different from what we are used to. Keeping our academic programs and extracurricular activities coupled with new constraints to our health care and budgets will lead to new and innovative decisions."

Who would have predicted the forecast for BOE's in May 2021? We never would have fathomed the state aid runs delivered to our districts in April. This was promising news given the year public schools have endured. Kathy was accurate in stating that we would have to look beyond our norms and think outside the box while planning for the reopening of schools.

We can celebrate this work by acknowledging it took developing new norms, best practices, and working together countywide to address similar needs and tackle a multitude of issues within our districts. While we acknowledge education has been "different", we have proven that a time of crisis requires a community of critical thinkers to create innovative solutions.

As we know, spring is also a time for the election of our boards and approval of our budgets... a "renewal" to confirm support by our communities for our respective budgets which will help sustain the wonderful programs we offer our students.

Equally important is the election of members to join or remain on our boards. It is imperative that we elect BOE candidates who represent the views of the entire community and who are not simply focused on a specific agenda. To that end, our collective advocacy to encourage community members to get to the polls on May 18 is vital.

If we experience low turnout rates, we are at risk of electing board members with a specific agenda who mobilize a small, vocal base but, in the end, do not represent the interest of all our residents. I am confident with our combined support and efforts, May 18 will result in positive news for all our districts.

We may have snow in April, but we have much brighter days ahead. By the way, the forecast for this week ranges from temperatures in the mid 50s to high 70s. A sign it is spring!

*Amy Jo Thomas*

## *From our executive director:* **HUMANKIND**



**Sherry Johnson**

Dear Members,

My favorite bumper sticker of all time says “Humankind, be both” and I fervently believe that we need to have a huge dose of that messaging right now.

On top of an already trying year and a half, the increasing amount of horrific behavior exhibited by some who have visited your board tables and posted on social media pages has exacerbated the stress created by the pandemic. I am increasingly disturbed by the example these individuals have put on display for the children in your districts.

I know you have heard me say before, that you lead not only on behalf of children, but in front of them, and I applaud all of you for your efforts to remain civil and respectful during the affronts to both of those tenets. You have remained true to your oath of office and you have held steadfast when it would have been easier to walk away. You have my most humble respect and deep admiration for the tireless and relentless pursuit to implement what you believe is best for children under such negative conditions.

But, others have to also stand with you and say that this is not appropriate and not how a civil society acts when confronted with an issue on which they disagree. Your example can only go so far.

There are many in your districts who understand the constraints that school districts must operate under and many who agree with what your school districts have provided and will provide, when possible. How do you help them have a voice under these circumstances? How do they not get caught in the middle and become fair game to the same demeaning and disgusting attacks that many of you have had to endure?

We know that this isn’t just an education phenomenon; this behavior has become pervasive across our country in all aspects of our lives, and these are hard questions to answer. But, I believe that education can become, as it always has been, one of the solutions. Create your own media campaign. Begin each board meeting by reading a positive message into the record. Ask students and families to come to your tables to celebrate learning or other accomplishments. Invite administrators to present on special projects or to give an update on curricular areas. Honor community collaborations, including the businesses that engage with your students. Invite your students in to speak to the board about topics that excite them. Then, pass this along to your residents in all of the ways that you communicate. You can’t ignore the noise, but you can create a louder voice that is more reflective of your community and representative of those who work and learn in your schools.

Then please continue to exemplify how to work as a team—one with members who don’t always agree, but one with members who listen to one another with dignity and debate respectfully, in order to reach a resolution.

It is so unfortunate that as you strive to help kids become the best version of themselves, that others continue to display our most destructive human traits. However, by offering a stark contrast and by giving others a space to amplify their voice, you will create an alternative option to showcase the better side of humankind.

*Sherry Johnson*

# BOCES/MCSBA Webinar: 2021-22 education funding

On April 7, our two BOCES sponsored a webinar in collaboration with MCSBA to present details about the recently approved state budget for 2021-2022 as well as the additional federal funding coming as the result of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The event was attended by 79 Association members.

Robert Lowry, Deputy Director for Advocacy, Research and Communications of the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS), reviewed elements of the state budget affecting public education, and John Abbott, East Irondequoit Deputy Superintendent and MCSBA Treasurer, discussed how much of all the promised funding districts can expect to receive.

Among their comments were the following:



Webinar presenters Bob Lowry (NYSCOSS) and John Abbott (B2, EI).

## State Funding Highlights

- \$1.4 billion increase in Foundation Aid (districts select best of 4 options for increases);
- Other aids funded according to current law—\$445 million net increase:
  - Proposal rejected to consolidate 11 aids into “Services Aid” and cut funding;
  - Proposal rejected to impose \$1.35 billion “Local District Funding Adjustment” against STAR reimbursements;
  - No use of federal education funding to offset reductions in state support;
- \$105 million to expand full-day prekindergarten (initially funded with federal aid);
- \$440 million in state-funded property tax relief;
- Budget language calls for state aid formula to be fully funded in 3 years:
  - Districts to receive 50% of difference between current aid and full funding in 2022-23, and 100% of full funding in 2023-24 (2020-21 Foundation Aid estimated to be \$4.06 billion below full funding);
- Transportation Aid reimbursement to be provided for 2019-20 expenses incurred in delivering instructional materials and student meals, providing internet access, and for “standby costs” incurred March 16 - May 7, 2020 (but no reimbursement for 2020-21 exceptional transportation expenses).

## Federal Stimulus Funding Highlights

- \$8.99 billion designated for NYS P-12 education:
  - At least 90% (\$8.09 billion) must be allocated to school districts by Title 1 shares;
  - To be obligated and liquidated by September 30;
  - 20% to be used to address “learning loss”;
- Remaining \$900 million in other education funding which is reserved for certain purposes (at least \$449.4 million to deal with learning loss, at least \$89.9 million to offer Summer enrichment, and at least \$89.9 million for after-school programs, plus expansion of full-day prekindergarten, NYSED administration);
- \$155.4 million for IDEA (school-age special education);
- \$7.2 billion (nationwide) for broadband access;
- \$800 million (nationwide) for homeless student assistance;
- Fiscal relief aid to remain available until spent;
- Maintenance of effort and equity provisions that could complicate decisions for the state and for school districts.
- Districts have until 9/30/2024 to obligate and liquidate their ARP allocations.
- By July 1, districts will be required to post on their websites “a plan by school year of how such [ARP] funds will be expended and how the local educational agency will prioritize spending on non-recurring expenses...”
- Districts will be required to seek public and stakeholder input prior to posting plan.

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# BOCES/MCSBA Webinar: 2021-22 education funding

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## Worries

- The NYS Budget relies on \$12.6 billion in temporary federal fiscal relief; what happens when that aid disappears?
- What will become of the New York City economy? (NYC residents accounted for 55% of state's growth in adjusted 2011-2018 gross income; and for 71% of the state's 2011-2020 job growth.)
- Will the state tax increases have negative effects? What happens when they expire?
- A Supreme Court case (New Hampshire v. Massachusetts) is challenging states taxing the income of workers who are now working entirely remotely out of state.
- Non-NYS residents accounted for 16.6% of NYS personal income tax receipts in 2018—more than all of upstate.

## How Much State Aid Are We Really Going to Receive?

- \* Numbers Don't Tell Everything (some based on estimates, some on expenditure formulas, some needed information not yet available, some aids are fixed while others will change);
- \* Some Numbers Are Fairly Reliable (Foundation Aid, Federal Stimulus Money, Universal Prekindergarten, Textbook, Library, Hardware, Software Aid);
- \* Many Aids Are Based on Estimates (District-Supplied Data, Building Aid, BOCES Aid, Transportation Aid, Public and Private Excess Cost Aids, Urban-Suburban Aid).

RIGHT: Also participating in the webinar were panelists who reacted to comments by the presenters and helped answer questions from members after the presentations-- Jo Anne Antonacci (B2), Dan White (B1), Sherry Johnson (MCSBA), Amy Thomas (Pit), Kathleen Dillon (B2, CC), Christopher Dailey (GC), and Gene Mancuso (HFL).



## RESOURCES

NYS School Aid runs: [https://nyassembly.gov/2021budget/2021files/enacted/2021final\\_school\\_aid.pdf](https://nyassembly.gov/2021budget/2021files/enacted/2021final_school_aid.pdf)

Funding provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act: [https://www.nyscss.org/nyscssdocs/Advocacy2021/2104\\_ARP\\_Act\\_Provisions.docx.pdf](https://www.nyscss.org/nyscssdocs/Advocacy2021/2104_ARP_Act_Provisions.docx.pdf)

NYSED Reference: [https://www.nyscss.org/nyscssdocs/Advocacy2021/2104\\_SED\\_ARP\\_Reference.pdf](https://www.nyscss.org/nyscssdocs/Advocacy2021/2104_SED_ARP_Reference.pdf)



## , Bill Sentiff & M&T Foundation

MCSBA wants to thank Bill Sentiff, Administrative Vice-President at M&T Bank, for a grant from the M&T Foundation, that enabled our association to purchase equipment to facilitate both in-person and Zoom capability for our professional development meetings.

MCBSA currently tapes those meetings and uploads them to an Ensemble package that is supported by Monroe One BOCES. This provides for members who can't attend a meeting to be able to view that meeting on their own time, or for a board to watch it collectively. With this new technology, we can still tape those meetings, but also allow members to attend the meeting virtually, via Zoom. The Association was able to purchase a camcorder, a HDMI capture device and a pro level memory card with the dollars graciously donated by the M&T Foundation. We will be purchasing a tripod and an external microphone to meet the rest of our technology needs.

Post pandemic, MCSBA can now offer members who can't travel to our Information Exchange or Labor Relations professional development meetings, an opportunity to participate from wherever they are on the same day as the meeting or continue to view them afterwards via Ensemble.

Bill also serves as a steering committee member and corporate sponsor for our ACT for Education committee and we are so grateful for his and M&T's collaboration and support for our Association and for public education!

# Superintendents' Equity Initiatives

During the April 14 Information Exchange Committee meeting, four of our Association's superintendents described recent initiatives to deal with equity:

- \* Jo Anne Antonacci, District Superintendent, Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES;
- \* Dan White, District Superintendent, Monroe One BOCES;
- \* Kathleen Graupman, Superintendent, Greece CSD; and
- \* Shaun Nelms, Associate Professor (Clinical), Superintendent, East High EPO; William & Sheila Konar Director of the Center for Urban Education Success.

Among their comments were the following:

- \* The Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CRS) Framework developed by the Board of Regents provides a context for the equity work being done by our local superintendents.

- \* The Framework's goals include:

- ☐ To affirm racial, linguistic and cultural identities;
- ☐ To prepare students for rigor and independent learning, develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; and,
- ☐ To elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change.

- \* The four guiding principles for the framework are:

- ☐ Create a welcoming and affirming environment;
- ☐ Set high expectations and provide rigorous instruction;
- ☐ Deliver inclusive curricula and assessment-(integrated into curricula already in use);
- ☐ Provide ongoing professional development.

- \* The CR-S Framework is a mind-set used by staff, school boards, and communities to create a culture of equity and inclusion. It includes tools to ground district policies and procedures as guardians of equity.

- \* After George Floyd's death in June 2020, our superintendents pledged to address inequities in our local community in an open letter to the community and began work on a Regional Equity Network (REN). REN seeks to "strengthen the fabric of the community by respecting and ensuring equitable outcomes for all. REN did a needs assessment and began tackling issues at monthly meetings that included local superintendents and other stakeholders. REN will support districts as they sustain their work in the face of inevitable pushback as changes are made. The superintendents are applying research to issues in our community— to prepare all students with the skills to think critically, be able to have conversations about their fellow citizens and challenge disparities that have remained unaddressed over time in their community.

- \* The group determined to develop four areas for inquiry, two 8<sup>th</sup> grade and two 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade level history lessons that included events in local history. The group completed a curriculum writing day in March, and is providing professional development in April before piloting lessons in late April or May.

- \* The website [www.elevatededucator.org](http://www.elevatededucator.org) contains examples of culturally relevant and responsive teaching materials that have been used at East High School and could be used by others. A co-serve at BOCES has been created to help component districts and the community build capacity and sustain the work of creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture.



Presenters Shawn Nelms, Kathleen Graupman, Dan White, and Jo Anne Antonacci.

The meeting was recorded via ZOOM. The video and meeting handouts are available on the MCSBA website.



Participants in the April 14 Information Exchange Committee meeting.

# Students create tutoring program for peers

One of the greatest challenges of the pandemic has been helping students learn from home. When **Bhuvana Chimmiri** and **Delia Zhangfeng**, two Brighton High School students, saw their peers struggling while trying to learn from home last spring, they determined that students could help other students deal with the challenges and founded Rochester Peer Tutoring. They spent late spring through mid-summer

developing processes and procedures for recruiting and training tutors as well as ways to pair them up with learners needing their help. Since both Bhuvana and Delia were already volunteers at the Brighton Memorial Library (BML), they worked with that institution to develop the needed infrastructure – applications, evaluations, recruitment, promotion, etc. By mid-August, the first call for tutors was published by BML, and Rochester Peer Tutoring has been serving tutees ever since.



ABOVE: Student leaders of Rochester Peer Tutoring during a recent Zoom meeting

Bhuvana and Delia oversee the tutoring—interviewing and training tutors, matching tutors with their learners, evaluating the learning sessions using evaluation forms and learner feedback, sharing feedback with tutors, and tracking hours spent in tutoring sessions. Before becoming a tutor, those interested first complete an online application that includes questions about accomplishments related to their intended tutoring subject specialties and reasons they want to participate in the program. Core subject areas include math, history, languages and the sciences. Extracurricular activities include coding, science Olympiad subjects, creative writing, and the performing arts. Tutor training involves workshops and sharing of resources. All tutoring sessions are conducted via Zoom so tutors are taught how to use that medium for maximum results..

“We train our tutors before they start their tutoring sessions, so sessions have been going really well,” Zhangfeng said. “Each month, the number of volunteer hours logged keeps increasing and tutees give us feedback saying that their tutor is helping them greatly.” Based on learner feedback, Tutors of the Month are identified and featured on the BML Facebook page.

Currently, 50 tutors from high schools in Brighton, Pittsford, and Rochester are meeting with more than 50 tutees from Brighton, Mercy High School, Pittsford, Rochester, and Victor—as well as two students from Oregon and one from Texas. The tutors are all high school students, mostly sophomores and juniors, while the tutees range from elementary grades through high school. Those interested in receiving help can read a brief bio about each tutor on BML’s website, [www.brightonlibrary.org/teen-education](http://www.brightonlibrary.org/teen-education), before signing up for the program.

Deena Viviani, young adult and programming services librarian at Brighton Memorial Library, identifies Rochester Peer Tutoring as the most successful young adult-centered program at BML since the pandemic, because it *is for* students and *run by* students.

Tutors earn volunteer hours toward their community service requirements. Brighton Memorial Library tracks the time spent and provides the documentation. The focus of the organization is to form strong peer-to-peer relationships.

Bhuvana and Delia are hoping that the program will expand to involve students from more districts as both tutors and tutees. They plan to continue this organization after they graduate from high school in June and begin their college careers. As they plan for the future and strive to improve the organization, the two are working on creating leadership positions and training other tutors to continue Rochester Peer Tutoring for years to come. Their monthly meetings with tutors to see what is working well, and what is not, will continue into next year. They plan to keep the initiative thriving from college via Zoom.

To learn more about Rochester Peer Tutoring or to become a tutor or tutee, visit –

- ▶ [rocpeertutor@gmail.com](mailto:rocpeertutor@gmail.com);
- ▶ [Rochester Peer Tutoring \(@rocpeertutor\) • Instagram photos and videos](#);
- ▶ [Rochester Peer Tutoring Application \(google.com\)](#);
- ▶ Teen Education | BrightonMemLibrary ([brightonlibrary.org](http://brightonlibrary.org));
- ▶ or email [rocpeertutor@gmail.com](mailto:rocpeertutor@gmail.com).





Although the pandemic and tight district budgets make field trips almost impossible, teachers and students can learn about the First Nations in our area through programs offered by Ganondagan. Outreach interpreters will visit a school to present a program, or meet with classes virtually through Skype or Zoom.

## Programs for Students

### Life of the Seneca

This presentation covers the formation of the Haudenosaunee Culture, specifically the Senecas at Ganondagan. It includes life in a Bark Longhouse of the 1600's and describes cultural items, clan symbols, and trade items. **Class time:** 45 minutes

### Virtual Tour

Virtual tours (with one of Ganondagan's interpretive staff) provide an up-close look at some of Ganondagan's historical reproductions and a tour in the museum's gallery. Connection is available via Skype or Zoom. **Class time:** 45 minutes

### Hodinohso:ni' Women

Hodinohso:ni' women selected their chiefs for centuries before American women won the right to vote. Learn about this and more when you take a virtual tour of our women's exhibit. **Class time:** 45 minutes

### The Storytellers Circle

Traditional stories not only entertain but teach important lessons to their listeners. A Ganondagan Native American Interpreter will tell stories to a class. **Class time:** 45 minutes

### Uses of the Whitetail Deer

The importance of the white tail deer to the Hodinöhsö:ni' peoples is described. Deer served as food, with parts used to create tools, blankets, and clothing. The value of antlers, hoofs, eyes, brains, internal organs, etc. are covered. **Class time:** 45 minutes

### Cornhusk Doll Workshop

This workshop illustrates the importance of corn to the Seneca people. The instructor brings cornhusk items to the classroom and tells the story of The No Face Cornhusk Doll before leading participants in making their own doll. **Class time:** 90 minutes

### A Bag of Stories Workshop

Primary grade students will make their own felt storyteller's pouch and have a memento to put inside it to remind them of the stories they hear during this session. **Class time:** 45 minutes



## Professional Development for Educators

### Onöndowa'ga': People of the Great Hill

This workshop gives educators a deeper understanding of the Hodinöhsö:ni' Confederacy and the formation of the Six Nation's League of the Iroquois. Clan systems, social life, stereotypes and current issues are discussed. Participants are invited to submit questions prior to the workshop to make the two hours meaningful and useful.

**Class time:** 2 hours

*Each program involves a minimal fee plus a mileage charged for distances over 25 miles.*

To learn more, visit [Educational Outreach | Ganondagan](https://www.ganondagan.org/Educational-Outreach).

To schedule a program, contact Kerri Ingham at (585) 924-5848 or [kerri.ingham@parks.ny.gov](mailto:kerri.ingham@parks.ny.gov).

