

## Potential Board Candidates Learn About Board Service



The 16 participants who attended the MCSBA seminar for potential school board candidates learned –

**What Candidates Should Know About Board Membership** from Penfield School Board Members Emily Belcer and Barb Babiarz (upper right);

**How Your District's Superintendent Can Help You** from Wheatland-Chili Superintendent Lynda Quick, Esq. (right);

**How to Handle the Legal Requirements for School Board Candidates** from Joseph G. Shields, Esq., Partner, Ferrara Fiorenza, PC (lower right); and

**How to Deal with Campaign Considerations** from MCSBA Executive Director Sherry Johnson (top left and center).



Some of the potential school board candidates attending the March 26 seminar.





## April 2022 INDEX

Potential Board Candidate Seminar	1
GVASCD Awards Banquet	2
Plan to participate in these events	3
From our Executive Director	4
Preparing for the 2024 Solar Eclipse	5
Marijuana Use: Law & Schools	6
Value of District Communications	7
Hot Topics in Labor Relations	8
Senator Brouk Conference on CTE	9
What to do about Lead Poisoning in the Classroom	10

# 2022 GVASCD Awards Banquet

**May 12, 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM**

**Shadow Lake Golf, 1850 Five Mile Line Rd, Penfield**

**Register at <https://www.gvascd.org/2022-gvascd-awards>**

The Genesee Valley Chapter NYS ASCD (GVASCD) is recognizing and celebrating educators for their contributions and making a difference in our field. **Sherry Johnson** will be recognized for her Service in the Monroe County region, along with Krista Lewis and Nikki Miller for Supervision and Curriculum, respectively.

The Genesee Valley Chapter NYS ASCD, in an ongoing search for what works in schools, has sought out, highlighted, and celebrated the accomplishments of educational leaders who achieve excellence in the areas of Supervision, Curriculum and Service.

The Genesee Valley Chapter NYS ASCD annual awards are one way of recognizing emerging and established educational leaders and sharing their exemplary practices with the education community. Every year, the Genesee Valley ASCD selects three winners from an annual nominations process.

We hope you will consider joining us for this in-person celebration. Register at <https://www.gvascd.org/2022-gvascd-awards>

## CONGRATULATIONS to the 2022 Award Winners



### Supervision Award 2022

**KRISTA LEWIS**

Assistant Superintendent  
for Curriculum & Instruction,  
Newark Central School District



### Curriculum Award 2022

**NIKKI MILLER**

Director of Educational Services,  
Marion Central School District



### Service Award 2022

**SHERRY JOHNSON**

Executive Director,  
Monroe County School Boards  
Association



# Plan to Participate in These Events

Come see our new office!

NOW

## MCSBA Open House For Members

*Snacks & Drinks Provided  
(No Charge)*

333 Metro Park, Suite C-102  
Rochester, NY 14623  
Thursday, April 14, 2022  
4:00 – 6:00 PM  
No RSVP Necessary



LATER

## MCSBA Law Conference

April 28, 2022  
8:00 AM - Noon  
Doubletree by Hilton Hotel

## MCSBA Annual Meeting

May 25, 2022  
5:45 PM - 8:00 PM  
Ridgemont Country Club

# From our Executive Director: A Call to Arms



**Sherry Johnson**

Dear Members,

Those of you who know me well know that I am a hugger. It is my favorite way to show love, friendship and appreciation. COVID took the hug away from me and from all of us who value the gift of a hug. Although we are in a better place, I still step carefully. I now ask first before hugging someone, offering a handshake, elbow bump or high five instead. It has been hard for me to not wrap someone in what I consider to be a life affirming embrace, but it pales compared to the issues that so many are dealing with as a result of this pandemic.

We can see the impacts all around us, whether we are on the road, in public venues or on social media. However, they are the starkest in our schools. There have been significant increases in incidences that require disciplinary intervention and mental health assessments and tragically we have lost students to suicide and gun violence. This past week the staff at a nearby district were heroic in their successful efforts to disarm a student and avert another tragedy.

We are on a terrible trajectory if we don't address the mental health crisis in this country. Our districts don't just need dollars, they need personnel. From getting our students to school, to getting their instructional and social and emotional needs met, there are simply not enough applicants to build the capacity to address all that is being asked of our schools right now. The ACT for Education steering committee has been working with Causewave Community Partners to implement a "Step Up for Schools" campaign in hopes of attracting more caring individuals to come work for our school districts. You can find those resources on our website or at <https://actforeducation.org>

In the meantime, I know that all of you will continue to advocate. But there are other things that you must continue to do.

Our children learn by watching. They are more likely to make choices on how to act based on the actions of those they care about. For example, we know that children who develop drinking addictions more likely have an adult in their lives who drinks excessively. Children who witness adults treat each other with disrespect, who taunt and threaten and blatantly disregard rules they don't care for, are learning that these behaviors are okay.

Therefore, it is more important now than ever to model the kinds of behaviors that you want to see in your students and staff and that you do not tolerate negative and harmful behaviors. I know that it has required incredible restraint at times and the use of all the tools at your table to keep your meetings professional, respectful and safe.

We need to wrap our arms around each other, our students and our staffs to show that there is a positive and productive way to work together, to have critical conversations, to disagree agreeably. You represent so many in the community who believe in your work and how you perform your duties. They are concerned for their children's future and trust that school is where the tenets of respect, dignity, equity and inclusion are embedded in instruction and affirmed by every staff member. Thank you for continuing to lead the way!

Hugs.

*Sherry*





# Information Exchange Committee: Preparing now for the 2024 total solar eclipse

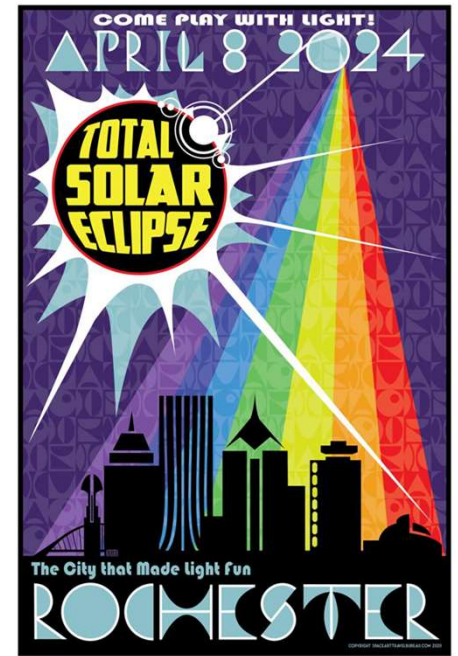
A rare total eclipse of the sun is due to pass directly over our region on April 8, 2024. Hillary Olson, President & CEO, RMSC, and Lisa Ireland, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, RMSC (and Past Vice President, MCSBA, and President, BOE, Brockport CSD) met with the Information Exchange Committee in February to discuss why we need to start planning for this event now. They noted that the eclipse is a huge public infrastructure planning and tourist opportunity. They expect approximately 375K visitors to this area, and folks are scheduling their houses as a BNB now. The eclipse will range from 2:07 - 4:33 P.M.; totality will last 3 minutes and 40 seconds, starting at 3:20 P.M.

Among their comments were the following:

- \* A total solar eclipse is a rare, perfect S.T.E.A.M. opportunity for all ages;
- \* Huge public infrastructure and planning effort;
- \* There is a 51% chance of full sun in Rochester on the day of the eclipse;
- \* Many in- and out-of-state visitors will travel HERE for the event, creating traffic.

Some of the issues districts need to consider include:

- \* How can we get our youth to safely view the eclipse from 3:15 - 3:45 P.M. and ensure that buses are not stuck in hours of traffic?
- \* Should school be held virtually on this date?
- \* Should we have a half-day of instruction? Where would the students go?
- \* How do we ensure student safety and adult supervision?
- \* Where will students and others gather to watch the eclipse?
- \* What groups, other than schools, could offer safe viewing sites?
- \* How does the community provide adult supervision to ensure the use of solar viewing glasses to protect against blindness?
- \* Section V needs to consider athletics scheduling issues.
- \* Should students be watching at school where they can be supervised?
- \* Could community-hosted events be held on school grounds?



RMSC is pursuing a Federal grant through NASA for funding so that the RMSC can provide solar viewing glasses to all Monroe County schools. Another grant proposal is to have RMSC lead a group of Eclipse Ambassadors (county-wide or more far-reaching) to host groups and train them on how to use the telescopes and engage the public with STEM and STEAM topics. The idea is to send the Eclipse Ambassadors out the day of the eclipse to festivals, bars, schools, community centers, etc. There would be non-profit, school-based training and fee-based training. To experience an eclipse is an issue of equity. The RMSC would like all families, school children, children in daycare, and adults to have access to educational information around the eclipse and the opportunity to safely view the eclipse.

The RMSC has access to eclipse lessons that involve poetry, ELA, music, math, history, and physics. It was suggested that district officials meet with the RMSC to develop a curriculum modified specific to Monroe County.

BELOW LEFT: Information Exchange Committee Co-Chair Tammy Gurowski (Web), in the center, with presenters Lisa Ireland and Hillary Olson of the RMSC.

BELOW RIGHT: Some of those attending the Information Exchange Committee meeting sporting solar viewing glasses distributed by the presenters.





# Labor Relations Committee: NYS Marijuana Use Law & Schools



Those attending the February meeting of the Labor Relations Committee heard Allison L. Marley, Esq., Ferrara Fiorenza PC, describe the effects of the state's new marijuana law on schools. She noted the following:

- \* The creation of a new section of the Penal Law under the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act does not have much impact on schools. Basically, you cannot use marijuana on school grounds. However, districts may not discriminate based on marijuana use during off hours, with few exceptions.

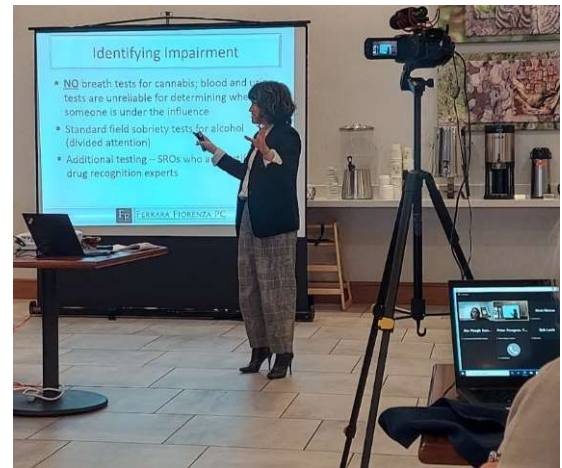
- \* Union representation is not needed during an assessment of impairment at work. For the purpose of drug testing, the employer must have "reasonable suspicion" based on evidence. If a test gets tossed during litigation and can't be used, the employer will have to follow 3020A procedure. The most important factor is testing for substance abuse on the day of the incident.

- \*The NYS Human Rights Law and ADA require that in the case of employees who have been prescribed marijuana for medicinal use, the employer needs to listen to their requests for accommodation, and if their requests cannot be accommodated, the employer must work with them to find alternative accommodations.

- \* For employees in safety sensitive positions, there is no requirement of reasonable suspicion. Safety sensitive positions are controlled by the federal Department of Transportation. Off-duty use for employees in "safety-sensitive" positions are excluded from the Medical Marijuana Reasonable Accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and NYS Human Rights Law. Review and update your Codes of Conduct and/or policies for both students and staff.

- \* Districts should review their Codes of Conduct for consistency because sometimes alcohol and marijuana are listed in different areas of the Code of Conduct and/or policy.

- \* There is no requirement to have a person trained to recognize impairment. A lay person can make a determination based on observable manifestations. Sheriff's departments can help with training in identifying drug use, and training for nurses, etc.



ABOVE: Allison L. Marley, Esq., leading discussion.

TOP: Labor Relations Committee Co-Chairs Frank Muscato (GC) and Barbara Babiarz (Pen) with presenter Allison L. Marley, Esq.

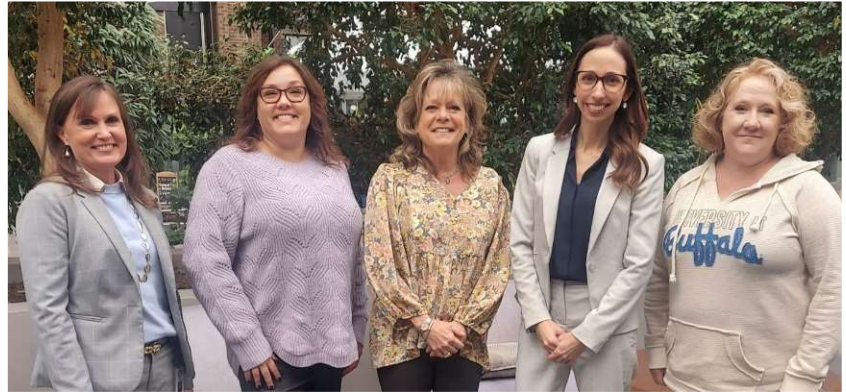
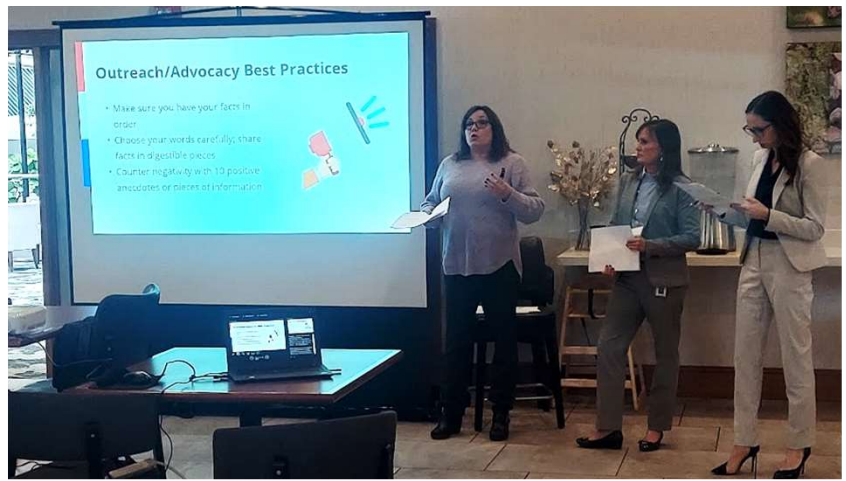
BELOW: Some of the participants at the February Labor Relations Committee meeting.



# Information Exchange Committee: Value of District Communications

During the March Information Exchange Committee meeting, participants heard from communications directors that a good communications plan can combat misinformation, manage tense situations, and increase community pride. Communications directors Lanette Cypher (Spe), Iva Petrosino (GC), and Amanda Puleo (CC) offered the following messages:

- Best practices include making sure of your facts, choosing your words carefully, sharing facts in digestible pieces, countering negativity with 10 positive anecdotes or items of data.
- Always involve your superintendent. Plus, the communications director needs to know everything that is happening in the district to be able to craft the message that the BOE/Superintendent delivers to the community.
- Board members should share community feedback, including misinformation, with the superintendent and communications director.
- Be prepared for who may show up at Board meetings. Give community members the opportunity to provide their voice, but not let it become a free-for-all.
- Make sure people are going to the correct source for facts.



TOP: Presenters Amanda Puleo (CC), Lanette Cypher (Spe), and Iva Petrosino (GC).

ABOVE: Lanette Cypher (Spe), Amanda Puleo (CC), IE Co-Chair Tammy Gurowski (Web), Iva Petrosino (GC), and IE Co-Chair Kerri Keyes (GC).

- DO NOT GO OFF THE RECORD, assume the person asking questions is recording your answer on their phone.
- STAY ON MESSAGE.
- Board members should answer questions ONLY as a BOE member and not speak for the district. Board members should be careful not to give the impression that they can change things by themselves.
- Student and employee confidentiality must be maintained. Explain privacy issues to inquirers.
- \* When responding to criticism, thank the critic for sharing but let the President or Superintendent make the response.
- Avoid sending district news through social media to avoid legal issues.
- \* Board members are ALWAYS BOE members. Even when using personal accounts, posts will be considered as those of a BOE member. Some districts have their school attorney monitor social media.
- Debrief and evaluate how your communications efforts are going, and take steps to deal with any issues or weaknesses.
- Transparency is important but privacy and police investigations are factors. The community wants consistent, ongoing communications from the district.
- New BOE members want to be loyal to those who supported their candidacy but they need to be empathic versus sympathetic.



# Labor Relations Committee: HOT TOPICS in Labor Relations

## NYS Education Law Section 3020-a Process and Updates The Interactive Process to Determine Reasonable Accommodations Negotiations Trends

Those attending the March Labor Relations Committee meeting heard an update on current issues in labor relations from Steve Carling, Esq., Senior Counsel, and Sara Visingard, Esq., Partner, both from Harris Beach. Among their comments were the following.

### New York Education Law Section 3020-a Process and Updates

- \* For filings commenced as of July 1, 2015, there are updated protocols and procedures that must be followed for 3020a, including a roll call vote in Executive Session.
- \* There is now a timeline holding the whole process to 135 days.
- \* Related Costs: Most settle, but the cost is between \$20,000-80,000 in attorney fees. There is no perfect settlement solution and districts need to consider optics, accountability, and the associated costs.

### The Interactive Process to Determine Reasonable Accommodations

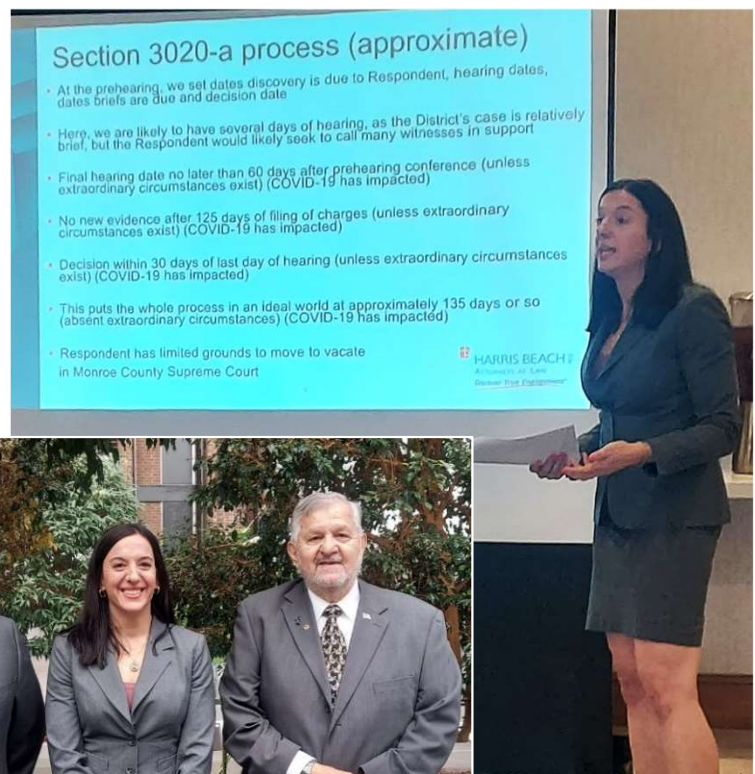
Under the ADA and NYS Human Rights Law, school districts must participate in reasonable accommodations to enable employees to safely perform the essential functions of their jobs. Employees with a disability should be accommodated and it is the employee's duty to ask for an accommodation. Medical documentation has to be provided to meet the accommodation, and the accommodation should not be overly burdensome on the employer.

Districts can use the Job Accommodation Network

<https://askJAN.org> to see a list of workplace accommodations available for a particular medical condition. The accommodation cannot require new burdens to be placed on other employees such as longer hours or extended shifts.

### Negotiations and Current Top 5 negotiation topics

5. Leave time;
4. Time: work year, workday, calendar; extra pay for outside of work time;
3. Remote instruction/work: seeking more opportunities for remote work, even if not best for students;
2. Health insurance: Trend has new hires forced to a high-deductible insurance plan;
1. MONEY: seeking wage increases consistent with CPI ~ 6%, plus covid/safety pay, stipends for additional work.



ABOVE RIGHT: Sara Visingard, Esq.

RIGHT: Steve Carling, Esq., Sara Visingard, Esq., and LR Co-Chair Frank Muscato (GC).



# Senator Brouk media conference: Seeking more state funding for CTE

NYS Senator Samra Brouk hosted a media conference on March 11 at Monroe One BOCES to promote the importance of Career and Technical Education as well as her efforts to expand state funding for CTE programs. The Senator noted that CTE programs boost graduation rates and prepare students for jobs in our community.



TOP: NYS Senator Samra Brouk addressing the media, educators, and students at a news conference on March 11.



MIDDLE: Senator Brouk, Sherry Johnson (MCSBA), and Monroe County Legislator Howie Maffucci (and former East Rochester Superintendent) speaking at the conference. Senator Brouk; Joe Alati, EMCC Teacher (B1) and former HFL Board Member; Howie Maffucci; and Sherry Johnson after the conference. The news conference was held in Mr. Alati's classroom.



BOTTOM: EMCC students being interviewed by TV Channel 10; Students listening during the conference.

Photos by Stephanie Robusto (B1).

During the media conference, MCSBA Executive Director Sherry Johnson stated that Association districts are grateful to Senator Brouk for prioritizing increases to the BOCES aid formula for the CTE (career and technical education) program in this year's state budget. Johnson noted that –

“We know from working with our business partners that they are in need for the skill set that a CTE program provides, and we have students who are interested in pursuing the career opportunities they can choose from upon completion of a CTE program.

“The impact of the changing demographics in our nation was accelerated during the pandemic when many chose to retire from the workforce. So, if not at this moment, when?

Providing for the increased support for this important program today will help assure a bright future for both our students and our economy.”

## What to do about lead poisoning in the classroom

*The Effects of Lead Poisoning: What We See in the Clinic, the Classroom and Beyond* was the subject of a webinar on March 16 led by Stanley J. Schaffer, MD, MS Director, Western New York Lead Poisoning Resource Center, Rochester Office Department of Pediatrics, Golisano Children's Hospital, University of Rochester. Among Dr. Schaffer's comments were the following:



Lead is a naturally occurring element with hundreds of uses, including pipes/plumbing, ammunition, pewter and bronze, leaded glass/crystal, building material, inks and dyes, sweetener, cosmetics, traditional medicines, paints and glazes, gasoline anti-knock agent, radiation shields, car batteries, and plastics.

Lead has no use in the human body. All forms of lead are TOXIC to people and animals.

- Many of the effects of lead exposure can occur at low levels of exposure.
- Cumulative exposure over time predicts long-term outcomes.
- Effects of lead exposure early in life can be severe and permanent.
- There is no effective treatment to overcome the adverse effects of lead poisoning.

The major sources of lead exposure today are peeling or chipping paint in homes and dust containing lead. Other leading sources are contaminated soil, and water contaminated by degrading lead pipes.

Lead exposure mostly targets low socioeconomic status inner city minority populations, especially children, whose families live in rented homes that are in poor condition. The brains of young children are rapidly developing, so lead exposure in the first three years of life can be devastating. Often these children are iron-deficient or have little calcium in their diets, so lead is absorbed more completely. Lead exposure has affected multiple generations in these populations.

Long term effects of lead exposure in childhood include: • Irreversible loss of IQ • Auditory processing difficulty • Attention problems & distractibility (ADHD) • Poor short term memory • Lack of impulse control • Aggressive behavior and conduct problems • Increased likelihood of dropping out • Delinquency • Incarceration (• For every 5 mcg/dL rise in a child's blood lead level during the preschool period, there was a 30% increase in the arrest rate for violent offenses later in life). For unknown reasons, the effects are generally more pronounced in males.

Lead poisoning creates children with: • Difficulty learning new concepts • Lack of ability to focus • Poor attention span • Impulsivity • Aggressive behavior • Difficulty learning who then tune out • frustrations, low self-confidence, and no urge to learn • Constant need of redirection • Behavioral outbursts and physical assaults. In these situations, teachers cannot maintain the pace of instruction.

A new study has found that early intervention can help lead-poisoned children perform better on math and ELA standardized tests. The CDC has published *Guidelines for Educators* with recommended intervention strategies. Key Recommendations include -

1. Early developmental assessment and intervention for children affected by lead;
2. Neuropsychological assessment of executive functioning of children exposed to lead;
3. Communication of lead exposure history and assessments between medical providers, early intervention providers, and schools;
4. Consistent implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) including assessment and monitoring of developmental progress of lead-exposed children and early implementation of the interventions these children are entitled to;
5. Education of teachers, school psychologists, parents and others about the effects of early lead exposure on educational results.

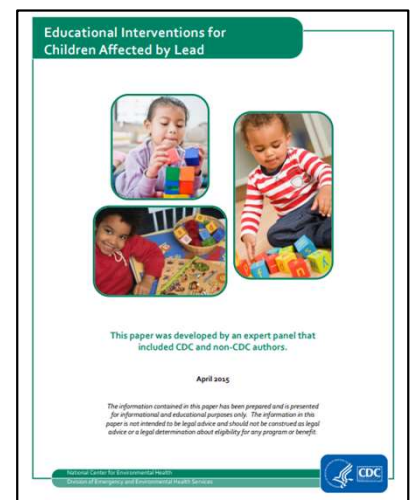
This CDC guide is accessible at

[https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/educational\\_interventions\\_children\\_affected\\_by\\_lead.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/educational_interventions_children_affected_by_lead.pdf).

SOURCE: Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center (FLCEHC) Webinar – Dr. Stanley Schaffer presentation:

"The Effects of Lead Poisoning: What We See in the Clinic, the Classroom and Beyond." <https://rochester.box.com/v/FLCEHCwebinar>.

To learn more, contact [FLCEHC@urmc.rochester.edu](mailto:FLCEHC@urmc.rochester.edu) or 844-352-3420.



## RMSC Museum & Science Center Makes Top 10 List

The RMSC's Museum & Science Center has been ranked among the top 10 best science museums in the country in USA Today's 10 Best Science Museums Readers' Choice Awards. The Museum & Science Center was one of 20 Science Museums to be nominated for this award category, and the final 10 Best list was determined through an online vote. The RMSC ranked eighth place. We are fortunate to have such a fine learning resource in our community that is accessible to our students and teachers.

