

# ***A strong offense is the best defense.***

The 1990-91 school year witnessed the last increase in state support for education for three years. State Aid to Education had increased by more than 100% during the 1980s. However, the early 1990s witnessed a recession. As the economy worsened the State budget process took longer and longer. In 1991, some school districts even had to borrow money because of late state aid payments. And the weakening economy led to taxpayer dissatisfaction about making up the difference in declining state support with increased local property taxes. School districts statewide, that had been pushed over several years to increase teacher salaries to competitive levels, were locked into contracts providing generous annual salary increases that their state and local communities no longer supported. MCSBA was called upon by member districts to defend them against cuts in state aid. MCSBA campaigned to demonstrate the value of current educational programs and the damage to them that would result if state and federal support were curtailed.

## ***The 1990-91 School Year***



Mary Salisbury

### **Major Issues**

The major issues facing the Association during the 1990-91 school year were the Drug Free Schools Network and the unprecedented mid-year withdrawal of allocated State Aid to public schools.

President Mary Salisbury wrote the plan for MCSBA's involvement as lead agency in the **Drug Free Schools Network**. This network developed strategies to implement recommendations in the 1990 "Greater Rochester Fights Back" plan of action. Ms. Salisbury chaired the Network, which consisted of 16 representatives of educational and social service agencies, until it completed its work in Fall 1991.

The cut in State Aid occurred in December 1990; 1991 efforts focused on saving the balance of 1990-91 Aid and on avoiding further cuts in 1991-92.

### **Other Business**

- MCSBA mission and objectives were reviewed; minor revisions were approved by the Executive Committee in February 1991.
- The MCSBA reception booth at the 1990 NYSSBA Convention in Rochester showed videos on local educational programs.
- MCSBA staff offered seminars on specific boardsmanship skills. These seminars continued for several years.

### **MCSBA MISSION AND SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

(amended by Executive Committee, February 1991)

#### **MISSION**

The mission of the Monroe County School Boards Association is to assist association members as they seek to provide an effective education program for all students.

#### **SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

MCSBA functions as a representative body for its member districts. MCSBA promotes legislative positions developed by representatives of all member districts.

MCSBA maintains frequent contact with our local Regents, the Board of Regents, and the State Education Department. MCSBA provides opportunities for members to exchange information and develop their boardsmanship skills.

MCSBA provides inservice, data and a forum for member boards on labor relations and negotiations.

MCSBA develops coalitions and working relationships with persons and groups working to achieve the same objectives.

BELOW: MCSBA Reception booth at 1990 NYSSBA Convention in Rochester, showing Barbara Wheat (Pen) answering a question, with Davis Parker (B1), Walton Ayer (WC), Jill Hagerman (Pen), and Assistant to Executive Director Judy Wadsworth.



ABOVE: Gene Kinney (Pittsford) and Karen Hoffman (Greece) conferring at the NYSSBA Convention in October 1990.



Raymond Milne

### ***Twenty-second Annual Meeting***

At the Association's Twenty-second Annual Meeting, held on May 29, 1991, members elected **Raymond Milne** of BOCES #1 as President and **A.C."Bud" Stander** of Gates Chili as Vice President. **Alan Chartock**, editor and publisher of *The Albany Scene*, discussed the machinations of the State Legislature during the budget building process.

### ***The 1991-92 School Year***

#### **Maintaining Programs During Recession**

The major concern of the year was protection of educational programs. State budget woes during an economic downturn directly affected State Aid, and indirectly affected local support for education.

Declining levels of state support led to increased local property taxes—and 8 of MCSBA's 17 districts seeking voter approval failed on the first attempt. County budget problems hampered efforts of the recently formed cooperative with several Monroe County agencies that offer services to school children. A number of joint efforts were cancelled and others saw financial support cut.

To increase cost effectiveness, the school boards associations of Erie and Monroe Counties co-sponsored the annual trek to Albany.

Due to the effect of employee contracts on budgets, the Labor Relations Committee prepared, and the Executive Committee approved, negotiating and bargaining position papers, for the first time since 1984.

### **Morin-Ryan Sales Tax Distribution Plan Re-Visited**

The economy also led to new discussion of the Morin-Ryan sales tax distribution formula. To fill a predicted revenue gap, County Executive Robert King proposed, and the Legislature barely approved, the elimination of the Morin-Ryan agreement. MCSBA became involved in several weeks of negotiations among affected taxing jurisdictions and legislators which restored the Morin-Ryan plan and approved a sales tax increase of ½ %.

### ***Other Business***

In an effort to inform the wider community about the fine programs in our schools, MCSBA organized a mall show featuring programs of most member districts. Districts showcased their efforts with a diverse audience on an interactive level.

RIGHT: Brighton display at the MCSBA Mall Education Show, Marketplace Mall, April 1992.



### ***Twenty-third Annual Meeting***

On May 20, 1992, at the Association's twenty-third Annual Meeting, members elected **A.C. "Bud" Stander** of Gates Chili to be their 1992-93 President, and **Dr. Stephanie Polowe-Aldersley** of West Irondequoit as Vice President. Members also approved a constitutional amendment to make the Executive Committee responsible for approval of the next year's operating budget during its April meeting.



A. C. "Bud" Stander

### ***The 1992-93 School Year***

#### **County Sales Tax Revisited**

In the fall of 1992, County Executive Robert King requested an increase in county sales tax of another ½ % to support the expenses of county government. His proposal led to negotiations that resulted in approval for the extra ½ % increase with a portion of that increase going to public schools. Because of a sunset clause for the tax increase, the Association began making plans for advocacy efforts to extend the increase beyond its December 1994 limit.

#### **MCSBA/BOCES Connection?**

A study was done to consider classifying MCSBA as a BOCES service. After months of study and discussion, the Executive Committee decided that MCSBA should remain an independent group.

#### **Other Business**

- The Executive Committee appointed outgoing President Raymond Milne as Treasurer.
- The Association co-sponsored seminars with other organizations on gifted education, student assessment, school management, and parental involvement.
- Staffer Judy Wadsworth developed handbooks on: Legislation, Labor Relations, board presidents, new board members, and school finance.
- Of the 17 MCSBA district budgets presented for voter approval, 11 were defeated at least once in 1993.



ABOVE: Ray Levato of TV 10 leading a discussion on education issues with guests Archie Curry (Roc), Adam Urbanski (Rochester Teachers Association) and Bud Stander (GC, MCSBA President).



Stephanie Polowe-Aldersley

## ***Twenty-fourth Annual Meeting***

At the Association's twenty-fourth annual meeting, held on June 16, 1993, MCSBA members elected **Dr. Stephanie Polowe-Aldersley** as 1993-94 President, and **Joseph "Nick" Gangemi** as Vice President.

## ***The 1993-94 School Year***

### **Efforts to Improve the Finance Picture**

The Steering Committee adopted school finance as its priority for the year. The standing committees devoted meetings to the topic, and sponsored membership meetings to explore ways to improve school climate and control costs. The Legislative Committee sought 3020-a reform and increased state aid.

To improve school budget vote outcomes, an ad hoc committee of the Executive Committee recommended a common vote date and a coordinated media campaign. Executive Committee members declined to approve a common vote date, but May 17 was accepted by 11 of the 17 involved districts. MCSBA staff met with media leaders, and member districts adopted initiatives to involve citizens in budget development and promotion. In 1994, only two MCSBA district budgets were defeated.

## **Sales Tax Update**

Association leadership worked to preserve for schools a portion of the 1% increase in county sales tax after November 1994. In spite of efforts by the coalition, the legislature voted along party lines to keep the added 1% for the county. The coalition decided to continue its efforts.

## **Other Business**

- The Executive Committee appointed Eugene Kinney (B1) as Treasurer.
- The Executive Committee met in February with Regents Chancellor Carlos Carballada to discuss recent Regents initiatives.
- The Association co-sponsored programs on school-business partnerships, school reform, performance assessment, and values education.



ABOVE: In May 1994, MCSBA President Polowe-Aldersley and Executive Director Woods received NYS proclamation honoring MCSBA on 25 years of service from Senator John Daly and Assemblyman David Gantt in Albany.



Joseph Gangemi

## ***Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting***

On June 15, 1994, at MCSBA's gala 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, members elected **Joseph "Nick" Gangemi** of Penfield as President for 1994-95, and **Gerald Maar** of Brockport as Vice President. Commissioner of Education Dr. Thomas Sobol spoke on state education reform initiatives. In addition, NYS Regent Dr. Walter Cooper presented MCSBA with a proclamation recognizing its accomplishments. Many former MCSBA leaders also attended.

## *The 1994-95 School Year*



ABOVE: Sales Tax Coalition members. Standing: Dr. Richard Mace (Pen), Theresa Woodson, Alan Shaffer (Pit, GVPTA), John Abbott (B2, El), Debbie Larrabee (NYSUT); Teacher rep., Nick Gangemi (Pen, MCSBA President), and Ray Samson (NYSUT Regional Director).

### **Sales Tax Issue Finally Resolved**

MCSBA worked with the Sales Tax Coalition (of school district leaders, teachers, parents, city and town officials) to gain a share of the additional 1% in county sales tax. Support from our Albany delegation resulted in a compromise in May 1995 that provided additional revenues for schools, Rochester, towns and villages. This compromise was intended to sunset in 1999.

### **Other Business**

- A Gannett-WXXI initiative netted extensive coverage of education issues with MCSBA staff providing data. The effort coincided with 1995 budget votes, and may have played a role in the approval of all but one budget.
- Programs on controlling meetings, negotiations, values policies, and performance assessment were offered.



ABOVE: MCSBA President Nick Gangemi being interviewed by WXXI radio.

## *Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting*

On June 14, 1995, during their twenty-sixth annual meeting, MCSBA members elected **Gerald Maar** of Brockport as 1995-96 President, and **Joanne "Jody" Siegle** of Brighton as Vice President. They also heard Regents Chancellor Emeritus **R.Carlos Carballada** speak on education reform.

## *1995-96 School Year*



Gerald Maar

### **State Support of Public Education Compromised**

In spite of lobbying efforts by MCSBA and other education groups statewide, the New York State budget was not approved until the end of the 1995-96 school year. In addition, the Budget Office stipulated that the last 1996-97 BOCES Aid payments that year would not be paid until July 1997, forcing districts to borrow or attack budget reserves.

### **Monroe County Education Coalition Formed**

MCSBA and the regional New York State United Teachers sponsored a discussion led by NYSUT President Thomas Hobart and Regents Chancellor Carl Hayden on collaborating to improve education. This event attracted 300 participants and led to the formation of the Monroe County Education Coalition with the area National Education Association and the Genesee Valley PTA.

## Other Business

· Executive Director Dr. John Woods and BOCES #1 staffers developed the MCSBA web site to provide information on issues, MCSBA activities, and member districts. Since its inception, the site has grown more comprehensive and attractive. The site's address is [www.mcsba.org](http://www.mcsba.org)

· *Maintaining Effective Relationships With Your Public(s)*, a handbook on community relations, was written by staffer Judy Wadsworth.



ABOVE: Information Exchange Committee members participate in distance learning during a meeting held at two high schools. Shown are Cheryl Stoddard (RH), David Pierce (EL), Jim Starkweather (RH), Jackie Anderson (Web), and BOCES 1 Assistant Superintendent for Technology Jerry Cummings.

## Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting

During MCSBA's twenty-seventh annual meeting, held on June 5, 1996, members elected **Joanne "Jody" Siegle** of Brighton as 1996-97 President, and **Alan Shaffer** of Pittsford as Vice President. They also heard NYS Commissioner of Education **Richard Mills** speak on reform.

## 1996-97 School Year



Jody Siegle

### Association Reports on Cost Control Measures

In response to accusations of fiscal irresponsibility, President Jody Siegle led an spearheaded an effort revise existing internal reports on cost savings into a public report that emphasized collaborative efforts among districts and with cultural and municipal agencies. The publication, *Cost-Saving Strategies and Shared Services in Monroe County School Districts*, was widely distributed.

### NYS Constitutional Convention Proposed

The MCSBA Legislative Committee researched the merits of holding a State Constitutional Convention. After months of discussion, and presentations by NYS government scholar Dr. Sara Liebschutz and NYS Senator Richard Dollinger, the committee was unable to agree on a position.

## Other Business

- Standing committee meetings became a way to involve board members who are not committee members. Among the topics they investigated were advocacy techniques, reform through negotiations, assessment practices, and block scheduling.
- Former Brockport School Board member **Dr. Ena Farley** was appointed to the New York State Board of Regents upon the retirement of **Dr. Walter Cooper**.
- In the fall of 1996, MCSBA sponsored a seminar to update state and federal candidates on education issues and to ask them about their goals for public education. Shown at that event are (l to r): US Senate Candidate Charles Schumer and NYS Assemblyman Joseph Robach with Greece School Board Members Joseph Doran and Paul Wawrzyniak.

## Twenty-eighth Annual Meeting

During MCSBA's twenty-eighth annual meeting, held on June 11, 1997, members elected **Alan Shaffer** of Pittsford as 1997-98 President, and **Karen Hoffman** of Greece as Vice President. They also heard a keynote address by Rudolph Crew, Chancellor of New York City Schools.



Alan Shaffer

## ***1997-98 School Year***

### **MCSBA notifies communities about STAR**

The 1997 Legislature passed the STAR legislation that cut property taxes and reimbursed districts for the lost revenues from such taxes. Since districts were made responsible for informing residential property owners about STAR, MCSBA organized the mailing for the whole county.

### **Executive Committee re-institutes learning component.**

At the request of some Executive Committee members, the former practice of inviting presenters to their meetings was re-instituted. In this school year these speakers included Rabbi Laurence Kotok of Temple Brith Kodesh, Regents Carl Carballada and Dr. Ena Farley, and Kate Bennett of The Rochester Museum and Science Center. The meeting with Kate Bennett took place at the museum after a planetarium show and tour of the Challenger Space Center.

## **Other Business**

- The MCSBA *Facts & Figures* publication was enhanced to provide a two-page spread on each member district, including features on exemplary programs once provided in a separate report. The new *Facts & Figures* was well received by realtors, representatives of whom had helped to determine its contents.
- The three standing committees hosted meetings on the internet as a teaching tool, communications strategies, training programs for school administrators, and collaborations with unions to improve teaching.
- The MCSBA office was moved to 1250 Scottsville Road. The new space was more appropriate for MCSBA purposes and centrally located for members.



ABOVE: Board of Regents Member Dr. Ena Farley with Nick Gangemi (Pen) and Assemblyman David Koon at the Spring 1998 legislative breakfast meeting.

## ***Twenty-ninth Annual Meeting***



Karen Hoffman

On June 10, 1998, during MCSBA's Twenty-ninth annual meeting, members Elected **Karen Hoffman** of Greece as 1998-1999 President, and **Robert Heinkel** of West Irondequoit as Vice President. They also listened to a short address by NYS Lieutenant Governor Betsy McCaughley-Ross.

## ***1998-99 School Year***

### **MCSBA Updates Collaboration Report**

An updated version of *Cost-Saving Strategies and Shared Services in Monroe County School Districts* was published in 1999 and distributed to national, state, and county leaders, local media and libraries.

## MCSBA at NYSSBA Convention

In October, MCSBA welcomed conventioners to our area at its hospitality booth during the NYSSBA Convention by offering popcorn, videos of some of our educational programs, copies of our publications, and door prizes.

## Other Business

- The 15th annual MCSBA/MCBA school law conference focused on school safety and attracted more than 90 participants from a 5-county area.
- The Executive Committee heard presentations on educational programs and partnerships from Susan Dodge Peters of the Memorial Art Gallery and Jerry Cummings of Monroe #1 BOCES.



ABOVE: Shown at the October 1998 hospitality booth operated by MCSBA members at the NYSSBA Convention are Kenneth Johnson (Web), Maggie Markham (B1), and Alan Lewis (B1).

## Thirtieth Annual Meeting

At MCSBA's thirtieth annual meeting, held June 2, 1999, members elected **Robert Heinkel** of West Irondequoit as 1999-2000 President, and **Ronald Mendrick** of Honeoye Falls-Lima as Vice President. In addition, noted demographer **Harold Hodgkinson** provided insights into population trends in our area and their effects on our schools.



Robert Heinkel

## 1999-2000 School Year

The Information Exchange and Labor Relations Committees attracted large numbers of MCSBA members and administrators to their meetings. Both committees hosted five topical meetings after their initial September planning session.

The Labor Relations Committee identified instructional improvement as its major item of interest for the year. Attorneys and board members described contract language and exemplary methods. Additional topics were attracting and keeping administrators and avoiding grievances.

The Information Exchange Committee hosted three discussions on aspects of meeting student needs, including inclusion, special programs and school safety plans.

## Other Business

- The 16th annual MCSBA/MCBA school law conference attracted more than 80 participants to look at children-family legal issues.
- The Executive Committee heard remarks by RMSC President Kate Bennett and toured the new BUBL™ (Bathysphere Underwater Biological Laboratory) operated by BOCES #1 at the RMSC.
- A task force was formed to investigate ways to involve urban and suburban students and teachers in common learning experiences.

RIGHT: Pictured at the March 2000 breakfast meeting with NYS Legislators are Senator James Alesi with Darryl Porter and Joanne Giuffrida (both of Rochester).

