

What is MCSBA?

The Monroe County School Boards Association (MCSBA) is a well known, respected organization that advocates for the public education Monroe County students. This county in the northern Genesee Valley region of New York State includes the City of Rochester and houses about 750,000 people . Since its creation in 1970, MCSBA has become a unified voice speaking for the County's young people and the public schools that serve them.

Monroe County School Districts

Boards of education, exercising local control over the education of their children, are a unique American institution. Local boards, by law, have the right and responsibility to set priorities, organize resources, and evaluate instructional programs for their communities. The school boards of Monroe County have used their rights and responsibilities to develop superior educational programs. Each MCSBA member district is uniquely qualified to deal with its community's needs.

School Boards Coalition

MCSBA was created in 1970 to help its members become more effective, and to help its member boards provide high-quality education and prudent fiscal leadership.

The Association continues to fulfill both of these functions. Today MCSBA is a cohesive body representing the county's 19 public school districts and two Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Over the past 30 years, member districts have shared a growing commitment to cooperative efforts at the county level. As this commitment has grown, so has the effectiveness of the Association.

Before MCSBA

The seeds of the Monroe County School Boards Association were sown in the 1960s with the formation of the group known as the Monroe County Chief School Officers and School Board Presidents (MCCSOSBP). Under the guidance of Dr. William Fullager, Dean of the University of Rochester College of Education, the group met to discuss educational issues. While Brighton Board President William Harper chaired the group in 1968-69, it moved to become a more formal organization to affect legislation, deal with labor issues, and exchange ideas among all board members in the county. Labor issues were coming into focus as a direct result of the Taylor Law which had been enacted in 1967.

While most members agreed that a more formal organization would help the county's school leaders, they wanted to preserve the existing informality and rapport between board presidents and superintendents. Some suggested that BOCES assume responsibility for a school boards association without the additional burdens on time and financial resources that a formal association would require.

Out of many...

Creating MCSBA

At their May 1969 meeting, MCCSOSBP members decided that the primary reason for formalizing the group was to provide staff assistance and direction, so they decided to employ a ¼-time executive secretary during the 1969-70 school year to be paid \$4,000-5,000. On October 2, 1969 Fred Painter became Executive Secretary. His salary was paid equally by the two BOCES and the Rochester City School District. Soon thereafter he recommended that the Executive Secretary position be given organizational backing through membership dues.

During the pivotal 1969-70 school year, MCCSOSBP members made a number of decisions that led to the formation of MCSBA.

On November 6, 1969 members approved a resolution to become a county school boards association affiliated with the New York State School Boards Association, and determined that school board presidents and superintendents would comprise the Executive Committee of the new group. A committee was formed to draft a constitution for consideration by county school boards.

On December 1, 1969 the proposed constitution and by-laws were presented to the group's Agenda Committee for review. It was noted that the constitution was intended to be as non-limiting as possible, and that the only challenging process was that for amending the document. The constitution was then submitted to the school boards of Monroe County for their approval.

Birth of MCSBA

The proposed constitution specified that:

“Adoption of this Constitution shall be by official action by Boards of Education of individual School Districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services. An affirmative vote of a majority of eligible member units shall be required for adoption. The constitution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.” (Article XII. ADOPTION)

On January 8, 1970 MCCSOSBP President James Green reported to the group that eight boards had approved the proposed constitution. On January 13 he reported that eleven districts had voted affirmatively. Thus, the Constitution of the Monroe County School Boards Association became effective between January 8 and 13, 1970, and MCSBA was born.

The Executive Committee of the new Monroe County School Boards Association met for the first time on February 5, 1970. At that meeting President Green reported that fifteen districts had approved the constitution, three had disapproved, and two had not yet reached a decision. Although the group was now committed to a more formal organization, members expressed concerns regarding:

- Possible undesirable competition with the Genesee Valley School Boards Institute;
- Possible threat to local board autonomy of MCSBA decisions;
- Possible domination of the new organization by NYSSBA.

Early Years: Separation vs. Collaboration



James Green, 1970

First Annual Meeting

The Association's First Annual Meeting was held on June 17, 1970. Distinguished guests included Dr. Cecil Combs, Dean of the UR School of Education, NYS Regent Helen Power, and NYS Senator Thomas Laverne. The 15 districts represented at the meeting unanimously approved a 1970-71 budget of \$10,000, and elected **James Green** of Spencerport and **Abe Golden** of Greece as officers for the upcoming year.

Struggle for Existence

During the early 1970s, the new association struggled to maintain its existence and establish an identity. For the first several years not all eligible boards were MCSBA members. However, as MCSBA demonstrated its value, the remaining districts joined the group one by one.

During MCSBA's early years many members felt that the needs of students beyond their own local boundaries were not their responsibility, and that involvement in politics was a 'dirty' business best left to others who were less idealistic. To counteract these feelings of separatism and introduce members to major issues facing public schools, issues discussions occurred at all Executive Committee meetings, many of which were open to the general membership, and a feeling of unity was slowly developed.

The 1970-71 School Year

The Association's first full year began with a stated commitment to become more effective in dealing with labor and legislative issues. In addition, members were polled to help set priorities. Poll returns indicated interest in pursuing the following issues:

State Aid increase	County sales tax distribution
Negotiations	Urban-suburban transfer program
Cable television	Countywide real estate assessment
Non-public schools	Regional demonstration school
Teaching effectiveness	Optimal use of school facilities.

Many of these topics will sound familiar to *current* school board members and administrators.

Because of abiding labor concerns, member district negotiators began meeting regularly to share information. These meetings have continued to this day.

In February 1971, the Center for Governmental Research published a report entitled *A Review of Teachers' Collective Bargaining Agreements in the School Districts of Monroe County*. This document provided for the first time information useful in judging teacher demands, and included business sector salary data that enabled comparisons.

Despite their hesitations, the majority of Executive Committee members voted to authorize a new Steering Committee to plan an annual meeting for all MCSBA board members for the purposes of electing officers and adopting a budget for the coming school year.

At its April 9, 1970 meeting, the new Executive Committee accepted the resignation of Executive Secretary Fred Painter. To succeed Painter, the group appointed Lewis Obourn, the retiring East Rochester Superintendent.

Second Annual Meeting

MCSBA's Second Annual Meeting was held on May 3, 1971. At that meeting outgoing President **James Green** delivered remarks he entitled *I never promised you a rose garden*, during which he stated:

We have made progress towards...cooperation..., but...in all too many instances we are our own worst enemies—always seeking what we believe is right - for our own district....We must find ways to do those things that must be done together if we expect to retain any shred of our existing local control.

At that same meeting, **Kenneth Pollard** of Fairport was elected President for the 1971-72 year, and **Cameron Estes** of BOCES 2 was elected Vice President.

The 1971-72 School Year



Kenneth Pollard

This year saw some continuing contention regarding areas of cooperation and superintendent membership in the organization. Nevertheless the Association was stronger by the end of the year.

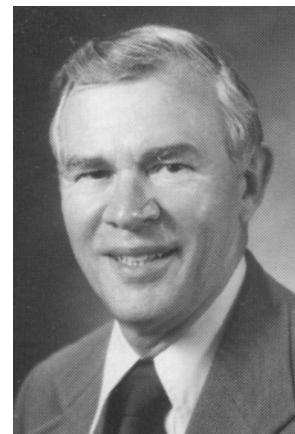
Early in the 1971-72 school year, the Association office was moved from its original location at 100 Allens Creek Road to a new home on the BOCES #1 Campus at 41 O'Connor Road in Fairport.

Because of great interest in labor matters, a Negotiations Committee was formed that is not to be confused with the negotiators group that started meeting in 1970. The newly formed Negotiations Committee would later become the Labor Relations Committee as its role expanded. Major discussions that year dealt with regional negotiations, the Taylor Law and PERB, and the impact of the state's financial crisis on State Aid to Education.

At its March 29, 1972 meeting, the Executive Committee approved a 1972-73 budget which included a salary for a full-time Executive Secretary.

Third Annual Meeting

At the Association's Third Annual Meeting, held on May 3, 1972, members approved the proposed 1972-73 budget; elected **Robert Hunter** of Churchville-Chili as President and **Loretta Bishop** of BOCES 1 as Vice President; and heard **Warren Doremus**, Public Affairs Director of WHEC, speak on *Education from the Standpoint of Public Affairs and as a News Analyst*.



Robert Hunter

The 1972-73 School Year

On August 1, 1972 **Jann Packard** of Pittsford began her service as MCSBA Executive Secretary. She was a member of the Pittsford Board of Education and a former President of that body. In one of her first acts, she appointed Bettie Ecker as secretary. The two would work as team for almost 14 years.

The priorities for the year were legislation, negotiations (including teacher salaries), and regionalism.

During the 1972-73 school year, Executive Secretary Packard published MCSBA's first *Facts & Figures* booklet. This brochure has been produced annually since then and has become an important service provided to area industries and real estate companies.

A survey exploring member attitudes toward regionalism netted responses from 32 people:

- 18 supported regionalism for planning and providing programs for small student groups; 15 added curriculum planning to this list;
- 25 agreed that regionalism could provide coordination and eliminate duplication (in transportation; programs for vocational, disabled and gifted students; calendar setting; computer and data processing services; educational television; library holdings, in-service and purchasing);
- Only 6 members felt that negotiations could be better accomplished at the regional level.

All of the regional services approved by survey respondents have since been incorporated into the services offered by Monroe County's two Boards of Cooperative Educational Services.



Jann Packard

Fourth Annual Meeting

On May 16, 1973--at MCSBA's Fourth Annual Meeting--President **Robert Hunter** noted that the year had seen growth and consolidation and that the benefits of MCSBA membership were more widely recognized. In other business, **Dr. Peter Stacy** of Webster was elected 1973-74 President and **Dr. Timothy Parsons** of Hilton Vice President. Members also voted to change the title of Executive Secretary to Executive Director to give the position more public clout.

The 1973-74 School Year

Labor issues were the major concern during the 1973-74 year. MCSBA officers Peter Stacy and Timothy Parsons recall that union militancy in 1973 gave MCSBA a new sense of purpose. Until then union trouble was considered unlikely in Monroe County. When East Irondequoit teachers went on strike in November 1973, MCSBA called its first press conference to decry strikes and call for re-opening the schools.

The Legislative Committee that year pursued State Aid revisions, studied property reappraisal, submitted data to the newly formed State task force studying school financial aid, and set long range legislative goals. On January 4, 1974 the Executive Committee approved the *Legislative Study Paper: Long Range Goals*. **Mary Alice Kendall**, who was soon to become a State Regent, chaired the committee that prepared the paper. President Stacy hailed the approval of the legislative goals as an "important step in MCSBA history."

Mid 70s: Consolidation

By 1974 the value of MCSBA membership was no longer questioned, and the leadership could concentrate on dealing with the issues pressing on public education. The mid-70s saw new initiatives in public information and lobbying and intensified efforts with negotiations issues.



Dr. Timothy Parsons, 1974

Fifth Annual Meeting

At the Fifth Annual Meeting, members elected **Dr. Timothy Parsons** of Hilton as 1974-75 President and **Douglas Webb** of Rush-Henrietta as Vice President. In other business, a new thrust was unveiled as Public Information Committee Chair **Joyce Budd** presented the first report of that group which was formed to:

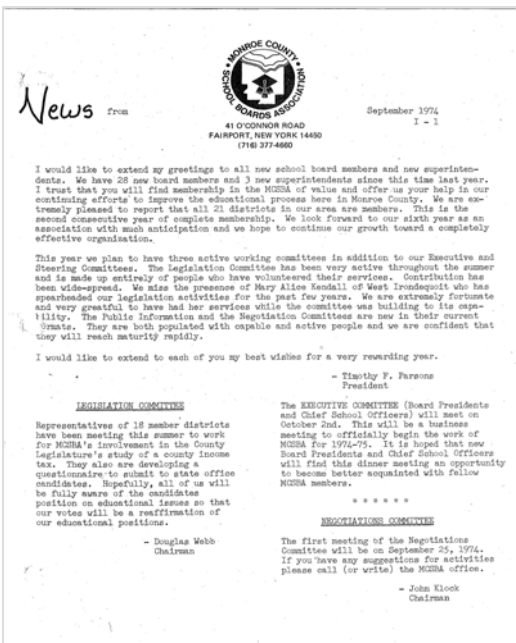
- Identify district information that should be collected,
- Decide what information should be shared with the community, and
- Determine how this sharing should occur.

In 1974 the Monroe County School Boards Association acquired a logo that pictured a commencement mortarboard super-imposed on an outline of Monroe County.



The logo was featured prominently on the masthead of the newsletter, *News from MCSBA*, that Executive Director Packard began publishing in September of that year. The first issue contained notices of meetings, the year's officers and calendar, and a message from President Parsons. The Association has produced a monthly newsletter ever since.

The 1974-75 School Year



Legislative Issues

Education advocacy networks were organized in 1974-75. NYSSBA hosted the first conference of its State Legislative Network (SLN) early in 1975. Later that year, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) held the first conference of its Federal Relations Network (FRN). MCSBA has been represented at every annual SLN and FRN Conference.

Labor and Public Relations Initiatives

The Negotiations Committee wrestled with developing guidelines for unified county-wide negotiations. Members were surveyed about issues but results were inconclusive. Increasing requests for labor-related assistance, led to the establishment of a part-time labor relations assistant position.

In the spring, MCSBA instituted its seminar for potential school board candidates, a program it has held every year since then.



Douglas Webb

Sixth Annual Meeting

At its Sixth Annual Meeting, on May 22, 1975, after a discussion that included an unsuccessful attempt to change the dues structure, the Executive Committee was charged with developing alternative dues structures for consideration.

In addition, members approved a budget with funds for a labor research associate and elected **Douglas Webb** of Rush-Henrietta as President and **Joyce Budd** of Brockport as Vice President for the 1975-76 school year. Mr. Webb challenged members to work together to advocate more effectively and to talk to one another more freely.



The 1975-76 School Year

In September 1975 the Executive Committee appointed Susan Haude, a graduate of the Cornell Industrial Labor Relations School, as MCSBA's Labor Research Associate. She produced a study of employee benefits offered by MCSBA districts, the such study for the Association. During her two years with MCSBA she expanded the scope of the study to include teacher and administrator salaries.

In other business that year, MCSBA produced its first annual Legislative Position which dealt with state aid, BOCES, tenure, and the Taylor Law. The Association also developed guidelines for the annual evaluation of the executive director.



ABOVE: **Karen Warren** of East Rochester, with **Barbara Reifler** and **Linda Spear** of Brighton, answering questions for visitors to 1975 NYSSBA Convention visitors.

1975 NYSSBA Convention

The Annual Meeting of the New York State School Boards Association was held in Rochester, for the first time ever, in Fall 1975. The NYSSBA President at that time was **John Woods** of the Greece Board of Education (shown at upper right in 1975).

Seventh Annual Meeting

At the Seventh Annual Meeting, held on May 19, 1976 members, by a 6-to-1 margin, approved a new stratified dues structure that included:

- A flat fee for all member districts (to cover 60% of the Association budget);
- An assessment fee based on each district's actual valuation divided by its weighted average daily attendance (to cover 40% of the Association Budget).

In other business, members elected **Joyce Budd** of Brockport as 1976-77 President and **John Klock** of Hilton as Vice President.



Joyce Budd

The 1976-77 School Year

At the beginning of this school year the MCSBA Office moved to the BOCES 1 building at 2596 Baird Road in Penfield. That summer the Association presented its first annual orientation for newly elected school board members, as it has done every year since then.

Also that year MCSBA leaders met with business leaders and the media. Members approved a statement of Educational Philosophy and Long Range Goals, which was used as an advocacy guide for many years. In addition, members developed a fact sheet that defined student needs and existing programs in place that dealt with those needs.

MCSBA also joined the Erie County Association of School Boards advocacy trip to Albany in the spring, a practice that continued until MCSBA instituted its own bus trips in 1982.

Eighth Annual Meeting

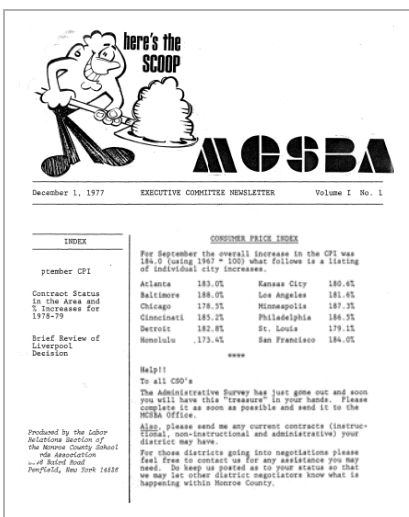
On May 18, 1977 during the Eighth Annual Meeting, Susan Haude was honored for her work upon her resignation to attend graduate school; and In addition, members elected **John Klock** of Hilton as 1977-78 President and **Margaret Price** of West Irondequoit as Vice President.



John Klock

LEFT: Area realtors attending a seminar on public schools that MCSBA presented in 1977.

The 1977-78 School Year



Labor Relations the major issue

MCSBA members developed a number of labor relations initiatives during the 1977-78 year, including county-wide negotiations goals and a labor relations newsletter.

In October **Kathryn Walsh** was hired to serve as Labor Relations Associate. Although she was with MCSBA for only a few months, the data book and monthly labor newsletter she developed set the pattern for subsequent efforts. The first issue of the newsletter, *Here's the Scoop*, appeared in December; it contained articles on the consumer price index, a decision mandating arbitration, and reports on local contracts. The document was published monthly until 1985. Shown at the left is the front page of the first issue.

That fall the Labor Relations Committee developed, and the Executive Committee approved, a *Goals of Negotiations* statement.

This paper was MCSBA's first effort to coordinate negotiations county-wide. It included provisions about graduate work, salaries and benefits, class size and merit. Similar goals were developed annually until 1985; after a 6-year hiatus the practice was renewed in 1991, and these goals are now reviewed annually by the Labor Relations Committee.

Upon the resignation of Kathryn Walsh in January, former Sodus Superintendent **Dr. William Stirling** was appointed as Labor Research Associate. He had a major impact on the effectiveness of negotiations within MCSBA districts until his retirement in 1986.



Dr. William Stirling

Other business

The Association returned to the original equal-share method for assessing dues as recommended by the Dues Revision Committee.

A meeting dealing with community involvement was hosted by the Public Information Committee.

The average cost per pupil in Monroe County public schools that year was calculated to be \$2524.

Ninth Annual Meeting

At the Ninth Annual Meeting, on May 24, 1978, outgoing President John Klock urged the Association to become more active in dealing with legislative issues, and members to increase efforts to inform and involve the public in MCSBA's advocacy efforts. In other business, members elected **Margaret Price** of West Irondequoit to serve as 1978-79 President and **Elmer Gordon** of Rush-Henrietta as Vice President.

The 1978-79 School Year

The 1978-79 year saw these activities:

- The Executive Committee endorsed legislative candidates based on responses to a candidate survey.
- WHEC-TV newscaster Wyoma Best spoke at a MCSBA workshop on media relations.
- In February local NYS Regent Mary Alice Kendall described plans for new state competency tests.

Tenth Annual Meeting

On May 9, 1979, at the Tenth Annual Meeting, members elected **Elmer Gordon** of Rush Henrietta as 1979-1980 President and **Doris Luckey** of BOCES 1 and Penfield as Vice President. A discussion at this meeting regarding the county sales tax was a precursor of future efforts to resolve this issue.

The 1979-80 School Year

President Elmer Gordon died in September. **Margaret Price** was re-elected to complete Mr. Gordon's term. MCSBA became involved in discussions about teacher professionalization. The Regents had received SED recommendations on the issue, and in October President Price submitted the MCSBA response to that report which sought to upgrade teaching and eliminate teaching incompetence. The recommendations of the original report and its many responses were never implemented.



Doris Luckey

Involving the community in schools was the topic of a seminar in November sponsored by the Public Information Committee.

Eleventh Annual Meeting

On May 28, 1980, **Doris Luckey** of BOCES 1 and Penfield was elected President for the 1980-81 school year, and **Archie Curry** of Rochester was elected Vice President.