



# This Week At ECASB ...

*Important news from this past week and news for the upcoming week.*

December 23, 2024

*Executive Director Cell Phone: (716) 867-3531*

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### PLANNING ON ATTENDING THE NYSSBA CAPITAL CONFERENCE IN ALBANY IN FEBRUARY?

ECASB will be securing a block of rooms for those planning on attending. We will be staying at the Fairfield Inn by Marriott at 168 Wolf Road. It is about a 20 minute drive to the capital. ECASB will pay for the cost of your room for one night, we will pay mileage from WNY to the Conference for people that are carpooling. We will reimburse participants for parking at the Capital or reimburse attendees for an Uber/Lyft/Cab driver on Wednesday morning. The DEADLINE FOR RESERVING THE ROOM WILL BE FRIDAY JANUARY 3RD. YOU NEED TO LET DAVE LOWREY KNOW IF YOU ARE PLANNING ON ATTENDING AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ECASB'S HOTEL BLOCK. The conference is February 12th. ECASB will pay for housing on February 11th.

### ECASB ELF ON A SHELF UPDATE: Winners of the ECASB Elf on Shelf Contest were:

- Grand Prize - Joe Cassidy, Board President East Aurora UFSD
- Second Prize - Kathy Ferneza, District Clerk from Gowanda CSD
- Third Prize - Jennifer Michalec - Board President Lake Shore CSD

THE ECASB EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING WAS CANCELED/POSTPONED: The meeting was scheduled for Thursday December 12th, however with the pending snow storm and the timing of some of the reports, we decided to have the meeting in January.

### ECASB HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS:

- December 24th - Closed
- December 25th - Closed
- December 26th - Open 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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December 27th - Closed  
December 31st - 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
January 1st - Closed



**ECASB PROGRAM SCHEDULED FOR SATUDAY JANUARY 25th IS CANCELLED.**

**VISIT TO FRONTIER CSD:** I had the opportunity to attend the Frontier CSD Board of Education meeting on December 17th. Thank you to President Dr. Mary Ann Costello, Vice President John Cordier, Board Members Patrick Boyle, David Ceccarelli, Sharon Heppner, John Kilcoyne, Jr. and James Vo-to. Thank you to Superintendent Christopher Swiatek and District Clerk Shannon Cross. I was able to listen to a great conversation from the Board on an initiative they will be working on in the coming year. The Board will be deciding to focus on either a Community Education program or a Student Support Center.

**ECASB ANNUAL AWARDS OPEN ON JANUARY 2ND, 2025:** The awards are listed below. Award nominations come usually from Boards of Education, but they can be made by individual Board Members, Superintendents and District Clerks as well. ECASB does not allow for self-nominations. The full descriptions are on the ECASB website and will be sent out in January.

- Diana Miller Leadership in Education Award
- Laura Burns Advocacy for Children Award
- Wayne Schlifke Lifetime Achievement Award
- Hodgson Russ Collaboration Award
- Webster Szanyi District Clerk Award
- Ray Carr Emerging Leaders Award
- Lorie Sabo Advocacy Award

We also have the ECASB Rising Star and Shinning Star Awards which are given based on participation at meetings, events and programs. In 2026, we will have a new award, "The Linda Hoffman Do More Award" that will be awarded to a Board Member that goes above and beyond Board Member service and volunteers and makes significant contributions to organizations beyond their Local School Board.

**NAMM:** Application period is open through February 28th for Best Communities for Music Education. Currently in their 26th year, the national honor recognizes school districts that demonstrate a commitment to providing access to music education.

**RURAL SCHOOLS 2025 SUMMER CONFERENCE IN LAKE PLACID IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS:** The Future of Rural-Our Time to Shine conference will be held July 13th-July15th. Focus of presentations should be focused on the following topics:

- Agriculture in Schools
- Preparing Students for Life Beyond P-12
- Staffing Issues
- District Collaboration

Proposals should be limited to 500 words or less and must be submitted electronically by February 14th at midnight. Sessions should be 45 minutes in length with 15 minutes for questions. Additional questions please contact Heather Zellers at hzellers@rsany.org.

**RURAL SCHOOLS TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD:** - Applications are now open. Award includes \$1,000 to awarded to the teacher for their own classroom and \$2,000 awarded to the teacher to en-

hance rural education programming in the district. A plaque is presented to the school district. C & S Companies (also an ECASB sponsor) is the corporate sponsor. Deadline for submissions is Friday, January 31, 2025.

**WATCH FOR A UNIQUE PROMOTION FOR STUDENT BOARD REPS TO GET INVOLVED AND PROMOTE THEIR SCHOOL.** Details will be sent out in the next few weeks.

**SCHOOL TEMPERATURE LEGISLATION:** “Maximum Temperatures in School Buildings and Facilities” was signed on December 14, 2024. Beginning September 1, 2025 schools and BOCES must develop and implement policies to ensure the health and safety of students, faculty and other employees on extreme heat condition days. Policies are required to include action:

- 82 Degrees - (not including kitchen area), the school must take actions to relieve heat related discomfort. This may include pulling down blinds, using fans, turning off lights, opening doors or windows for cross-ventilation and providing water breaks.

- 88 Degrees - (not including kitchen area), the room may not be occupied.

The law describes how temperatures must be measured (i.e. at a shaded location, three feet above the floor near the center of the room. Schools will be required to amend their building-level safety plans. As in most cases when new laws are enacted, there are many more questions that arise that will need to be addressed. Schools should contact their attorneys for additional questions.

**CW FIT PROGRAM:** I mentioned about the CW Fit Program a few weeks ago after having attended the Rural Schools Program. I have attached two pages related to the CW Fit Program.

**SCHOOLS BOARD MEETINGS YET TO VISIT:** After the holidays, I will focus on getting to the remainder of the ECASB schools. I have yet to attend Board of Education meetings for Akron CSD, Gowanda CSD, Hamburg CSD, Orchard Park CSD, Springville Griffith Institute CSD, Sweet Home CSD, West Seneca CSD, Williamsville CSD and both Starpoint CSD and Pioneer CSD.

**STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS:** July 1, 2025 is the deadline that all schools will be required to have an ex officio student board member.

- Buffalo will be able to select a student member via any method.
- In accordance to a locally developed policy, schools can select students in one of the following six ways:
  - A student duly elected as the Student President of the high school.
  - A student duly elected by the student body.
  - A student selected by the high school student government.
  - A student selected by the high school principal.
  - A student selected by the Superintendent of Schools.
  - A student selected by majority vote of the school board.
- Most students should have attended the high school for at least one year prior to selection. BOCES Board members must have attended the high school in one of the component districts at least 1 year prior to their selection and participate in one of the programs administered by BOCES. The Board may want to put into policy a requirement to provide the ex officio student member on their roles and responsibility.

What is the Role of the member? The law stipulates that that student should join board members at all public meetings and hearings of the board. They cannot vote and do not count towards a quorum of the board. They cannot attend executive sessions or hearings not open to the public. They serve without compensation. The board should discuss whether they will just provide reports or whether they will be a conduit to the board for the student body.

**ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE RECOMMENDATIONS:** As the report is reviewed and evaluated, more information will be examined. The report released Dec. 2nd has a few recommendations listed below:

- Reduce the use of “save harmless” funding. The report notes that about 1/2 of the districts rely on the guarantee of save harmless payments. Instead the formula should utilize up to date information in the calculation of the formula.
- Eliminate the guaranteed minimum state payment of \$500 per student.
- Should be a better use of poverty date to drive funding.
- “Set asides” should be eliminated as a portion of the formula.
- State should fully underwrite the cost of the mandated transition to zero emission buses.

- Use rolling averages and multi-year phase-ins to improve predictability and reduce volatility.
- Allow districts to temporarily retain 10% of their budgets as an unrestricted year end fund balance.
- Create separate aid categories to address needs involving students with disabilities, geographic sparsity and acute enrollment growth.
- Schools today are obligated to provide more support and services than ever before, particularly when it comes to safety and mental health services.

When talking with Legislators during the Legislative session, many Legislators will explain the New York State spends a great deal on education. They fail to tell you that New York State also spends a great deal on prisons, on Medicaid, and for roads to name a few. In fact New York state is usually among the top spender in every category. The New York State Budget has increased tremendously over the last 20 years. The cost of educating students has also increased over the last 20 years - that is a given. **HOWEVER**, education's piece of the pie from the New York State Budget has gotten smaller and smaller.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:** (Upcoming ECASB Events).

- January 2nd - ECASB Award Nominations Open
- January 23rd - Legislative Team Meeting 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- January TBD - Re-Scheduled Executive Board Meeting

**POLITICAL FUNDRAISERS:**

None Listed

**NYSSBA'S PROGRAMS:**

- Become an Advocacy Liaison - NYSSBA encourages each district to appoint an Advocacy Liaison.
- Capital Conference - Virtual - February 7th
- Capital Conference - In Person; Meeting with Legislators - February 12th.
- NYSSBA ANNUAL CONFERENCE - October 23rd-October 25th

**RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE:**

**NSBA'S (NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION) PROGRAMS:**

- 2025 National School Boards Conference will be in Atlanta, Georgia April 4th-6th.
- NSBA's Advocacy and Equity Institute will be held in Washington D.C. February 2nd-4th.

**AFFILIATE NEWS AND INFORMATION:**

Erie Niagara School Superintendents has a list of all of their podcasts over the last three years. If you are interested in subscribing or following the E-NSSA podcast you can search for "Achieving Joy and Mastery in Public Schools" within your favorite podcast platform.

**BEST PRACTICES:** The Best Practices of most Boards of Education is when they visit programs in schools, attend sporting events, and attend events and programs that they are invited to. If a Board Member cannot attend a program and receives an invite, please send a note thanking the group for the invite and letting them know that you cannot attend due to a conflict so that they are aware you will not be in attendance.

**NYSSBA AREA 1 DIRECTOR NEWS AND NOTES:**

*Be sure to check out dates for the Capital Conference. There is a virtual component and an in person component. The Virtual Day is February 7th, while the In Person date is February 12th.*

