



# This Week At ECASB ...

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

November 22, 2024

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

## Diamond Level Sponsor



**ECASB OFFICE CLOSED ON NOVEMBER 22ND:** Due to the use of vacation time by staff members.

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY HOURS AT ECASB:** I will be off next week and will return on December 1st. I will be available via cell phone if you need to reach me. The office will be closed on Wednesday, November 27th, Thursday, November, 28th and Friday, November 29th in observance of Thanksgiving.

**LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST:** Thank you to Associate Director Jane Sullivan and her planning committee consisting of ECASB Legislative Co-Chairs Scott Johnson (Sweet Home), Kathleen Chiavetta Lake Shore and E2CC BOCES), and Erik Polkowski (Akron), along with Gordon Crock (Amherst), Sherry Steffans (Grand Island), Lorene Barulich (West Seneca), Mary Jo Szucs (Holland), Dennis Priore (Clarence), Heather Becker (Iroquois), and Kristy Pingitore (Akron).

**ECASB DIRECTORY:** We are sending them to the Board President and any Board Member with 3 years or less of board service. We have plenty available if anyone else would like one. Just email us or call our office and we will send it interschool mail.

**DISTRICT CLERKS WILL BE RECEIVING AN ECASB DIRECTORY AND A DISTRICT CLERK DIRECTORY.** The District Clerk directory has all District Clerks listed in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties.

**PLANNING ON ATTENDING THE NYSSBA CAPITAL CONFERENCE IN ALBANY IN FEBRUARY?** ECASB will be securing a block of rooms for those planning on attending. Watch for details.

**ECASB ELF ON A SHELF RETURNS:** December 1st, the ECASB Elf on a Shelf returns. Edward C. Asby, the notorious elf travels to ECASB member districts and leaves a clue as to which district he visited. All ECASB members are eligible to play. Each correct guess gets your name entered into the final drawing. The winner of the drawing will receive a Holiday Cookie Jar with cookies and \$200 cash. New this year....the winner of the drawing will have \$300 donated to the High School Student Government of the district they serve on as a donation. If the district has three high schools each school will receive \$100. If the district has 2 high schools each school will receive \$150. If the school has one high school, the high school receives \$300.

## Platinum Level Sponsors



*ECASB Gold Level Sponsor*



**VISIT TO CHEEKTOWAGA-SLOAN UFSD.** I attended the Cheektowaga Sloan UFSD on Tuesday, November 19th. Thank you to President Denise McGowan, Vice President Zachary Smith, and Board Members Stephanie Dombrowski, Jennifer Kregg, Ava-Marie Shonitsky, Gary Sieczkarek, and Jim Stachewicz. I heard a very comprehensive update on the district's capital project. Project managers from Young and Wright explained in detail many of reasons why the project follows along a specific time line. A special Thank You to Superintendent Andrea Galenski, and District Clerk Denise Knaebe.

**VISIT TO BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS:** Jane Sullivan and I ventured into Buffalo for the Buffalo Public School District Board of Education on Wednesday November 20th. Thank you to Board President Sharon Belton-Cottman, Vice President Lawrence Scott, Vice President Dr. Kathy Evans Brown, and Board Members Terrance Heard, Cindi M. McEachon, Jennifer Mecozzi, Dr. Ann Rivera and Theresa Schuta. Special Thank you to Superintendent Dr. Tonja Williams Knight and District Clerk Dr. Will Keresztes. We heard about a phenomenal program that was held in conjunction with MST and Trocaire College on Cybersecurity that many students took advantage of this past year. We heard from the Building Principal, teachers involved in the program, and from students that were involved in the program.

**SCHOOL BOARD MANDATED TRAINING:** I have had several inquiries lately regarding the Mandated Training for New School Board Members. If Board Members attend training at ECASB or NYSSBA they will obtain a certificate that should be turned into the District Clerk. The District Clerk should keep all certificates on file. A Board Member only needs to complete the mandated training once. So if a Board Member completes training, and then there is a lapse in service because they did not run for office and are then later back on the board, they would not need to complete another course of study in the mandated training. We not aware if the Comptrollers office has done any audits on school boards member taking their mandated training, however, I would recommend that District Clerks keep the certificate on file for all Board Members. Board Members failing to complete their mandated training within the first year of service are subject to removal by the Commissioner of Education.

**ECASB ANNUAL AWARDS OPEN ON JANUARY 3RD, 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
- Lori Sabo Advocacy Award

We also have the ECASB Rising Star and Shinning Star Awards which are given based on participation at meetings, events and program. 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.

**THANK YOU AGAIN TO LACKAWANNA SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT NADIA NASHIR:** Who was the

first presenter at last night's Speed Boarding/Dessert Forum. Nadia's team of High School Principal Jennifer Springer and Assistant Principal Meagan Bender spoke about Lackawanna's new cell phone policy and their success with the program. They also provided information on areas that need improvement with the policy. Overall they are seeing positive results. The second presentation was by Cheektowaga-Sloan Superintendent Andrea Galenski and Assistant Superintendent Janelle Finn who presented information on the District's successful Restorative Justice Program. The program has been in existence for 6 years, and they have data that demonstrates the process works. The final presentation of the evening was by Lake Shore CSD Superintendent Dan Pacos and their Director of Transportation who spoke about Zero Emission Buses. Lake Shore CSD has a few Zero Emission buses in their fleet with several more on the way. After each presentation, there was a drawing for a Watson's Chocolate turkey. Lucky winners of the door prizes were Tricia DeGraff (Erie 2 CC BOCES), Ashley Rapsinski (Hamburg CSD) and Noriel Esteron from Gold Level Sponsor Campus Construction. Additionally, Bipperts pies (apple, pumpkin, pecan, and cherry) were given away as door prizes. Winners included Dan Pacos (Lake Shore CSD), Tricia Andrews (Clarence CSD), Linda Hoffman (Erie 2 CC BOCES), Jason Wilke (Wilson CSD), Brian Sullivan (Roy-Hart CSD), Janelle Finn (Cheektowaga-Sloan UFSD), Adriann Johnson (Lackawanna City School District), Stephanie Dombrowski (Cheektowaga-Sloan UFSD), and James Stachewicz (Cheektowaga-Sloan UFSD).

**THE DRAWING FOR THE FREE BOARD DINNER TOOK PLACE AT THE FALL SPEED BOARDING EVENT.** Any Board Members that submitted photos of themselves with ECASB sponsors at the Annual NYSSBA Convention or at the Rick Timbs Dinner or at the Legislative Breakfast had their names entered into the drawing. Board Members from the following districts submitted pictures: Akron, Cheektowaga, Cheektowaga-Sloan, Clarence, Cleveland Hill, East Aurora, Holland, Iroquois, Ken Ton, Lake Shore, Tonawanda, and West Seneca. This year, we decided to select three districts to receive a Board Dinner. Dave Lowrey will be reaching out to the District Clerks of the three lucky winners. Boards of Education that were drawn after each presentation last evening include Cheektowaga CSD, Cheektowaga-Sloan UFSD, and West Seneca CSD.

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

- December 1st - Elf on a Shelf Promotion Begins
- December - ECASB Executive Board Meeting
- January 1st - ECASB Award Nominations Open

**POLITICAL FUNDRAISERS:**  
None Listed

**NYSSBA'S PROGRAMS:**

- December 3rd—Legislative and State Budget Preview Complimentary Webinar
- Asian-American and Pacific Islanders Member Initiative....Several Asian American school board members have expressed an interest in organizing a virtual meetup on November 18th from 7:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. If you identify as Asian American please register with NYSSBA.
- Become an Advocacy Liaison - NYSSBA encourages each district to appoint an Advocacy Liaison.

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

- December 4th and 5th - Winter Conference 2024 at Saratoga Springs. Registration close November 15th.

**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:** Here is a unique practice for appointing Board Members to fill vacant seats. One district before appointing a Board Member to a vacant seat has the Board Member complete on-line

Government Training through NYSSBA prior to their appointment to the Board. This Board feels much more comfortable knowing that the Board Member has completed their training and is aware of the Board Members role before the person assumes a position on the Board of Education. Please keep in mind that both NYSSBA and ECASB provide certificates to Board Members that have completed training. The certificates should be on file with the District Clerk.

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

*The next NYSSBA Board of Directors meeting will be held the first part of December. If you have any issues or concerns you would like me to bring up, please let me know.*