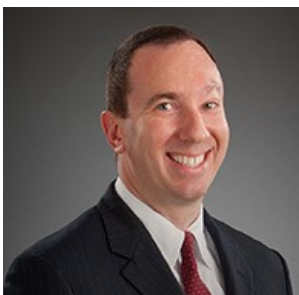


Presenters:

**Honorable Deanne Tripi
Erie County Family Court Judge**



Judge Deanne Tripi has dedicated her entire 28 year career to helping children and families in need. Prior to taking the Bench, Judge Tripi was in private practice in Matrimonial and Family Law cases, representing a variety of clients which included mothers, fathers, children and other family members. For eighteen years, she guided families through the legal process during what can be the most difficult items in their lives. As an attorney, Judge Tripi committed herself to being the voice for the voiceless. Judge Tripi was elected to Erie County Family Court on January 1, 2014. She presides over cases involving families and children in Erie County who are often in crisis and need immediate Court intervention. Judge Tripi handles a sizable caseload of over 2200 dockets per year some which include contested child Custody, Visitation and Guardianship cases. A considerable portion of her cases involved Domestic Violence matters where it is often necessary to issue a Temporary Order of Protection in favor of those at risk. She handles Child Abuse and Neglect cases which involve various forms of abuse on children where children are often removed from the home of a parent or guardian to ensure their safety. Judge Tripi also hears criminal cases that involve criminal charges filed against children under 18 years of age where her goal is to try to find a way to rehabilitate the children and change their trajectory so that they do not become part of the adult criminal justices system. The Decisions that she render every day have a significant impact upon the families in Erie County and Judge Tripi is diligent in ensuring that any Decision that she makes is in the children's best interests.



**Jeffrey J. Weiss, Esq.
Harris Beach Attorneys at Law, PLLC**



Jeff focuses primarily on representing public school districts in special education matters, including impartial due process hearings, appeals to the Office of State Review, and the federal and state court actions. He also counseled school districts on their duties and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Jeff is frequently invited to present at school districts and BOCES centers throughout western and southern New York on topics in special education law, including the IDEA, Section 504 and the development of appropriate individualized education plans. Jeff has lectured at the University at Buffalo, Niagara University and D'Youville College, and at programs presented by the New York State School Boards Association. Western New York Education Service Council, New York State Bar Association and Erie County Association of School Boards. Following law school, Jeff served for three years as an assistant corporation counsel in the New York City Law Department, General Litigation Division, where he represented the City of New York and municipal agencies, including the New York City Board of Education.



**Andrew R. Mark, Esq.
Harris Beach Attorneys at Law, PLLC**



Andrew is an attorney in the labor and employment group where he focuses on representing school districts on a variety of education, general education and labor and employment matters. Prior to joining Harris Beach, Andrew represented municipalities and school districts as bond counsel on a range of general obligation and lease /purchase financings. He also provided guidance on matters arising under the Local Finance Law, General Municipal Law, Education Law, and SEC and IRS regulations. While in law school,

Andrew served as a law clerk in the housing unit of Neighborhood Legal Services in Buffalo where he assisted low income tenants facing eviction. Andrew holds a New York State Professional Teaching Certification in music. Before becoming an attorney, he served as director of elementary, middle and high school bands for 10 years at a local charter school in Buffalo



Rachael Pudlewski
BPO Associate Director of Education



Rachael received her Master of Music from Eastern Michigan University and holds a Bachelor of Music from the State University of New York College at Buffalo. Her work in Education for the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra developed her newfound passion for arts administration. She currently serves as Associate Director of Education for the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra where she promotes and runs several education initiatives. Rachael is Chair of the BPO Disability Awareness Committee, leading effort to enhance accessibility for the BPO and Kleinhans Music Hall, and sits on the BPO Concert Experience Committee.

Panelists:



James Schwanz
Supervisor of Music, Buffalo Public Schools



James Schwanz, is the Supervisor of Music for Buffalo Public Schools (BPS), working collaboratively with a department of more than 85 classroom, instrumental, and choral music teachers. James has worked closely with the BPO Education and Curriculum committees for more than 10 years, first as a BPS teacher at International Preparatory School PS #198 and presently, as the Supervisor of Music. At Portville Central School, James began playing the trumpet in 4th grade and actively participated in the school's concert band and jazz ensemble. Heavily influenced by his father, a pianist and the constant support of his mother to practice, James fostered an early love for music performance and piano composition. Upon graduating high school in 1999, James spent his first two years studying Music Education as a trumpet major at Houghton College, before transferring and ultimately graduating from SUNY Fredonia. James received his M.Ed. In Music Education from SUNY Buffalo, and his educational administration certification from St. Bonaventure University. A few of James accolades and highlights of his career as an educator and administrator include being awarded the Yale Distinguished Educator Award, Buffalo Business First's 40 Under 40 Award, securing Title IV: Well-Rounded Education Grant funding to increase access to grades 4-8 instrumental music and increase the BPS band and string inventory. He facilitated the expansion of string programs to include ac-



cess for students in grades 3 and 4 at BPS Early Childhood Centers, coordinated the introduction of BPS’s first music recording and technology programs, and recently began the process of collaborating with Erie Community College to provide high school students with dual and high school college credit courses.



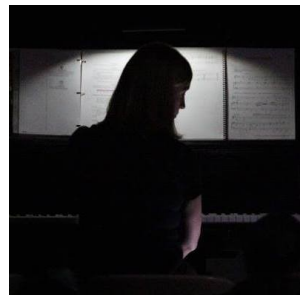
Lynne Ruda
Mayor, Village of Lancaster
Director of High School Orchestras,
Lancaster Central School
Conductor, Greater Buffalo String Youth Orchestra



Lynne Ruda is a lifelong Lancaster resident and is proud to serve her community as Mayor of the Village of Lancaster and the Director of Economic Development. She also serves as a Volunteer Firefighter for the Village of Lancaster and is on the Board of Directors for the Lancaster Opera House. Lynne served as the Director of Orchestras at Lancaster High School since 2008 and is a proud member of the Lancaster Central Teachers Association. Additionally, Mrs. Ruda is the conductor of the greater Buffalo Youth String Orchestra. She is also an Assistant Faculty Member of the Bravo Workshop. At Lancaster High School, Lynne serves as the advisor of the First Responders Club. She also runs the String Chamber Ensembles. Lynne received her Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education and her Master’s Degree in Music Education with a Performance Certificate from the State University College at Fredonia. As an active cellist in the area and a member of the Buffalo Musicians Association - Local 92, M. Ruda has performed throughout Western New York including with the Western New York Chamber Orchestra and the Clarence Summer Orchestra. She has performed with the Who and Weird Al Yankovic in concert. Lynn was a finalist for the GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year for both 2020 and 2021. Mrs. Ruda was named a 2020 NYS Woman of Distinction and received the 2020 Agent of Change Award from the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce. She was the 2019 recipient of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra/Erie County Music Educators Association Award for Excellence in Music Education. In 2018, she was named Citizen of the Year by the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce.



Julie Furlong
K-5 Vocal and General Music Teacher
Amherst Central Schools



Julie Furlong teaches general music and chorus to students in grades K-5 at Smallwood Elementary School in the Amherst Central School District. Julie received her Bachelor’s degree in Music Education from SUNY Fredonia, and her Master’s degree from the University at Buffalo. She is the Assistant Conductor for “Presto” ensemble of the ABC Bel Canto Choir. As the Lead Teacher for the Amherst School District’s “link Up” Collaboration Concert, Julie received training through Carnegie Hall, and coordinates an interactive concert with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in-

ECASB Presenter Biographies

Erie County Association of School Boards ECASB SPEED BOARDING DESSERT FORUM - November 30, 2023

volving over 600 students biannually. Julie was the recipient of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra/Erie County Music Educator’s Association Award for Excellence in Music Education in 2011. At school, she has served on the Smallwood Leadership Team and coaches the “Girls on the Run” team, training girls to run a 5K race while learning about self-esteem and bully prevention. Julie is a member of the Erie County Music Educators Association (ECMEA), where she presented at the 2010 Classroom Music Festival, and at both the 2014 and 2017 WNY Conference Days for Music Educators. She serves on the boards of the NY chapter of the Gordon Institute of Music Learning (NY-GIML), where she was a presenter at the 2011 Spring Workshop, and Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra Education Committee.

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