



This Week At ECASB ...

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

February 7, 2025

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BOARD MEMBERS TO SERVE ON PANEL DISCUSSION FOR PROSPECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER WORKSHOP: We have several Board Members that volunteered to serve on the panel. Thank you to Patrick Boyle (Frontier), Maureen Poulin (Williamsville) and Cindy Magera (Clarence) Karen Whitelaw (Ken Ton), Denise McCowan (Cheektowaga-Sloan), and District Clerk Deb Custodi (Amherst). The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 22nd. The program begins at 8:00 a.m. The panel discussion will be from 9:40 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. I will provide all panelists with a set of questions to start us off, however, there will be questions that attendees may ask.

DISTRICT CLERK WORKSHOP WAS FEBRUARY 4TH: The District Clerk workshop was held this past Tuesday. There were approximately 55 participants and presenters. The topics included:

- Subpoena's / FERPA/ Etc. Have You Been Served? - presented by Tracie Lopardi and Andrew Mark from Bond, Schoeneck and King PLLC.
- Student Ex Officio Members - Are You Prepared? Is Your Policy in Place? - Presented by Janelle Hallgren, Director of Policy Services from Erie 1 BOCES.
- Budget Votes and Elections - presented by Melanie Beardsley from Webster Szanyi LLP

THE ECASB BUDGET AND FINANCE TEAM MET THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH. The committee reviewed and approved the budget. The Budget will now move to the Delegate Assembly at their next meeting for final approval. The Budget for 2025-2026 has been approved by the Executive Board and Budget and Finance Committee. This will be the 12th year, that ECASB has been able to provide services and programs with NO DUES increase due to increased sponsorship levels and cost containment and awareness.

THE FOLLOWING ECASB MEMBERS ATTENDED THE NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ADVOCACY AND EQUITY INSTITUTE IN WASHINGTON D.C. FEBRUARY 2ND-4TH. Kathleen Chiavetta, Mike Franey, and Dennis Feldmann (Lake Shore CSD); Chris Schnars (Erie 2 CC BOCES and NYSSBA Area 3 Director); Dirk Rabenold (Sweet Home CSD) and Edward Cavan (Erie 1 BOCES). We received an update from BGR Group on the landscape of Washington. BGR is one of the top lobbying firms in Washington D.C. One of the key note speakers was Brandon Farbstein who discussed how important empathy is. A powerful comment that he made was "Diversity is not a choice - Inclusion is. Inclusion is nothing more than making people feel valued and respected". Another message that

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that he left with the audience is that “Advocacy is more about listening and less about speaking”. Brandon is a 24 year old Gen Z activist, author and speaker who was born with an extremely rare form of dwarfism (metatropic dysplasia). One of the workshops I attended was on Advancing Student Leadership Through Student Voice on School Boards. The workshop was presented by the National Student Board Members Association. In New York State, in July 2025, all school boards will be required to have an Ex Officio Non-Voting Student Board Member. Through the workshop, attendees learned that there are a lot of different models around the country. In some parts of the country, students serving on the school boards are voting members. In other parts of the country, students are paid. In Montgomery County Baltimore, students receive a \$25,000 scholarship to college, receive student service hours and are awarded Social Studies credit.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION / NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS ON CAPITAL HILL: ECASB attendees met with representatives from the following offices:

- 10:00 a.m. - Kristen Gillibrand’s office
- 10:30 a.m. - Claudia Tenney’s Office
- 12:00 p.m. - Joseph Morelle’s Office
- 12:00 p.m. - Nick Langworthy’s Office
- 2:00 p.m. - Chuck Schumer’s Office
- 3:00 p.m. - Timothy Kennedy’s Office

THANK YOU TO FORMER IROQUOIS CSD BOARD MEMBER GUNNAR HABERL. Gunnar is one of Senator Schumer’s top aides. After our meetings in Washington D.C. Gunnar took us to view floor of the senate. Gunnar was able to explain in details the workings and proceedings of the senate. We were able to see Gunnar’s office in Senator Schumer’s office in the Capital.

ECASB ANNUAL AWARDS OPENED 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.

- 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.

NEW YORK STATE REGENT 8TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT: Dr. Bruce Fraser has expressed an interest in serving as the Regent for the 8th Judicial District. Dr. Fraser had served as the Interim Executive Director at ECASB from August of 2017 - October of 2018 just prior to my arrival. I met Dr. Fraser back in the summer of 1987 when he was serving as Assistant Principal at Lockport High School when I

interviewed for an art position in the district. I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Fraser again when I was the Board President at Iroquois and we hired him as an Interim Superintendent at Iroquois Central School District August 2010 - June 2011. Other career highlights and background information include:

- Doctor of Education / Education Administration - Virginia Tech
- Master of Education –Education Administration - Virginia Tech
- Professional Certification - Education; Physical Education from State University of New York at Buffalo
- Bachelor of Arts, Political Science from State University of New York at Buffalo with minors in American History and English Literature

Work Experience:

- Superintendent of Lockport City Schools
- Director of Secondary Education and High School Principal
- Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- Principal of Wilson High School
- Assistant Principal of Lockport High School
 - Graduate/Research Assistant - Virginia Tech
 - Instructor/Coach - Orchard Park High School
 - PE Chair / Athletic Director - Ticonderoga High School
 - Instructor / Coach - Niagara Wheatfield
- Principal of Barker Middle School
- Interim Superintendent of Iroquois CSD
- Interim Superintendent of Medina CSD
- Interim Superintendent of Amherst CSD
- Interim Superintendent of Newfane CSD
- Principal Newfane Early Childhood Center
- Executive Director of New York State Rural Schools Association
- Interim Executive Director of Erie County Association of School Boards
- Board Member Niagara Orleans BOCES

He is the recipient of many honors and accomplishments including: American Education Finance Association National Outstanding Dissertation Award; Alumni Medal—The University of Buffalo’s Highest Award for Scholastic Athletic Achievement; Clifford C. Furnas Graduate Fellowship Awarded based upon Scholastic Athletic Excellence, Eastern College Athletic Conference- University Division All East Linebacker, United Press International—Honorable Mention All American Linebacker—University Division.

Additionally he was an Expert Witness in the Small City School Finance Formula Challenge, School District Efficiency Study for Massena Central School District, Joint Board Presentation for the Potsdam & Canton CSD District Consolidation, Participant and Co-Author of the Chenango Forks/Chenango Valley Merger Report, and Expert Contributor NYSED/Air Cost of an Adequate Education study.

** The Regent is selected in March by a vote of the joint meeting of the New York State Assembly and the New York State Senate. The position is a non-paying 5 year position.*

CELL PHONE DISCONNECTED CONFERENCE SPONSORED BY NYSUT: Thursday, February 13th at Casey Middle School East Amherst at 6:00 p.m. Call NYSUT to register for the event and obtain additional information.

ALL ECASB MEMBERS SERVING ON A TEAM: (Delegate Assembly/Budget and Finance/Legislative) have been entered into the first No-Cost ECASB Super Bowl pool. The numbers for the pool were drawn by Hamburg School Board Members Mary Odden and Cameron Hall prior to the meeting on January 14th. Prizes will be as follows:

- 1st Quarter winner - \$50 and an ECASB Padfolio
- Halftime winner - \$75 and an ECASB Cheese Board Set
- 3rd Quarter winner - \$100 and an ECASB Throw
- Final Game winner - \$200 and an ECASB Lawn Chair

The program is sponsored by Image Model Management. The pool was provided in last weeks attachments. No need to watch the big game. We will let you know if you are a winner. Good Luck to all ECASB Team Members. The next ECASB Committee meetings are as follows:

- February 6th - Budget and Finance Team (Will review 2025-2026 Budget), 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.,

B1.

- February 27th - Delegate Assembly Meeting 6:30 p.m. –8:30 p.m., B1

THE FOLLOWING ECASB MEMBERS HAVE CONFIRMED THEIR ATTENDANCE AT THE NYSSBA CAPITAL CONFERENCE. ECASB will pay for a room for those staying at the Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott on Wolf Road. Attending the Capital Conference will be Jane Sullivan and Heather Becker (Iroquois), Mary Jo Szucs (Holland), Ed Schaefer (Cheektowaga), Lorene Barulich (West Seneca), Sabatino Cimato, Matthew Chimera, Paul Spors, Lee Ann Vogt, Karen Whitelaw, and Fred Floss (Ken Ton UFSD), Kristin Schmutzler (Tonawanda), and Kristy Pingitore and Erik Polkowski (Akron). Dan Pacos, Kathleen Chiavetta, and Mike Franey (Lake Shore CSD) will be attending the conference as well. Additionally, Beth Pyskaty (Starpoint) will also be joining us for part of the conference. As well as Leslie Tobin, Greg Newman Jr., and Michael Ferraro (Lockport City School District).

NEW BOOKS ADDED TO ECASB LIBRARY: I attended the NSBA Workshop in Washington D.C. and picked up additional books for the ECASB Library. Books in the library are available for loan to any ECASB members:

Better Days - 180 Creative Practices and Daily Connections for Teachers and Students by Lisa Lucas

NSBA - Becoming a Better Board Member

Ten Feet Tall by Brandon Farbstein

Same But Different - Teen Life on the Autism Express by Holly Robinson Peete

Hindsight - Lessons learned from the Joplin tornado and other crisis events by Zac Rantz

When You Wonder, You're Learning—Mister Rogers' Enduring Lessons for Raising Creative, Curious, Caring Kids by Gregg Behr and Ryan Rydzewski

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: (Upcoming ECASB Events).

- January 2nd– March 3rd - ECASB Awards Nominations Open
- February 27th - Delegate Assembly Meeting, B1, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

POLITICAL FUNDRAISERS:

None Listed

NYSSBA'S PROGRAMS:

- February 7th - NYSSBA's Virtual Capital Conference
- February 12th - NYSSBA's Live Capital Conference
- Look for the following resources on the NYSSBA website:
 - Timeline 2025 - Annual Budget Vote and School Board Election
 - 2025 Running for the School Board: What all Prospective School Board Members Should Know
 - NYSSBA'S School Board Member Experience

RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE:

- Deadline for workshop proposals is February 14th at midnight
- January 31st - Nominations close for Teacher of the Year.

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.
- ENSSA Luncheon 2/7/25 at the Columns featuring NYSCOSS / Deputy Director for Advocacy, Research and Communications Bob Lowry.
- ENSSA and WNYESC facilitate a leadership forum Friday March 21st at the Atrium at 500 Seneca Street. Registration is at 9:30 a.m.
Schedule is as follows:

- 10:00 Greetings/Introduction
- 10:20 Session One: Dave Egner, President/CEO Ralph Wilson Jr. Foundation
- 11:00 Session Two: Trina Burruss, President/CEO United Way of Buffalo
- 11:45 Lunch
- 1:00 Session Three: Dr. Satish Tripathi, President of the University at Buffalo
- 1:40 Closing Remarks

BEST PRACTICES: Many Boards of Education will go into Executive Session at the beginning of the meeting. There are some Boards of Education that will go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting. For those Boards of Education that go into Executive Session at the beginning of the meeting, there are a few that I have viewed that when coming back into the regular session, they will again reiterate the reason for going into the Executive Session. For those Boards that go into Executive Session at the end of the meeting, it can be helpful to let the audience know whether there will be any action taken after the Executive Session. A few boards of education have made the following statement: The board will be going into Executive Session to discuss _____. We do not anticipate taking any action after the Executive Session.

NYSSBA AREA 1 DIRECTOR NEWS AND NOTES:

Don't forget to register for the Capital Conference. There is the Virtual portion on February 7th and the In Person portion in Albany, New York on February 12th. I will be attending a Celebration to honor NYSSBA retiree Jay Worona on March 1st. The NYSSBA Area Board of Directors held a 'virtual call in' session this past Wednesday to get us all caught up on information. The next Board of Directors Meeting will be on March 1st and 2nd.

IN SPORTS:

Nothing to report this week.