

Area 2 News



Greetings FCSBA Members,

It was good to see the FCSBA representation at the NSBA conference in Chicago. One thing that I took away from the conference, and I hope you did also, was a confirmation that the schools in NYS are already embracing many of the new concepts that are being shared as leading edge. Yes there are always some new things to pick up and the national networking can always produce great idea generation, however several of the new ideas are already in practice in many of our districts. I personally noticed that Foundation seminars and those concentrating on alternative funding sources were receiving some significant attention and were well attended, something we may need to start considering to ease the local taxpayer burden. I also saw significant importance placed on Strategic Planning and how that helps plan future expenditures. Thanks for taking the time to attend and bringing back some possible ideas.

I hope you are starting to catch your breath from all the activities going on in your respective districts related to budget development and that your hard work pays off in successful Budget votes and school board elections. Regarding elections, I wish those re-running for election good luck and thanks for wanting to serve your districts and the students of your community. Also, those of you who have decided for your own personal reasons to step away from school board service, a big thank you to for the service to your communities and the children of your districts.

While the students and adults can see the end coming to the school year, you've just completed running the annual gauntlet, budget meetings and public hearings, preparing local budget communications and so forth. Thank you for all the effort and I know your residents say thank you also.

I've been told that this is the last Newsletter of the year and in case I don't get a chance to see you at the FCSBA annual meeting in May I hope you have a restful summer; next school year will sneak up on us very quickly.

Tom

Area 2 Director, NYSSBA, Vice President

SLATE OF OFFICERS PROPOSED

The Nominating Committee met on March 18, 2010 to consider candidates for the 2010-2011 slate of officers. Chaired by *Past President Jeanne Durfee* (Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES), other members of the Committee included *Mary Evans* (President Marcus Whitman), *Tom Ledbetter* (Vice President Newark), *Patty Paprocki* (member Sodus) and *Mitch Wilber* (President Geneva). The Slate of officers was accepted by the Board of Directors for submission to the General Membership at the Annual Meeting that will be held on May 20, 2010. The proposed Slate of Officers is: *President – Joyce Lyke* (President Wayne BOE), *First Vice President Anne Morgan* (President Romulus BOE/member Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES BOE) and *Second Vice President Mike Ellis* (Vice President Bloomfield BOE). Additional nominations will be taken from the floor.

Website Spotlight

www.casal.org – site for the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

www.wholechildeducation.org – site for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's (ASCD) Whole Child Initiative.

Legislative Corner



How would I summarize the last year from a legislative perspective? That is a complicated and challenging charge, but one that has much merit. I guess the best way to accomplish this is to review the highs and lows of the last year, and to summarize the events from Washington DC and Albany to each of our districts. We each know that what happens in Albany and Washington directly impacts how we run our districts and what we offer to our students and communities. If aid cuts are the course, that directly relates to cuts in our offerings.

We have heard Governor Patterson threaten cuts to school aid. When challenged by NYSSBA, the cuts were withdrawn, only to be threatened once again. We have had positive signals from Washington about education reforms, many of which make sense and seem to fit with our beliefs about the necessary reforms in NYS. Unfortunately, a dysfunctional Albany missed a major opportunity to grasp that gold ring from Washington and leave NYS education ineligible for a unique funding opportunity with RTTT. We are watching with anticipation what happens in Round 2.

From 4CSBA we were charged with a challenge regarding 3020-a, and Shared Services. We have worked diligently on these efforts and continue to make great strides in the directions that we had hoped when we embarked on this journey. Our Shared Services Committee initiated and convened meetings to address opportunities and obstacles. This includes working with multiple partners and participation on other committees outside 4CSBA on this topic. 3020-a Reform has moved through the problem, planning and review stages and is now fully into the action stage. A number of presentations have occurred through 4CSBA and also within our member districts to increase the awareness of the issue. There have been articles in our local newspapers (see reprint in adjacent column) and we have been working hard to also get coverage in statewide and national media regarding 3020-a and the impact it has on our region and state. We will continue these efforts along with strong advocacy within the State Capital. We are making a pilgrimage to Albany on June 7 and 8 to meet with key policy and law makers regarding 3020-a, building coalitions within the capital to bring legislation to the floor of the State Assembly and Senate.

While the year has been extremely difficult for our districts from a financial standpoint, I believe that we continue to offer unique opportunities to fix issues that are important to our districts and our communities. I thank all who have participated in these efforts and encourage you all to be active. We will have campaigns in the future to show support for our efforts - will be asking each of you to contact your representative and the key players to help pass legislation on 3020-a reform and other issues that are brought to the capital.

Mike Ellis - Legislative Committee Chair

JOIN US

The Legislative Committee is sponsoring a LEGISLATIVE TREK

to ALBANY
June 7 – 8, 2010

Purpose:

- to meet with Legislative Leadership, key staff from the Governor's Office and the State Education Department
- to seek majority party and leadership support for our key legislative issues.

Details and a Registration form have been sent to all board members and superintendents. If you are interested and have not received yours, contact our office.

(Association funds will support a portion of the cost for those participating.)

(Reprinted from Daily Messenger and FL Times)

The Case for Reform of Education Law Section 3020-a The Discipline Process for Tenured Teachers and Administrators

By
Joyce Lyke, Four County School Boards Association President
Mike Ellis, Four County Legislative Committee Chair

In late January of 2007, a teacher in the Phelps-Clifton Springs (Midlakes) Central School District experienced difficulties with his district owned laptop computer and gave it to a district computer technician to repair. During the repair process pornographic material was found and an investigation was undertaken. Upon completion of the investigation (early May 2007) the teacher was suspended with pay as required by law and the board filed 3020-a charges against him. 820 days and over \$200,000 later, the hearing officer in the case found the teacher guilty of conduct unbecoming a teacher, neglect of duty, insubordination, and acting in an immoral manner. The penalty was a six month suspension without pay but with continuation of health insurance at district expense. Believing the penalty too lenient, the Board of Education appealed the decision to the New York State Supreme Court. The judge agreed and sent the case back to the original hearing officer for review (the only option available according to law) noting that dismissal would not be inappropriate. (Subsequent to this decision, the teacher was found guilty of the additional charge of perjury and dismissed.)

The original verdict and penalty in this case were the result of a legally required hearing process for the discipline/removal of a tenured teacher/administrator. (Spelled out in Section 3020-a of the New York State Education Law.) It is to be used in discipline cases ranging from insubordination and incompetence, to cases where students and their safety have been endangered. There is no provision for a "progressive" process - a less cumbersome approach to address minor infractions.

We believe that the majority of teachers and administrators in our Four County School districts are outstanding professionals who are doing a great job of providing a quality education for our children. The process available for the discipline or removal of the few who are not is flawed. It is lengthy, expensive, and rarely yields student centered outcomes. For these reasons, it is rarely implemented.

A survey conducted by the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) reveals that since 1994, only ten teacher disciplinary cases have been heard in this Four County area (others may have been settled prior to implementing the disciplinary process). This is a very small number considering the thousands of individuals employed as teachers and administrators throughout the area in the past 16 years. The time to complete those cases - between 100 and 820 days, and the cost exceeded \$1 million in salaries and benefits. This does not include a calculation for attorney fees, the cost of substitute teachers, hearing officers, and staff time. In spite of this investment of time and money, outcomes in these disciplinary cases rarely met the needs of students. A sampling reveals the following: improper touching of a student took 320 days resulting in a fine; insubordination and improper touching of a student with previous warnings took 291 days to get a suspension; and a teacher criminally charged and convicted of Aggravated Harassment received probation and was suspended after 206 days of process. And, the recent Midlakes case - 820 days for a suspension!

Members of the Four County School Boards Association have developed a series of recommendations that we believe would make

Section 3020-a a fair and efficient tool for tenured employee discipline. (Details are available through the Four County office (315-332-7294) and on line at www.4csba.org.) Because the process is outlined by law, it requires legislative action to make such changes. We have taken our suggestions to State legislators who represent our Four County area (Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates counties) and will be seeking the support of others interested in a fairer, more efficient process. We encourage those who share our concerns to join us in this effort.

When resources are scarce we must make every dollar count and maximize every educational opportunity for our children. Reform of the 3020-a process would assist with both.

ORIENTATION
for
FOR NEW AND NEARLY NEW
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
Saturday, June 12, 2010
8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Finger Lakes Conference Room
Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES Regional Support Center
Newark, New York

Encourage your new (and nearly new) board members to join us.

They will:

- meet their colleagues from the Four County area
- gain and understanding of their new role and responsibilities
- hear from key district staff members
- learn about the resources available

Board Presidents and Superintendents are invited to come along!





PROGRAM PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
June 15, 2010

5:45 – Registration
6:15 – Dinner and Meeting

Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES
Finger Lakes Conference Room

Join us to begin planning for
2010-2011 Four County Program topics and speakers!

"The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize." ~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

May	June	July	August
1 Joint BOCES Workshop 1 FCSBA Fiscal Training 18 Budget Vote & Elections 20 FCSBA Annual Meeting 31 Memorial Day Holiday	2 Statewide School Finance Consortium 4 NYSSBA Home Field Advantage Lobby Day 7-8 FCSBA Legislative Trek 12 FCSBA New Board Orientation 15 FCSBA Program Planning Committee Meeting 23 FCSBA Steering Committee Meeting	9-10 NYSSBA New Board Member Academy– Ithaca 11-13 Rural Schools Conference 15 NYSSBA Summer Law Conference - Albany	6 NYSSBA New Board Member Academy-Rochester 13 NYSSBA New Board Officers' Academy - Albany
			



Four County School Boards Association
131 Drumlin Court
Newark, NY 14513

**May
2010**

Four County School Boards Association Annual Meeting & Dinner

Thursday, May 20, 2010

at

The Belhurst Castle
Route 14S, Geneva, NY
(315) 781-0201

5:30 p.m. Registration/Conversation 6:30 p.m. Student Performance & Dinner

7:45 Business Meeting & Program

Guest Speaker

David Cay Johnston

Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist and author

“ A Path back to Prosperity for America”

Joyce Lyke
President

Nancy Scher
1st Vice President

Anne Morgan
2nd Vice President

Jeanne Durfee
Past President

Mike Ellis
*Legislative
Committee
Chair*

Jim Koehler
*Program Planning
Chair*

Bill Gowan
*Legislative
Committee
Vice Chair*

Donna Cotter
*Program Planning
Vice Chair*

Sharon A.
Sweeney
Executive Director

Mary Roth
*Administrative
Assistant*

President's Message



Recently several of the board members from our area had the pleasure of attending the National School Boards' Conference in Chicago. The sessions always offer us a great learning experience but it is equally interesting to share with board members from other states.

Many times I could not relate to the demographics of the schools presenting but I found their initiatives gave me ideas that could be adapted to our region. For instance, the Dearborn Central School is a large district with 18,000 students a 65% reduced lunch program and a 38% English as a second language population.

They believe it is very important for students to retake exams "as soon as possible". They have a Credit Recovery, ASAP Program that meets in an extended day session two afternoons per week for two hours for 17 weeks. Could we offer/mandate such a program if a child is failing a course say after 10 weeks? How do we presently handle credit recovery in our area?

Dearborn also has a testing out program that is offered 2 times per year to middle and high school students. To demonstrate mastery they need to achieve over 78%. 303 students attempted to "test out" last year with 29% receiving credit. Students can also test out of Physical Education, if they are involved in sports teams, Karate, dance or other such physical programs in or out of school. It was felt that students in these activities needed more time during the school day. If you remember "seat time" was a hotly debated item at last years NYSSBA delegate convention. Have we ever discussed where we stand as a region on this issue?

With the "testing out" program and the availability of college level courses Dearborn is offering the possibility for students to earn an Associates Degree in five years. They are in a unique position with community colleges in close proximity but we could do the same by adding "on line courses" to supplement our current college level courses.

Dearborn also offers a magnet high school for students that are experiencing difficulties in the traditional settings. Students are in smaller classes with more activities tailored to their learning style. It seems to be a more hands on approach. At Wayne we have a similar program and it has been successful.

Can we use some of these ideas? Are you doing something along the same line in your school? Some of our most successful programs at Four County have been "What Works" from our own area. Please send Sharon any ideas that you think are unique to your school. Sometimes we take our own efforts for granted.

Joyce