

NEWS

Y S S B A

NYSSBA Convention to Return to Rotating Locations

At their meeting in December, the NYSSBA Board of Directors discussed the Convention and Business Meeting and future locations for the Annual event. At the Four County General membership meeting on December 3, NYSSBA Area 2 Director Tom Nespeca reported that the Board agreed that the location for the Convention should continue on a rotating basis between Upstate venues and New York City. This rotation will begin after the three-year commitment to the Sheraton in New York ends (2006-2008).



IMPORTANT FOUR COUNTY DATES TO REMEMBER (Further Details to follow)

Legislative Breakfast

Saturday March 24, 2007 The Club 86

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.



FROM YOUR AREA DIRECTOR

NYSSBA Area 2 Director Tom Nespeca (Webster BOE) sends his wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year to all Four County members and notes he will resume his column in the next newsletter.

“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.”
Vince Lombardi

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Research has demonstrated that the quality of teaching in the classroom has a clear impact on the quality of student learning. Gaps in teacher quality have been shown to leave a deficit in student achievement that is difficult, if not impossible to make up. A report issued by the Commissioner Mills on January 8 demonstrates that New York has raised the percent of core classes taught by highly qualified teachers, in every subject except the arts, between 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. New York also narrowed the teacher quality gap between high and low poverty schools. (A highly qualified teacher is one who has a bachelor’s or higher degree, meets state certification standards, and demonstrates subject matter knowledge in their teaching assignments in one of the ways required by law.) **The average for the 19 Four County member districts is 98% with two at 100% and 10 at 99%. All are at 90% or better.**

The Commissioner notes that there are additional reforms yet to come for teaching in New York State: expanding the pool of qualified candidates in necessary areas; expanding alternative teacher preparation programs and creating new pathways to certification; evaluating the quality of professional development, improving the conditions that affect teacher retention and investigating incentives; strengthening teacher preparation programs; bringing retired teachers back into the workforce where they are needed without pension penalty; and expanding Teachers of Tomorrow, Teacher Opportunity Corps.



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE
Anne Morgan, Legislative Committee Chair

The dedicated group of Legislative Committee Representatives met for their third Saturday on December 9, 2006. Joining them for their discussion of the State, Federal and Regulatory Position Papers was NYSSBA Director of Governmental Relations **David Little**. The papers were reviewed and further revised and have now been sent to all Legislative Committee Reps, Alternates, and Superintendents for review by all Four County members. On January 18, 2006 the Committee will gather for one last review and consider any additional comments or recommendations. They will then approve the papers for submission to the Board of Directors’ for adoption. I encourage you to make sure your board is represented for this important discussion. However, if you are unable to attend, please send your comments to either Sharon or to me so they may be considered by the group.

SAVE THE DATE SAVE THE DATE
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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, February 6, 2007

The Club 86

Avenue E, Geneva, NY

5:30 – Registration

6:30 – Dinner

7:15 – Program

“Retiree Health Insurance Obligations: Challenges, Liabilities and Strategies”

David W. Lippitt, Esq.

David will talk about recent cases that have challenged changes to retiree health benefits; EEOC regulation permitting coordination of benefits with Medicare eligibility; GASB 45 obligations; and some strategies for dealing with retiree health insurance issues.

Please invite your human resource directors, business officials and other appropriate members of your district staff to join you for this program.

FOUR COUNTY REPRESENTED AT COMMISSIONER’S AND CHANCELLOR’S ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Four County School Boards Association has participated in the Commissioner’s Advisory Council of School Board Members since it was created in its current form in the early 1990’s. This Council is comprised of representatives from a number of local school boards associations as well as statewide organizations such as NYSSBA, Rural Schools, and the Council of Big 5 School Districts. The group meets about three times per year in Albany. During the morning, representatives meet with key SED staff members to receive updates on current initiatives and to talk about the school board perspective and any concerns that they may have. Commissioner Mills joins the group for a dialogue in the afternoon. Because the group is small, usually no more than 10 or 12, it provides a real opportunity for the Commissioner to get to know the representatives and come to trust the quality of their comments and suggestions. Four County’s representative has been the President or the President’s “designee”. In recent years Past President **Jeanne Durfee** (W-FL BOCES) has filled that role. Beginning in February, current President Tom Scherer will take on that responsibility.

Jeanne has also represented the Association to a similar, though smaller, group that meets with the Chancellor of the Board of Regents. The representatives from several local associations meet once or twice a year with Chancellor Bennett to discuss issues of common concern. Through these meetings the Chancellor has come to better understand the role and responsibilities of the local school board member and respect the level of knowledge and commitment they bring to their positions. President Scherer has appointed Jeanne to continue in this position for 2006-2007.

WEBSITE SPOTLIGHT

State by State “Chance for Success” rankings can be found at www.edweek.org. On the home page select Quality Counts 2007, on the next page, scroll down to “Web Extras” and select “Chance for Success Index”. This index is based on an original state-by-state analysis, combining information from 13 individual indicators that span an individual’s life. The site offers an interactive map that provides a quick way to examine various indicators and summary data.

January		February		March		April	
15	Martin Luther King Jr Holiday	2	FCSBA Negotiators' Breakfast	4-6	NYSSBA Legislative Conference	2	W-FL BOCES Annual Meeting
17	FCSBA Ad Hoc Budget & Dues Committee	6	FCSBA General Membership Meeting	6	State Legislative Network (SLN) Lobby Day	7	FCSBA Prospective Board Member Seminar
18	Education Conference Board Policy Conference	19	Presidents' Day	24	FCSBA Legislative Breakfast	14-17	NSBA Conference
18	FCSBA General Membership Meeting	19-23	Mid Winter Recess			28	FCSBA Fiscal Training
18	FCSBA Legislative Committee Meeting						
18	FCSBA Board of Directors Meeting						
21-23	NYSCOSS Midwinter Conference						
28-30	NSBA Federal Relations Network						



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

January 2007

Thursday, January 18, 2007

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

“EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE: PREPARING TODAY’S STUDENTS FOR TOMORROW”

Plus
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS’
&
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETINGS**

The Club 86, Geneva, New York

**5:30 – Registration/Conversation 5:45 - Directors’ & Legislative Committee Meetings
6:45 Dinner 7:30 Program**

TOM SCHERER
President
NANCY SCHER
1st Vice President
JOYCE LYKE
2nd Vice President &
KATHY MALONE
Program Planning Chair
ANNE MORGAN
Legislative Committee
STEVE WYCKOFF
Immediate Past
President
JEANNE DURFEE
Past President
SHARON A. SWEENEY
Executive Director
MARY TRANELLI
Administrative Assistant

President’s Message



President’s Message

Happy New Year! Here’s hoping that you manage to keep all of those New Year’s resolutions that you have made for 2007. We also congratulate and welcome Governor Spitzer as he enters his first term in office. Generally, I have been impressed by the energy and enthusiasm that our new governor has brought to his first term in office. His approach has been straight forward with a willingness to take on the big issues that have been facing the State of New York for many years. From what we have listened to and read, we should be pleased with the rhetoric on changing the funding formula for school districts, increasing state aid levels, health care and property tax relief. My concern centers on where the funds will come from in years when, unlike this year, there is no surplus. Additionally, our new Governor’s comments regarding “increasing resources and increasing accountability” for public schools raises concerns. Everyone supports increased funding and public schools have been and will be held accountable for their results so there is no news there. What’s important is making sure that accountability is attached to clear and measurable goals. Once those are detailed and expanded upon, maybe then we will all feel a little more comfortable. Only time will tell!

One of the important services that Four County School Boards provides our member districts is a credible voice in the ongoing debates about education. To that end, your representatives to Four County School Boards Association have been busy at work during the months of November and December (Saturday mornings no less) preparing position papers on issues of concern at the state and federal levels. Those concerns and issues will be expressed on your behalf as your representatives lobby with federal legislators at the end of January and state legislators in early March. Our sincere thanks go out to everyone who participated in preparing our position papers. A job well done!

One other reminder – our next General Membership meeting will be held on Thursday, January 18 at Club 86 in Geneva. Victor Superintendent Timothy McElheran and Victor’s Director of Special Programs, Dawn Santiago-Marulo, will be our presenters. Their presentation will review some major factors affecting the future of our country in a global economy and share insights gained from a recent trip to China. They will also talk about how Victor has adjusted its course in preparing their students for a rapidly changing world. See you there!

Tom