

## Finance conference prepares new board members



LEFT: Business official Darrin Kenney (Pit) speaking to the new board members about budgets.

RIGHT: Hilton School Board President Dan Wellington, who spoke to participants about board oversight responsibilities, MCSBA President Aggie Seneway (Hil), and Eileen Hansen (WC) before the program.

BELOW: Business officials/conference presenters Lou Alaimo (Bri), Dr. Bruce Capron (HFL) and Mark Sansouci (Pen).



More pictures on page 3.



New school board members from Monroe and Wayne counties spent November 5 being updated about their fiscal responsibilities in such areas as oversight, fraud prevention, the budget process, financial documents, fund balance and reserves, and audits. Besides Hilton Board President Dan Wellington and Raymond Wager, CPA, the presenters were local district business officials Lou Alaimo (Bri), Dr. Bruce Capron (HFL), Darrin Kenney (Pit), and Mark Sansouci (Pen).



RIGHT: Background painted by Executive Director Jody Siegle.



MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION  
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## Coming in January

Wednesday, January 18, Noon, Holiday Inn Airport  
 Information Exchange Committee Discussion of  
**Controlling at-risk behaviors through social norms**

Wednesday, January 25, Noon, Holiday Inn Airport  
 Labor Relations Committee Discussion of  
**ERS/TRS & the total compensation package**

## Coming in February

Saturday, February 4, 9:00 – 11:30 am,  
 Holiday Inn Airport

### Legislative Breakfast Meeting

The Legislative Committee presents this opportunity for you to meet informally with members of our Albany delegation and to hear their input on issues of importance to public schools and their governance.

*From our president:*

## Paradox of Effective School Boards



**Aggie Seneway**

At this time of the year, our communities are focused on a variety of multi-cultural celebrations. Retail stores open at midnight, stay open for 24 hours and encourage

spending. The unity of purpose? Sell as much merchandise as possible and make as much money as possible.

However, for many of us the season's celebrations represent a much deeper meaning in our personal lives, our family lives and our respective cultures. There is somewhat of a paradox, though, between what we want the season's celebrations to *be* and what they actually *are*. The question now posed is how can we connect this paradox with the possible paradox of school boards?

Are we spending our time on operational issues (retail) or on the policies to improve student achievement (purpose of our role)? Effective school boards are accountability driven. Types of data necessary for being accountability driven would be the demographics of our community (enrollment, attendance, drop-out rate); the school process (description of school programs and processes); student learning (assessments); and perceptions (of learning attitudes beliefs etc.). \*

Let's start with reflection on our individual boards and asking ourselves several questions. How is your school board accountability driven? Is each board member responsible for being student focused, community focused and data educated and informed? Is there an

\* (Data Analysis for Continuous School Improvement (2nd ed.), by Victoria L. Bernhardt, with permission of the publisher. © 2004 Eye on Education)

acute awareness of how your community views the education of their students? Is each of your board members aware of the programs offered to all students? Is each aware of the results of the students' performances in each of the programs and the assessment results?

In interviews with hundreds of board members and staff across districts, researchers Goodman, Fulbright, and Zimmerman found that high-performing boards focused on establishing a vision supported by policies that targeted student achievement. Poor governance was characterized by factors such as micro-management by the board. So, for Monroe County, let's continue to commit to working on policies for improving student achievement, which *is* our primary purpose.

Happy Holidays to all.

*Aggie Seneway*

# Finance conference photos



LEFT: Eileen Hansen and Mark Strivings of the Wheatland-Chili school board..

RIGHT: Seated- Joe Quirk (Gre) and Eileen Hansen (WC); standing- Presenter Dan Wellington (Hil) and MCSBA President Aggie Seneway (Hil).



ABOVE: Chuck Patt (Ken) with Aggie Seneway (Hil).



LEFT: Amy West (HFL) and Amy Wilson (CC).



RIGHT: Marty Cardone (Fpt) and Jim Ditzel (Fpt).



## From our executive director: *A legacy of service*



Jody Siegle

Everything about working in education is premised in the concept that one person can make a difference in the lives of others.

signifies Judy is present and focused on the details of MCSBA's work. Over the years Judy has developed many of MCSBA's initiatives. And her precise questions have guided us in identifying clear and effective action steps for MCSBA activities.

know another person's needs but should always reach out and involve the people who must deal with a problem in developing any solution.

We all hope that when we step away from our careers we will know we have accomplished some good. This is certainly true of Judy Wadsworth who will retire from MCSBA this month after 24 years as Assistant to the Executive Director, a position she took after serving on a school board for 9 years, including one year as MCSBA president.

Judy is passionately committed to public education. She believes our country's success is the result of the work of our public schools. And she worries about how we will maintain ourselves as a nation of democratic principles and as an economic, cultural, and social power if that support for education is undermined.

We are honoring Judy at a farewell party on December 14, appropriately at the Holiday Inn, a place where I estimate she has attended over 700 meetings in past three decades. Please call our office for details if you would like to attend.

Everyone who attends MCSBA programs is familiar with the camera flash that

Judy was trained as a teacher and I believe there are lessons she hopes we have learned. In her absence she will want us to remember the importance of speaking up for what we know is important. And, when looking to solve a problem, we should never presume to

All of us leave a legacy, whether we choose to be active participants or sit on the sidelines. Judy chose to commit to the goal that public education makes a difference, and our entire community is better for her choice.

*Jody Siegle*

# Fiscal & legal issues with controlling the cost of athletics

In November, almost 50 representatives from 16 MCSBA member districts learned strategies and legal guidelines for controlling the costs of student athletics from Dennis Fries, Churchville-Chili Interim Athletic Director and former Section V president, and from Ronald J Mendrick, Esq. (HFL), of Harter Secrest & Emery. Hosting the discussion was the MCSBA Information Exchange Committee.



TOP: Dr. Michelle Kavanaugh (HFL), Amy West (HFL), and John Piper (Pen).



UPPER LEFT: Ron Mendrick (HFL) and Mike Suffoletto (Web) confer.  
UPPER RIGHT: Chuck Allan (HFL), Presenter Ron Mendrick (HFL), Brian Donohue (HFL), Presenter Dennis Fries (CC), and Dick Rasmussen (HFL).  
ABOVE: Margaret Burns (WI), Maureen Nupp (Fpt), and Margy Richards (ER).  
LEFT: Lou Alaimo (Bri), Beth Race (Gre), and David Ferington (Gre).

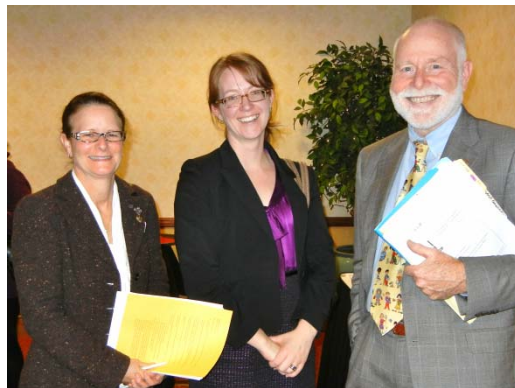
# Labor issues and consolidation

At the November Labor Relations Committee meeting, a panel reviewed some of the personnel issues involved with school district mergers and consolidations .

Jaime Saunders, Senior Associate at CGR, provided a policy-level overview of consolidations, noting a lack of short-term gains and lack of research about effects on students.

Tom Gillett, NYSUT Regional Staff Director, spoke about contract issues that arise when school districts consolidate.

Sheila Wallenhorst, BOCES #1 Director of Human Resources, described staffing issues that occur when sharing services with BOCES or other districts.



TOP ROW:  
Colette Morabito (ER), with presenters Jaime Saunders and Tom Gillett;

MCSBA President Aggie Seneway (Hil), and Cynthia Elliott (Roc).

LEFT: Rhonda Laskoski (GC) and Lowell Benjamin (GC).



ABOVE: Phil Oberst (EI), presenter Sheila Wallenhorst (B1), and Julie Christensen (Ken).

# Meetings with state lawmakers

In November, MCSBA members met with NYS Senators George Maziarz and Joseph Robach as well as with Assemblymen Harry Bronson, Sean Hanna, Stephen Hawley, and Mark Johns in local offices to discuss a number of current issues facing our member districts. Among the concerns discussed were implications of the tax cap for fiscal solvency of school districts, and the need for relief from expensive state mandates.



ABOVE: Ed Starowicz (Pit), Jody Siegle (MCSBA), Assemblyman Stephen Hawley, Barbara Cutrona (Hil), and David Dimbleby (Hil).



RIGHT: Mike DeLaus (B1), Mike Seeley (WI), Jody Siegle (MCSBA), Assemblyman David Gantt, and Ed Starowicz (Pit).

BELOW: Back row - Mike DeLaus (B1), Sue Casey (Web), Assemblyman Mark Johns, Tom Nespeca (Web), and Dr. Ray Giamartino (ER); Front row - Maggie Markham (B1), Joyce Kostyk (Fpt), Jody Siegle (MCSBA), and Alka Phatak (Pit).



ABOVE: Seated – Alka Phatak (Pit), Sherry Johnson (CC, MCSBA); Standing – Dick Rasmussen (HFL), Judy Wadsworth (MCSBA), Pam Reinhardt (RH), Dr. Michelle Kavanaugh (HFL), Assemblyman Sean Hanna, and Margaret Burns (WI).

BELOW: Dr. Kevin McGowan (Bri), Sherry Johnson (CC, MCSBA), Mark Kokanovich (Bri), Senator Joseph Robach, Judy Wadsworth (MCSBA), Jody Siegle (MCSBA), Julia VanOrman (Gre), and Dr. Steven Ayers (Hil).



BELOW: Margaret Burns (WI), Frank Nardone (CC), Jody Siegle, Assemblyman Harry Bronson, Pam Reinhardt (RH), and Dr. Kenneth Graham (RH).



ABOVE: Julie Christensen (Ken), Bill Sweeney (Spe), Jody Siegle (MCSBA), Michael Crumb (Spe), Senator George Maziarz, and Bob Iveson (Bro).

# 'Let NY Work' develops state reform agenda.

During their November meetings with state lawmakers, MCSBA members shared information about the newly formed "Let NY Work" coalition of business, education, and local government groups. This partnership is seeking changes to the pension system, control of step salary increases, minimum health insurance contributions by employees and retirees, and a prohibition on new mandates on local governments.

The Let NY Work agenda includes:

- **PREDICTABLE, AFFORDABLE PENSION SYSTEM**

NYS should offer two retirement options to new public employees. A reduced defined benefit plan or a new defined contribution plan that is controlled by the employees, is portable, and does not weigh down taxpayers.

- **COMPULSORY ARBITRATION RULES**

*Ability to Pay* – Amend state law to require that an arbitration panel consider ability to pay when making an award.

*Prohibit Consideration of Non-Compensation Issues* – Some public employee unions are denied the right to pursue non-compensation matters before an arbitration panel; school districts and municipalities should have the same protection.

*Add Transparency to the Arbitration Process* – Make arbitration panel deliberations and presentations subject to the Open Meetings Law to provide accountability and transparency.

- **REDUCTION OF CONSTRUCTION COSTS.**

Increase Wicks Law threshold to \$10 million statewide. Use Unemployment Insurance (UI) Prevailing Wage tables to determine regional prevailing wage rate for projects.

- **NO STEP INCREASES WHEN CONTRACTS EXPIRE**

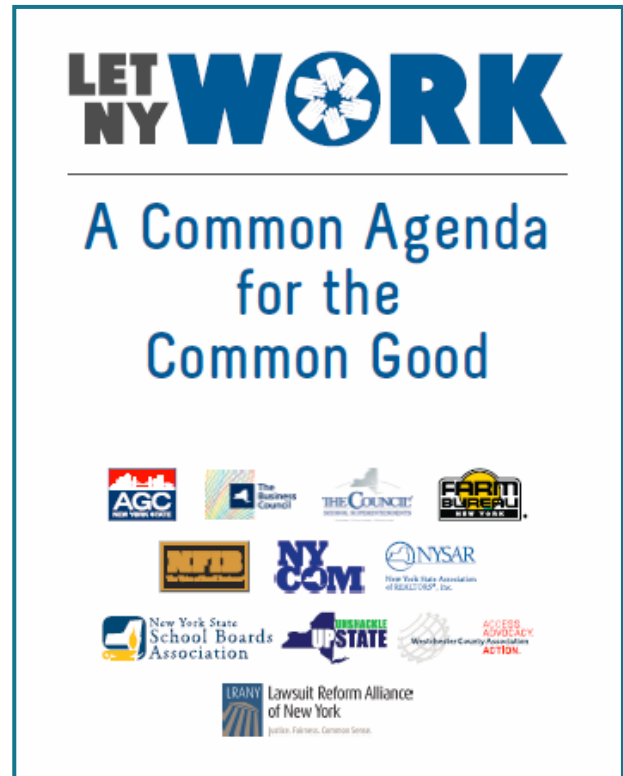
Salary step increases should be held when no contract is in place.

- **MINIMUM HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS LEVEL FOR EMPLOYEES AND RETIREES**

Employers will cover no more than 85% of a single healthcare premium or 75% of a family or retiree healthcare premium, phased in over a 3-year period.

- **NO NEW MANDATES**

Pass the *Unfunded Mandate Reform Act*. Require a super-majority to enact new unfunded mandates. Prohibit the imposition of added unfunded mandates on local governments by NYS unless those mandates are fully funded by the state.



RIGHT: Cover of 'Let NY Work' agenda listing all of the state-level organizations that collaborated to develop this agenda for reform of NYS government.

To learn more about "Let NY Work", go to <http://www.unshackleupstate.com/assets/news/letnyworkagenda.pdf>.

## Updating the Association's position on federal issues



Sub-committee members Joyce Kostyk (Fpt), Executive Director Jody Siegle, MCSBA Vice President Sue Casey (Web), Maggie Markham (B1), MCSBA President Aggie Seneway (Hil), Legislative Committee Co-Chair Marie Cinti (Pen), and Margaret Burns (WI).

Members of the Legislative Sub-Committee that developed a revised position statement on federal education issues are shown at their first meeting in mid November.

The position paper covers issues with NCLB and steps that Congress should take to bring federal education law into compliance with the U.S. Constitution.

# Foodlink a partner in education



**Foodlink directs a number of programs that seek to overcome the effects of poverty for children and families.** A number of Foodlink initiatives were described in a previous edition of *News Scope*. Foodlink also works with schools and other agencies to involve adults and older students in learning experiences, volunteer efforts, and job training.

## Cooking matters

Cooking Matters is a curriculum within the nationally recognized Share Our Strength “No Kid Hungry” Program. Cooking Matters classes are offered to Foodlink’s network of after-school meal programs to students of all ages. Each class is 6 weeks long and involves participants in all aspects of food preparation. Every lesson ends with eating the food prepared that day. Cooking Matters involves volunteers from the nutrition and culinary fields as instructors. To learn more, contact Cooking Matters Coordinator Laura Sugarwala at [lsugarwala@foodlinkny.org](mailto:lsugarwala@foodlinkny.org).

## Partnerships to end hunger with jobs

Foodlink’s GreenWorks is a local workforce development program. GreenWorks provides participants with skills needed to get and retain employment in green jobs, primarily deconstruction and landscape. The GreenWorks transitional jobs program, New Beginnings, mows more than 300 vacant lots for the City of Rochester, non-profit organizations, businesses, and others. Deconstruction crews dismantle houses as an alternative to demolition which is better for the environment and landfills.

RIGHT: High school volunteers at Foodlink’s warehouse, packing food donations for distribution. Students frequently use Foodlink activities as part of their community service requirements.

## Freshwise food prep programs in partnership with schools

The Freshwise Kitchen provides employment training in materials handling in warehouse, kitchen skills, and culinary skills to individuals with special education needs through BOCES programs. Freshwise Farms works with Heritage Christian Services clients to help them develop work skills. The same programs that provide this training also prepare the food distributed through several Foodlink programs.

## High school community service & Foodlink

One option for high school students to meet the community service mandate is working in the Foodlink warehouse. In the past, athletic teams from area HS have volunteered together.

More about Foodlink and its programs is accessible at (585) 328-3380 or [info@foodlinkny.org](mailto:info@foodlinkny.org) or <http://www.foodlinkny.org/>.

Foodlink Photo



# MCEC is here to support you.

The Monroe County Education Coalition (MCEC) is a coalition of education groups that support the public schools of Monroe County. Member groups include the Genesee Valley PTA, Monroe County Council of School Superintendents, Monroe County Federation of Teachers, Monroe County Association of School Business Officials, Monroe County School Boards Association, NYS United Teachers, Rochester City School District, and the School Administrators’ Association of NYS Region 11.

The Monroe County Education Coalition (MCEC) works to –

- \* Increase community support for our excellent local public schools
- \* Increase awareness of issues that affect children’s ability to learn
- \* Seek state funding to support public education and education reforms
- \* Secure a continued fair share of Monroe County sales tax revenues for school districts.

Visit <http://www.mcsba.org/mcec/index.htm> to learn more.

## Your MCEC:

- \* Publishes an electronic BULLETIN regularly on current issues. Access newsletters at [http://www.mcsba.org/mcec/news\\_issues.htm](http://www.mcsba.org/mcec/news_issues.htm).
- \* Develops POSITION STATEMENTS on important issues such as expensive mandates, state aid, and sales tax distribution. Access position statements at <http://www.mcsba.org/mcec/index.htm>.
- \* Seeks meetings, as appropriate, with leaders of other governmental entities to present our recommendations in support of public education.

# RASHP 2 helps districts control insurance costs

At a time when many employers are looking “outside the box” for ways to control skyrocketing health insurance costs, the Rochester Area Schools Health Plan (RASHP 2) is ahead of the curve.

In 2002, 19 suburban Monroe County school districts, with the help of Providium Consulting Group, began building the framework for a healthcare insurance consortium. The goal was to create strength in numbers by negotiating as one customer for health insurance coverage. Using that strength, the consortium would:

Preserve quality benefits at the most competitive price possible.

Enter into a more fiscally prudent health insurance funding arrangement with Excellus.

Use the law of large numbers to more evenly spread cost/risk among all.

Leverage the administrative costs of the plan.

RASHP was officially formed on January 1, 2004. A multi-year contract with Excellus BCBS was established, and the group adopted three benefit offerings that were identical to what was available at the district level at that time — Blue Choice Extended, Select and Value. Slowly but surely, bargaining units were moved out of the district plants and into RASHP, reaching full maturity at 16,000 contracts in 2010.

A governing board of representatives from each district and various bargaining units oversees the plan’s financial and operational components today. Monroe 2 BOCES acts as the “bank” for RASHP, managing the plan’s financial administration. The consortium continues to work with Providium and consults with Harter Secrest & Emery LLC as needed.

RASHP contracts with Excellus for a “minimum-premium” funding arrangement that gives it control of the financials and works very similar to a self-funded plan without the full risk. A monthly “cash cap” and adequate reserves protect RASHP from immediately feeling the pain of large claims.

Perhaps the most remarkable information to share about RASHP is the level of savings since its inception. RASHP has consistently seen lower rate increases than the “community” —for nearly identical plan offerings – with a total savings in 2011 alone estimated at nearly \$110 million.

The Board continues to regularly review potential long-term cost-control initiatives and ideas. In the spring of 2011, to prevent excessive and fraudulent claims and their accompanying expense, a membership audit was conducted to ensure that only those truly eligible were enrolled in the plan. In July 2011, the group issued its first formal communication piece to members, *Community Health Magazine*. The 40-page, glossy magazine comes out

quarterly and has created a medium for consistently and effectively sharing messages about: health and wellness; becoming better healthcare consumers; healthcare reform; and future initiatives related to RASHP.

The Monroe County Schools also participate in two other consortiums, RASHP 1 and the Rochester Area Schools Dental Plan (RASDP).

Today, RASHP is Excellus’ largest local customer and a great role model for school systems across the country. It is a true collaboration among all districts involved. James Fichera, the Webster district’s chief financial officer, is the chairman; and Scott Covell, Fairport’s assistant superintendent for business, is vice chairman.

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## Shared Spaces 2012: The High School Art Teacher & Student Show



ABOVE: The Arts Center Gallery at Nazareth College on the opening of the 2011 high school art teacher and student show.

The Nazareth College Department of Art will once again host its annual art show for art students and their teachers in June 2012.

***Shared Spaces 2012: The High School Art Teacher & Student Show*** will be held June 1 – 16 in the Arts Center Gallery at Nazareth College. Art educators who teach at least one class at the secondary level (grades 9-12) are invited to participate with one of their students in the exhibition. The guidelines for the exhibition as well as registration forms will be emailed in January 2012.

To learn more about this exciting opportunity for students and teachers, contact Cathy Sweet, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, at [csweet1@naz.edu](mailto:csweet1@naz.edu).