

Why should you vote on May 16? *Because your input is vital.*

Genesee Valley
PTA

Monroe County
Federation
of Teachers

NYS United
Teachers

Monroe County
Association
of School
Business Officials

Monroe County
Council of School
Superintendents

Monroe County
School Boards
Association

National Education
Association
of New York,
Western New York
Region

Most people consider the quality of a community's schools when choosing where to live. On Tuesday, May 16 voters across our state will have the opportunity to voice their opinions about the quality of their communities' schools. Your vote counts – be sure to cast your ballot.

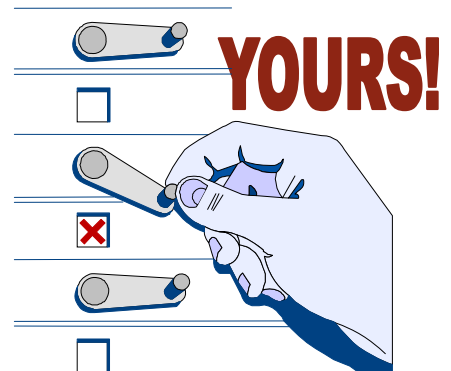
Nowhere is the pluralism and openness of our society better shown than in our public schools. For generations, our system of universal public education has opened doors of opportunity to young Americans. And today, our schools educate the most diverse group of students in America's history. From programs for the learning disabled to enrichment in music and art to classes for the gifted and talented, today's public schools offer programs undreamed of 50 years ago.

Our schools are not perfect, and they face many challenges. They must enable our children to meet statewide academic standards, they must provide professional development for staff, and they must ensure a learning environment that is both safe and adequate. They must accomplish these tasks with limited state and federal financial support.

Why should you vote? Because your input is vital.

Your vote on May 16 is step one in providing this input. The annual election allows you to help identify those who will represent you on your local school board and to voice your opinion on the proposed school budget. It is an opportunity not available in many other states. Take advantage of it!

The vote that counts--



MCEC

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Let's Build On Success

Jody Siegle, Executive Director, Monroe County School Boards Association

Monroe County Education Coalition

.....Representing 60,000 Members
.....A force in our community



Jody Siegle

An On-Time state budget two years in a row! The New York State Legislature is to be congratulated for this significant accomplishment that eluded them for two decades. It has taken a very deliberate effort to change past practices and make an

Adequate and On-Time budget a reality.

While a great beginning, it is still only a beginning. For years we have advocated that state funding for education must be Predictable, Fair, and Sustainable in addition to Adequate and On-Time.

Adequate and On-Time: the Foundation

This year's education budget represents a victory for people who care about public education. The Legislature recognized that the Governor's education budget proposal did NOT cover the inflationary costs school districts were facing but DID contain numerous provisions to reduce local control and complicate the work of school boards. Legislators listened to their constituents and took action. They appropriated funding to cover the real needs districts were facing. They rejected cutbacks to BOCES and special education, added funding for Operating Aid and high needs districts, and removed the hostile changes to laws governing the management of school districts.

Predictable, Fair, and Sustainable: the Next Step

The need for a rational predictable consistent formula for funding education has not yet been resolved. Too much of the budget development process is reactionary rather than pro-active.

The very fact that settling the education budget is a headline item is a statement about the need for a predictable funding formula. Adequate funding should not be a function of how successfully school supporters rally each spring. The needs of education do not systemically change each year, yet it seems as if every year we must make the case anew, as if BOCES suddenly ceased to provide valuable programs or the need for special education vanishes from one year to the next. Why must schools annually explain that they, like every other organization, are subject to inflationary costs? What accounts for the persistent lack of understanding that new mandates cause a need for additional funding?

The most problematic adjective of all is Sustainable. Surpluses and deficits cycle with the years and funding decisions fluctuate with the state's fortunes. Instead of planning for future needs and ensuring continuing funding levels, state leaders find it difficult to address the reasons behind rising costs. This year the Legislature created new funding streams to satisfy various constituent requests. But will these new expenditures create expectations for future spending which will threaten the state's ability to provide funding in coming years?

For the future, education will be best served when all the components are in place - Adequate, Predictable, Fair, Sustainable, and On-Time. That would be the best description of funding for education in New York State. But for the moment, congratulations to our Legislators for their hard work.

