

ECASB Update

Member Districts: Akron, Alden, Amherst, Erie 1 BOCES, Erie 2 Chautauqua Cattaraugus BOCES, Buffalo, Cheektowaga, Cheektowaga-Sloan, Clarence, Cleveland Hill, Depew, East Aurora, Eden, Frontier, Gowanda, Grand Island, Hamburg, Holland, Hopevale, Iroquois, Ken-Ton, Lackawanna, Lake Shore, Lancaster, Maryvale, North Collins, Orchard Park, Springville Griffith Institute, Sweet Home, Tonawanda, West Seneca, Williamsville

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“We already know enough to begin to cope with all the major problems that are now threatening human life and much of the rest of life on earth. Our crisis is not a crisis of information; it is a crisis of decision, of policy and action.” — George Wald



Another Successful Law Conference ...

Sustaining Quality Education during these financial times was a theme that helped draw some 240 participants to this year's WNY Education Law Conference on Aug. 5 at the Millennium.

Congressman Brian Higgins opened the program and the day's complement of speakers included Francisco *Negrón, Jr.*, General Counsel for the National School Boards Association, and Jay Worona, General Counsel for the New York State School Boards Association.

The conference is sponsored each year by ECASB and the WNY Educational Service Council, in partnership with the Erie-Niagara School Superintendents Association, UB Law School, and the New York State School Attorneys Association. More photos inside!



Lancaster School Board President Ken Graber, right, speaks with Ron Mendrick, of the Harter, Secrest and Emery law firm. Mr. Mendrick spoke on, "How to Negotiate Smarter."

2009 Law Conference ...



Melissa Brinson (center), Ken-Ton School Board President and member of the ECASB Executive Board, joins Sweet Home School Board Vice President Marianne Jasen and member Scott Johnson in a Law Conference Session.



Daniel Brunson, President of the East Aurora Board of Education, poses a question during a session.



Among the day's presenters were (from left, above): Francisco Negrón, Jr., National School Boards Association; Jeff Swiatek, Hodgson Russ; David Hoover, Erie 1 BOCES.



Jay Worona, General Counsel for the NYS School Boards Association, gave his annual "Hot Topics Review" to conclude the Law Conference program.



Dr. Tom Ramming, from the WNY Educational Service Council, speaks with Orchard Park School Superintendent Joan Thomas after a session.

2009 Law Conference ...

Speakers included:



Tracie Lopardi and Doug Gearhardt from Harris Beach, speaking on Stimulus Funds.



Andrew Freedman, from Norton/ Hoover, Radin/Freedman, speaking on "Ways to Save Money in the School Setting," and Colleen Sloan, Erie 1 BOCES, speaking on "Safeguarding Student Information."



David Oakes, from Harris Beach, spoke with colleague Kate Hill on "Special Education Update."



Final notes ...

ECASB thanks Congressman Brian Higgins, above, for opening this year's WNY Education Law Conference, and the members of the Planning Committee who, along with ECASB Executive Director Jane Burzynski, meet throughout the year to develop program topics and format:

Robert Christmann, Superintendent, Grand Island Central School District

David A. Farmelo, Hodgson Russ

David Hoover, Erie 1 BOCES

Andrew J. Freedman,
Norton/Radin/Hoover/Freedman

Tracie Lopardi, Harris Beach

Bren Price, WNY Educational Service Council

Dr. Thomas Ramming,
WNY Educational Service Council

GOWANDA UPDATE

An e-mail to ECASB members in mid-August launched a Gowanda Disaster Relief Effort among our membership that has been a tremendous success.

Many, many thanks to all who have made contributions and donated time, effort and trucks to this effort.

Contributions from our members enabled us to send more than 70 cases of water to Gowanda, including four cases donated by TOPS market in Derby. These were personally delivered by Dave Smaczniak (West Seneca), Rick Vogan (Lake Shore), Mary Busse (West Seneca), Andy Breier (Eden) and Brian Burgstahler (Eden). In addition, \$150 was directed to help a Family in Need. Florence Johnson (Buffalo) put out an outreach call to her church, Calvary Baptist on Genesee Street, where

parishoners generously responded with a case of canned goods, baby supplies, feminine products and \$634 in check donations, which helped purchase additional cases of water.

Water remains the most pressing need. Forty-nine homes are uninhabitable. These homes were condemned and families had to evacuate; some were given less than an hour to retrieve possessions. Hundreds of others had damages and those families also are in need.

ECASB invites members to send canned goods/water/donations with their representatives to our Executive Board, Delegate Assembly, Budget and Finance Team, and Legislative Team meetings in September. ECASB President Rick Vogan notes, "I suspect as the event dims into history, public support will dwindle. We need to stay in touch, I think, as the needs may not diminish as quickly as the support probably will."

Donations will be accepted at these meetings in September:

Legislative Team Sept. 10
Budget/Finance Sept. 10
Executive Board Sept. 24
Delegate Assem. Sept. 24

**Checks should be made to
PPPE, with "Gowanda Relief
Fund" on the memo line.**

At right: Mary Busse (West Seneca BOE) and Andy Breier (Eden BOE) help unload water in Gowanda. Labatt's lent the refrigerated truck to keep water and Gatorade chilled.



Photo by David Smaczniak (West Seneca BOE).

UPDATE FROM CROSSROADS SPRINGS IN KENYA

The following is the text of an e-mail received from Alison Hyde (Hopevale) on Aug. 26, 2009 regarding the donations made during this year's Annual Dinner ("Imagine Africa") ...

Dear Jane,

Please pass along enthusiastic thanks from Crossroads Springs founder Dr. Meshack isiaho for the gifts of soccer equipment and school supplies! The six boxes we packed up and mailed have arrived, five still to be opened! Dr. Isiaho listed on email all the pencils, markers, notebooks, whistles, shorts which were in the first box, and will pick up the other boxes from the Post Office next week. He will send us photos of kids and all the wonderful gifts, and I will send them to Lake Shore Youth Soccer, Sweet Home School Board, and ECASB. Thanks to all who chipped in for the shipping as well as to Sweet Home and Lake Shore!

It is so important for the children at Crossroads Springs to know they have friends here in Western New York! They are also on break now. Imagine the excitement when they return!

Peace!

Alison Hyde

In Memoriam ...

ECASB members are saddened by the loss of two friends this summer.

Louis M. Reuter, Jr. ... August 17, 2009, from the Ken-Ton Board of Education. Lou was a dedicated member of the Legislative Team and participant in advocacy activities on behalf of education. His long service to education, athletics and community were honored this past June when he was awarded ECASB's Laura M. Burns Advocacy for Children Award. Donations may be made to the Louis M. Reuter Scholarship Fund, Ken-Ton School District, 1500 Colvin Blvd., Tonawanda 14223. Condolences may be shared at www.AMIGONE.com or <http://www.legacy.com/gb2default.aspx?bookid=700211184010&cid=gbsrchres>

CHASE - Marjorie Lee ... August 26, 2009, Marjorie was the Past President and a long-time member of the Clarence Board of Education. Marjorie was the 1985 recipient of the ECASB Diana R. Miller Service to Education Award. Memorials may be made to The American Red Cross, 786 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209. Condolences may be shared at <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/buffalonews/obituary.aspx?n=marjorie-lee-chase-cox&pid=131991356>.

Annual Leaders' Forum for School Board Presidents, Vice Presidents, Superintendents and Aspiring Leaders

in collaboration with E-NSSA

**Thursday, Oct. 1, 2009 at the Millennium
2040 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga
Sponsored by Hodgson Russ**

5:30-6:00 pm Networking
6:00-7:00 pm Buffet Dinner
7:00-7:25 pm *Team Building* ... Clarence Schools
7:25-7:55 pm *Redistricting & Living
to Tell the Tale* ... Orchard Park Schools
7:55-8:25 p.m. *Returning the Focus to Student
Performance* ... Lackawanna Schools

**\$30/members; \$55/non-members ... Please
register by Thursday, Sept. 24
via your Superintendent's Office**

Erie County Association of School Boards

2009-10

TEAM MEETINGS

Thank you for taking an active part in ECASB! Please make every effort to attend your assigned team meetings, or ensure that your alternate can attend, because no action can take place and no business can move forward if a quorum is not in place.

All meetings are held at Erie 1 BOCES, 355 Harlem Road, West Seneca, unless otherwise noted.

Please be sure to SIGN IN at meetings ... the sign in sheet becomes our official Record of Attendance.

Executive Board

- September 24** 5-6:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B1
December 3 5-6:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B2b, followed by
PPPE Annual Meeting of the Member,
7-8:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B2a
January 7 5-6:15 p.m., E1B Rm. B2a
March 25 5-6:30 p.m., Cheektowaga High School

Delegate Assembly

- September 24** 7-8:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B2b
January 21 7:30-9:00 p.m., E1B Rm. B2b
April 29 7-8:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B1

Budget and Finance Team

- September 10** 7:30-8:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B2b
November 5 7:30-8:30 p.m., E1B Rm. B1
January 7 6:30-8 p.m., E1B Rm. B2b
March 4 6:30-8 p.m., E1B Rm. B1
(IF NEEDED)

Legislative Team

- September 10** 6-7:15 pm, E1B Rm. B1
November 5 6-7:15 pm, E1B Rm. B2b
January 21 6-7:15 pm, E1B Rm. B1
March 25 7-8:30 pm, Cheektowaga High School



Linda Hoffman, right, ECASB's 2008 Diana R. Miller Award recipient, will become the next NYSSBA Area 1 Director. Pictured with her is Alison Hyde, Hopevale BOE.

Linda Hoffman Next Area 1 Director

ECASB member Linda Hoffman will succeed David Smaczniak as Area 1 Director for the New York State School Boards Association upon the expiration of Dave's term.

Linda is President of the Erie 2 Chautauqua Cattaraugus Board of Education. She is an officer on the ECASB Executive Board, serving as Treasurer, and is Chair of the Budget and Finance Team. Linda was the 2008 recipient of the Diana R. Miller Service to Education Award.

Linda also has been active in legislative advocacy activities, serving on the Federal Relations Network of the National School Boards Association and the State Issues Conference (formerly State Legislative Network) of the NYS School Boards Association.

In announcing that he would not seek re-election as Area 1 Director, Mr. Smaczniak said, "I have found my service on the NYSSBA Board of Directors profoundly rewarding. My volunteerism coupled with my daily professional exposure has enhanced my passionate advocacy for public education ... I truly thank all of you for the confidence you have placed in me and for the opportunities given to me."

2009-10 ECASB Programs at-a-glance

All programs are at Erie 1 BOCES, 355 Harlem Road, West Seneca, unless otherwise stated.

October 2009

- 1** **Annual Leaders' Forum** for School Board Presidents, Vice Presidents, Superintendents and Aspiring Leaders: 5:30-6 p.m. - Networking, 6-7 p.m. - Buffet Dinner, 7-8:30 p.m. – Program, at the Millennium
- 8** **WNY Summit on School Support Centers/Community Schools**, registration at 8:30 a.m., program 9 a.m.-1 p.m., includes lunch. Presented by the United Way, in partnership with ECASB, PPPE, E-NSSA, Erie 1 BOCES and Erie 2CC BOCES, Rm. B2a-B2b at 355 Harlem Road, West Seneca. Register at www.uwbec.org

November 2009

- 14** **Fiscal Oversight and Responsibility Training for New Board Members ...** from 8:45-9 a.m.; Program ... 9-3:30 p.m., in Rm. B1 and **REFRESHER FORT for Veteran Board Members, (covering Fund Balance Management, Use of Reserve Funds, Audits - internal, external, claims and comptroller's audits)** from 8:30-11:45 a.m. in Rm. B2a
- 19** **Do You Know What's In Your Teachers' Contract – And What's Not There But Should Be?**, Dessert Forum, with John J. Christopher from Hodgson Russ, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Rm. B

January 2010

- 9** **Nuts & Bolts of Dollars & Cents, Annual School Finance Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon , Rm. B1**

February 2010

- 6** **Legislative Breakfast @ Millennium, 8:30-11 a.m**
- 27** **Building A High Performance District**, 8:30 a.m. registration and continental breakfast; Program from 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

March 2010

- 18** **Technology: the 4th R ... Redefining Literacy**, speaker: David Warlick. Buffet dinner from 6-7, speaker from 7-8-ish, Q&A/audience discussion open till 8:30, at Michael's, 4885 Southwestern Blvd., Hamburg. Sponsored by the WNY Joint Management Team (Erie 1 BOCES, Erie 2 CC BOCES, Cattaraugus Allegany BOCES, Orleans Niagara BOCES) in cooperation with the ECASB and the Erie-Niagara School Superintendents Association.
- 27** **Prospective School Board Member Workshop, 8:30-noon, Rm. B1**

June 2010

- 5** **ECASB New School Board Member Academy, 8:30-12:30, @ Millennium**
- 10** **ECASB Annual Dinner @ Salvatore's**
- 12** **FORT: Registration ... 8:45-9 a.m.; Program ... 9-3:30 p.m. , Rm. B1**



Image source: <http://media.rd.com/rd/images/rdc/mag0806/saving-money-during-hard-financial-times-01-af.jpg>

MONEY ON YOUR MIND ...

If it helps to know you're not alone, well, rest assured, you're not alone at all. Money is the top concern on school board members' minds this year, according to the annual ECASB Member Survey. Whether it's general budget and finance, or as specific as an upcoming teachers' contract, or as broad-reaching as the state's fiscal woes, school board member concerns are focused on money and resources to maintain programs and fiscal strength.

While the specter of mid-year state aid cuts may not be politically prudent, state aid reductions for the following year are a very real threat. With pension costs leaping and health care costs marching inexorably, a perfect storm is brewing. There's no magic fix, but there are things we can do to learn and advocate for changes that would help. Some suggestions:

- Become familiar with the issues so you can optimize your position to inform and advocate.

Note the ECASB Legislative Position Statements posted at ecasb.org, particularly those in support of Wicks Law reform, Pension Reform, and Health Benefit Reform. Get feedback from your Legislative Team representative on the issues being discussed and those that will be featured at our Legislative Breakfast on Feb. 6th. Take a look at the NYSSBA reports on **Recommended Mandate Relief for School Districts** http://www.nyssba.org/clientuploads/nyssba_pdf/gr_MandateReliefBooklet08.pdf and **Maximizing School District Resources** http://www.nyssba.org/index.php?src=news&submenu=advocacy_overview&srctype=detail&category=Reports&refno=530

- Brush up on your knowledge of fund balance management, use of reserve funds, and audits (internal, external, claims and comptroller's audits) in the REFRESHER FORT* (Fiscal Oversight and Responsibility Training) for Veteran Board Members on Saturday morning, Nov. 14, 355 Harlem Road, West Seneca.

- Do You Know What's In Your Teachers' Contract ... and What's Not There That Should Be? If not, plan to attend the Dessert Forum* from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 19, 355 Harlem Road, West Seneca, with John J. Christopher, from Hodgson Russ, presenting.

- Also mark your calendar for the Saturday morning of January 9th, for the annual ECASB Nuts and Bolts of Dollars and Cents Finance Session*, also at 355 Harlem Road.

** Please register through your Superintendent's Office.*