



Erie County Association of School Boards

Vol. 4; Issue 7; March 2025

ADVOCACY ALLIANCE MONTHLY

YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE

Dear Friends,

ECASB did not have the NYS Legislative Calendar when we made our 2024-2025 Event Calendar. Unfortunately, we did not know our legislators would still be in session in Albany the night of our Legislative Wrap-up Dinner. We had no way to guarantee that a legislator would be able to make it home in time for the dinner, so Executive Director David Lowrey and I made the decision to cancel the event this year. I am disappointed because I like to hear about the challenges in Albany directly from our local legislators. We hope to bring the popular program back next year.

Spring brings local elections to school boards. Good luck to all those running campaigns in hopes of re-election. I have announced I will not seek re-election for my seat on the Iroquois CSD Board of Education. I have happily served for 10 years and feel it is time to let someone new take the reins. Working here at ECASB keeps me active and involved, so it doesn't really feel like I am leaving board service, just redirecting my energies.

Our Federal Government Administration is sure keeping us on our toes and the uncertainty is clearly impacting budget session here in NYS. I have been told not to expect the budget to come in by the deadline; although, why would we expect anything different?

Yours in Advocacy,
Jane

Take Note...

- ⇒ **Legislative Team Meeting-The next meeting is scheduled for tonight, March 20, 2025, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. This is the last Legislative Team Meeting for the 2024-2025 school year.**
- ⇒ **Mark you calendar for the ECASB Road Rally, held this year on April 26th. Its not too soon to form your car teams. Teams do not need to be from the same district! Feel free to mix and match. We will begin at the Erie 1 BOCES Campus, 355 Harlem Road.**
- ⇒ **Mandated Governance Training and Fiscal Oversight Responsibility are right around the corner. If you have not completed your training, this is your chance! Your District Clerk can get you registered for the events.**

Our 2024-2025 Diamond Sponsor



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IN THE NEWS

Links to interesting readings

AI Explains the Budget Process in NYS

Click on Links to go to the news source.

[What's next with the Education Department?](#) Buffalo News, March 13.

[Lackawanna principal reflects on phone ban.](#)
Buffalo News March 4

[Counterpoint: STEM Education is Key](#)– From the DV Journal.



1. The Governor's Executive Budget Proposal (January)

- By January 15 (or February 1 in a gubernatorial transition year), the Governor submits an Executive Budget to the Legislature.
 - This proposal includes funding allocations for education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other priorities.
 - The Division of the Budget (DOB) prepares revenue forecasts to estimate available funds. The Governor's proposal includes school aid figures, such as Foundation Aid, expense-based aids (e.g., transportation, BOCES aid), and categorical funding for specific programs.
- Impact on K-12 Schools:
- School districts get an initial estimate of their expected state aid for the upcoming year.
 - Districts begin budget planning based on this estimate, though final figures may change.

2. Legislative Budget Hearings & Negotiations (February – March)

- The Senate and Assembly hold budget hearings to gather input from education stakeholders, including the New York State Education Department (NYSED), school boards (NYSSBA), teachers' unions, and advocacy groups.
- Lawmakers review the Governor's proposed education funding and may push for adjustments to aid formulas or funding priorities. Each chamber (Senate and Assembly) releases its own budget proposal, which may increase or redistribute education funding beyond the Gov-

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AI Explains the Budget Process in NYS

ernor's proposal.

Impact on K-12 Schools:

- Advocacy efforts from school boards, superintendents, and the public can influence lawmakers to increase or adjust funding.
- Schools remain in a holding pattern, as their final state aid amounts remain uncertain.

3. Budget Negotiations & Passage (March – April)

- The Governor and legislative leaders negotiate a final budget agreement.
- By April 1, a balanced budget must be passed by both houses and signed into law.

If an agreement isn't reached by April 1, a temporary budget (extender) may be passed to keep government operations running.

Impact on K-12 Schools:

- The final state aid numbers are confirmed, allowing school districts to finalize their budgets.
- If the state budget is delayed, districts may face uncertainty and need to prepare multiple budget scenarios.

4. School District Budget Development & Public Vote (April – May)

- Districts finalize their budgets based on the final state aid allocations.
- Each district must present its budget to the community for approval during the annual school budget vote in May.

If a budget is rejected, districts may revise it for a second vote or operate under a contingency budget with spending restrictions.

Impact on K-12 Schools:

- If state aid increases, districts can expand programs, hire staff, and invest in student services.
- If state aid is lower than expected, districts may cut programs, reduce staff, or increase local taxes (within tax cap limits).
- Budget delays create uncertainty, forcing districts to prepare for multiple funding scenarios

Key Takeaways

- State aid is a critical funding source for K-12 public schools, covering everything from teacher salaries to student programs.
- The Governor proposes a budget in January, the Legislature negotiates changes, and a final budget is passed by April 1 (ideally).
- Delays in the budget process can disrupt school planning and force districts to make contingency plans.
- Advocacy by school boards, educators, and the public can help shape the final education funding levels.

Waiting on the NYS Budget...

Your Work Is Not Over Yet!

New York State's legislature is in the midst of negotiations with the governor's office working at building the agreement for the State budget. As in year's past, we are warned that the budget may not come in by the April 1 deadline. That means our work is not done! While waiting for the New York State (NYS) budget to pass the NYS Legislature, school board members can take proactive steps to prepare their districts and advocate for public education.

Advocacy & Outreach

Engage with Legislators – Continue advocating for school funding and policy priorities by reaching out to state senators and assembly members.
Encourage Community Advocacy – Urge parents, teachers, and stakeholders to contact legislators and voice concerns about education funding.

Work with NYSSBA and ECASB – Partner with organizations such as the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) and Erie County Association of School Boards (ECASB) to stay informed and amplify advocacy efforts.

Budget Planning & Contingency Strategies

Refine District Budget Proposals – Analyze various funding scenarios to prepare for potential increases or shortfalls.

Review Reserves and Fund Balances – Assess available reserves to plan for possible gaps in state aid.

Develop Contingency Plans – Prepare for best- and worst-case budget outcomes to ensure minimal disruption to programs.

Community Engagement and Transparency

Host Budget Information Sessions – Keep the community informed about potential budget impacts and upcoming votes.

Gather Stakeholder Input – Solicit feedback from educators, parents, and local leaders to understand concerns.

Promote Civic Participation – Encourage voter turnout for school budget votes in May.

Strengthen Governance and Policy Work

Review and Update Policies – Use this time to refine district policies, particularly those tied to funding priorities.

Plan for Negotiations and Contracts – If contracts are up for renewal, strategize based on expected funding.

Assess Capital Projects and Infrastructure Needs – If funding allows, prioritize long-term investments in facilities and technology.

Professional Development and Networking

Attend Workshops and Conferences – Stay informed on policy trends, finance updates, and leadership strategies.

Collaborate with Other Districts – Share insights and best practices with neighboring school boards.

Monitor Legislative Updates – Stay up to date with budget negotiations and policy changes through NYSSBA, ECASB, and state resources. Don't forget to use BillTrack50 too!

Taking these steps will ensure that districts remain prepared and responsive, regardless of how the NYS budget unfolds.

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BILL ALERT PAGE

ECASB uses Bill Track 50 for our bill tracking and advocacy needs. If you also have an interest in tracking bills, email Jane at JSullivan@e1b.org; she will set you up with an account umbrellaed under the ECASB Bill Track 50 subscription. Support is provided.

The 2024-2025 Legislative Session Highlighted Bills

S00140-(Device Ban)-Prohibits students from accessing their wireless communications devices on school property, unless authorized for classroom use; prohibits students from accessing social media platforms through the use of internet access provided by the school district, except when expressly directed to for class instruction. There is no local sponsor and there is not a companion bill.

S00376-(Mental Health Employees)-Requires the department of education to report information regarding counselors, social workers and psychologists in schools and to implement a plan to increase the school counselor, school social worker and school psychologist to student ratio to nationally accepted standards and provide funding for such. There is no local sponsor and there is not a companion bill.

S00380-(BOCES Aid)-Exempts the costs associated with expenditures resulting from the purchase of BOCES services and programs from the real property tax levy limit. There is no local sponsor. There is a companion bill in the Assembly-**A03257**.

S00447-(Mental Health Employees)-Requires at least one full-time guidance counselor to be employed in each elementary, intermediate, middle, junior and senior high school throughout the state; sets duties of guidance counselors. There is no local sponsor. There is a companion bill in the Assembly-**A00706**.

S00519-(Teacher Recruitment)-Establishes the underrepresented teachers of tomorrow teacher recruitment and retention program to attract and retain underrepresented certified teachers in schools which have an underrepresentation of underrepresented certified teachers; provides for grants and procedures for applying for such grants and eligibility requirements for fund distribution. There is no local sponsor. There is a companion bill in the Assembly-**A05777**.

S00589-(Regionalization)-Enacts the "our school our rules act"; prohibits mandatory regionalization plans. There is no local sponsor and there is not a companion bill.

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BILL ALERT PAGE

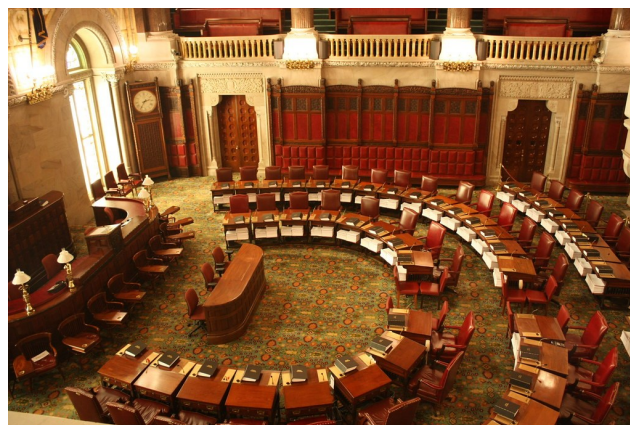
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More Senate Bills to check out:

Bill Number/ Issue Raised

S00016	Jacobe's Law-Bullying
S00030	Amistad Commission
S00095	Financial Literacy
S00241	SRO Resources
S00312	Teacher character
S00449	Transgender Policies
S00460	Transgender Sports Policies
S00469	Reimbursement Time Frame
S00482	SRO
S00528	BOCES Salaries
S00584	Telehealth Care in Schools
S00835	Civic Responsibility
S00840	Migrant Student Aid
S01089	Workplace readiness
S01111	Certification
S01118	SRO
S01120	Aid Formula Study
S01160	Diwali Holiday
S01210	History Curriculum
S01251	Violence Study
S01269	Airway Devices
S01270	Employee Opioid Training
S01272	Financial Education
S01310	Mental Health Services
S01312	Social Workers in schools

S01325	Special Education
S01349	Swimming Instruction
S01371	Equity in Education
S01474	Agriculture Instruction
S01495	PreK Transportation
S01682	Remote Learning
S01696	Transportation
S01710	Apprenticeships
S02031	Budget Vote
S02036	Building Aid for Safety
S02077	Telehealth Services
S02112	Bus Attendants
S02126	Underrepresented Convention
S02189	Tax Levy Exclusion



New York State Senate Chamber– Albany, NY

“The budget is not just a collection of numbers, but an expression of our values and aspirations.”
– Governor Kathy Hochul