



Erie County Association of School Boards

# ANNOUNCEMENT

**Nominations open January 2, 2025 open for the following annual ECASB recognition awards. Nominations must be received in the ECASB office by Monday, March 3, 2025.**

**Diana R. Miller Service to Education Award  
Laura M. Burns Advocacy for Children Award  
Hodgson Russ Excellence in Collaboration Award  
Wayne Schlifke Lifetime Achievement Award  
Lorie Sabo Advocacy Award  
ECASB District Clerk Award Sponsored by Webster Szanyi LLP  
Friend (s) of ECASB Award  
Ray Carr Emerging Leaders Award**

1. **The Diana R. Miller Service to Education Award** was established in 1981. It is given in memory of Diana R. Miller who, at the time of her death on September 9, 1981, was a teacher, school board member for the Lancaster Central School district and President of the Erie County Association of School Boards. The first award was given posthumously to Mrs. Miller and was presented to her family at the ECASB Fall Dinner meeting on November 12, 1981.

The Diana R. Miller Service to Education Award honors an individual or an organization who has made contributions to the betterment of education and/or assisted ECASB in achieving its mission on behalf of public education.

2. **The Laura M. Burns Advocacy for Children Award** was established in 1998. It is given in memory of Laura M. Burns, who passed away in 1998. Laura served as a teacher and served on the Hamburg Central School District, serving as president for 2 years.

The Laura M. Burns Advocacy for Children Award honors a current or former school board member who has provided outstanding service in advocacy for children, demonstrating leadership in the district and community with actions that clearly benefit children and show a willingness to stand up for principles that "put kids first".

3. **The Hodgson Russ Excellence in Collaboration Award** was established in 2005. The award honors a school district and at least one community partner who have developed an education program that has propelled the district toward greatness and has the potential to be replicated elsewhere. The program must be unique, exemplary and go above and beyond the ordinary.

4. **The Wayne Schlifke Lifetime Achievement Award** was established in 2017 to honor the memory of Wayne Schlifke. Wayne served on the Depew Union Free School Board for 5 years, Erie 1 BOCES Board of Education for over 25 years and served as Area 1 Director for NYSSBA. Wayne also served as the Vice President of the NYSSBA in 2006 and served as President in 2008. The award recognizes an individual whose lifetime efforts have resulted in outstanding service to the Erie County Association of School Boards and the education community.

The award will not be presented every year. Rather, it will be designated by the Awards Review Team in the specific and unique circumstances where lifetime achievement recognition is warranted.

5. **The ECASB School District Clerk Service To Education Award Sponsored by Webster Szanyi, LLP** Honors the School District Clerk that has made contributions to the betterment of education or the betterment in the operations of Board of Education meetings within the district. The nominee must have served in the role for at least 5 years and must have assisted ECASB or other District Clerks.

6. **Friend (s) of ECASB Award** Nominations will be accepted by District Clerks, Board of Education Members or Superintendents to nominate individuals or groups of individuals that are NOT ECASB members that have been helpful in advancing ECASB's Mission and Vision.

7. **Lorie Sabo Advocacy Award** - Is awarded to the individual(s), that best exemplify the characteristics, traits and passion in advocating with elected officials that were exhibited by Lorie Sabo.

8. **Ray Carr Emerging Leader Award** - Was awarded in 2024 for the first time. Ray Carr was a long time Board Member from Cheektowaga CSD and Erie 1 BOCES. Ray was active in the ECASB serving on the Executive Board as an At Large Member, the Treasurer, Vice President, and President. The Award is presented to an emerging leader. The award will recognize an emerging leader in their first term of service who is an emerging leader both on their Board of Education and in ECASB.

9. Linda Hoffman Involvement Award - The award will be awarded in 2026. The award will recognize an ECASB member who not only serves/served on a Board of Education, but contributed positively to other organizations and associations in the community. Linda is a past member of the Springville Griffith Institute Board of Education. She served as the NYSSBA Area 1 Director and currently is serving on the Executive Board of the NYS Rural Schools Association. She is the recipient of the ECASB Diana R. Miller Leadership Award, the Laura M. Burns Advocacy for Children Award, the Wayne Schlifke Lifetime Achievement Award as well as several ECASB Medallion, Shining Star and Rising Star Participation awards. In the community, she has served on the Springville Center For the Arts, volunteered at the Springville Public Library, Partner's for Children's Hospital, the Healthy Community Alliance and the Temple Beth Shalom of Elma.

***Forms for each of the awards will be sent to the ECASB membership and are also available on the ECASB website at [www.ecasb.org](http://www.ecasb.org).***

***The Awards 2024 Review Team consisting Lorry Goldhawk (Amherst CSD), Dawn Snyder (Clarence CSD), Renee Wilson (Erie 1 BOCES/Cheektowaga CSD), Kristin Schmutzler (Tonawanda City SD), and Sherry Steffan (Grand Island) will review all nominations when ECASB Awards nominations close on March 5, 2025. The team will meet on March 6th.***

## **Previous Award Winners:**

### **Wayne E. Schlifke Lifetime Achievement Award**

Karl Kristoff, Esq. (Hodgson Russ LLP) – 2017; Linda Hoffman (Erie 2 CC BOCES and NYSSBA Area 1 Director)- 2021; David Little (Rural Schools Association of NYS)- 2022; Ray Carr (Erie 1 BOCES)- 2023; Scott Johnson (Sweet Home CSD) - 2024.

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### **Diana R. Miller**

#### **Service to Education Award**

**\* Robert M. Walker, Esq.-1982**; Frederic Sievenpiper- (Alden CSD & Erie 1 BOCES) - 1983; Merton L. Haynes (Iroquois CSD)-1984; Marjorie C. Chase (Clarence CSD)-1985; Edward J. Sawkowski (Springville Griffith Institute CSD)-1986; Chester A. Nowacki (Cheektowaga CSD)-1987; Betty T. Quinn-1988 (Iroquois CSD); Mary Ellen Murphy (West Seneca CSD)-1989; Robert A. Binner (Maryvale UFSD)-1990; Jean Wood (Williamsville CSD)-1991; Stanley J. Figiel (Frontier CSD)-1993; Jane Sweet (Clarence CSD)-1994; Alison Hyde (East Aurora UFSD)-1995; Linda U. Riley (Iroquois CSD)-1997; James A. Powers (Clarence CSD)-1998; Dr. Eugene Steinberg (Williamsville CSD)-1999; Eileen Rucker (Hamburg CSD)-2000; Judith Katz (Williamsville CSD)-2001; Florence Johnson (Buffalo PS)-2002; Dr. Charles Stoddart (Orchard Park)-2003; Jan Peters (Buffalo PS) -2004; Wayne Schlifke (Depew UFSD & Erie 1 BOCES) - 2005; Linda Hoffman (Springville Griffith Institute CSD & Erie 2 CC BOCES)-2008; Raymond Carr (Cheektowaga CSD & Erie 1 BOCES)-2009; Delia Bonenberger (Cheektowaga CSD & Springville Griffith Institute CSD)-2010; Dr. Thomas Coseo- (Clarence CSD) 2011; Lorie Sabo (Orchard Park and Erie 2 CC BOCES) (posthumously)-2012; Kathyann Lorka (East Aurora & Erie 2 CC BOCES)-2013; Julie McCullough (Clarence CSD)-2014; David Lowrey (Iroquois CSD & Erie 2 CC BOCES)-2015; Mary Busse (West Seneca & Erie 1 BOCES)-2016; Maryellen Kloss (Clarence CSD)-2017; Brenda Christopher (Lancaster CSD)-2018; Ron Catalano (Westfield & Erie 2 CC BOCES)—2019; Sharon Belton-Cottman (Buffalo PS) & John Sherman (Tonawanda & Erie 1 BOCES) - 2020; Robert Polino (Cleveland Hill)- 2021; Terrance Heard (Buffalo PS)- 2022, Kristin Schmutzler (Tonawanda City SD) - 2023; Dr. Christine Tinnesz (Orchard Park CSD) - 2023; Denise McCowan (Cheektowaga Sloan UFSD) and the Ken Ton UFSD Board of Education and Superintendent (Sabatino Cimato, Matthew Chimera, Todd Marquardt, Paul Spors, Lee Ann Vogt and Karen Whitelaw) - 2024.

### **Laura M. Burns**

#### **Advocacy for Children Award**

Laura Burns (posthumously)-1998; Linda Hoffman (Springville CSD)-1999; Margery G. Baumler (Sweet Home CSD)-2000; Lorie Sabo (Orchard Park CSD and Erie 2 CC BOCES)-2001; Raymond Carr (Cheektowaga CSD and Erie 1 BOCES)-2002; Margaret Fletcher East Aurora UFSD)-2003; Mary Michael Egan (Amherst CSD) -2004; Andrew Loeb (Hamburg CSD and Erie 1 BOCES)-2006; Jane Okun (Cheektowaga CSD) & Michael Morrow (Sweet Home CSD)-2007; Dolores Mendola (West Seneca CSD)-2008; Louis Reuter (Ken Ton UFSD)-2009; Richard Vogan (Lake Shore CSD)-2010; Thomas Kulaszewski (Cleveland Hill UFSD)-2011; William Freeman (Williamsville CSD)-2012; Jan Dalbo (West Seneca CSD) and Elaine Diederich-2013; Patricia Brunner-Collins (Hamburg CSD)-2014; Renee Wilson (Cheektowaga CSD & Erie 1 BOCES)-2016; Charles Specht (Iroquois)-2017; Dr. Jill O'Malley (Ken Ton UFSD)-2018; David Yoviene (Hamburg CSD)—2019, Sylvester Cleary ( Forestville & Erie 2 CC BOCES) - 2020; Dwight Eagan (Orchard Park CSD & Erie 2 CC BOCES) & Scott Johnson (Sweet Home CSD) 2021; Matthew Chimera (Ken Ton UFSD)- 2023; Sharon Belton-Cottman (Buffalo PS) - 2024.

### **Excellence in Collaboration Award** ***Sponsored by Hodgson Russ LLP***

Sweet Home CSD and its partners including The Amherst IDA, the Amherst Town Board, and

Zapfael Development for the creation of the North West Community Center - 2024

West Seneca CSD and its partners, NFIEC and Erie 1 BOCES for the Business & Education Employability Portfolio (BEEP) program – 2005;

Holland CSD and its partner, Young audiences of WNY for "A rainforest come to Holland"-2006; Cheektowaga Central School District for it "Seniors and Students Partnership" with the Cheektowaga Department of Senior Services – 2007;

Lake Shore Central School District for "Substance Abuse Training"-2008; HONOR Award: Orchard Park – 2009;

Cheektowaga Schools and Cheektowaga Alliance for Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth – 2010;

Cleveland Hill/UB Partnership and Erie 2 CC BOCES and Partners Central Business Office Service – 2011;

Eden Community Service Project and Hamburg Finance Academy – 2012;

Springville GI and the Springville Community Foundation – 2013;

Erie 2 Chautauqua Cattaraugus BOCES Virtual AP Academy: HONOR Awards to Hamburg Central Schools EMT Training and Certification Program AND Ken-Ton UFSD Ken-Ton Academies – 2014

West Seneca CSD Raising Readers WNY: HONOR Awards: Erie 1 BOCES Twilight Program and Erie 1 BOCES New Visions Program: Connections and HONORABLE MENTION to Hamburg CSD Drug and Alcohol Parent Forum – 2015;

Tonawanda Schools and Herschel Carrousel Museum for "T-NT S.T.E.A.M. is Dynamite!": HONOR Award: Erie 1 BOCES and Carubba Collision – 2016;

West Seneca Schools and health/medical partnering organizations for "West Seneca Academy of Life Science": HONOR Award: Springville Students for Human Rights and human rights partnering organizations - 2017

Amherst Central Schools "Tiger's Den Food Pantry" in partnership with St. Paul's Lutheran Church and the WNY Food Pantry - 2018

Grand Island Central School District "Growing Readers" in partnership with Grand Island Pediatrics, Grand Island Memorial Library, Grand Island Neighbor's Foundation, Grand Island Rotary, Grand Island Teachers Association, Grand Island School Related Professionals, Grand Island CSD Administrator's Union, Fucillo Automotive Group, Grand Island Golden Age Center and Private Community Donors.—2019

Iroquois Central School District It Takes A Community - A collaboration with over 30 community agencies focused on drug and alcohol prevention. - 2020.

No organizations recognized in 2021 due to COVID.

Clarence Central School District Clothing Closet - A collaboration with many community organizations and businesses. - 2022.

Alden Central School - Alden Bulldog Manufacturing. A collaboration with many community partners. Alden Bulldog Manufacturing served as a consultant to many school districts in the area who started their own Manufacturing Division—2023.

Sweet Home CSD and its partners including The Amherst IDA, the Amherst Town Board, and Zapfel Development for the creation of the North West Amherst Community Center - 2024

**ECASB District Clerk Award Sponsored by Webster Szanyi, LLP**

Jessica Neischel (Depew UFSD)- 2020; Deborah Custodi (Amherst CSD) - 2021, Gina Santa Maria (Ken Ton UFSD) - 2022; Cindy Sadowski (Iroquois CSD) - 2023 and Wendy Limardi (Cleveland Hill UFSD) - 2023.

**Friend (s) of ECASB Award**

Kathyann Queeno (Queeno Accounting) - 2021, Dr. Rick G. Timbs (Statewide School Finance Consortium & R.G. Timbs, Inc.)- 2022; Wayne Drescher (Erie 1 BOCES and Cheektowaga-Sloan UFSD) 2023; Senator Patrick Gallivan and Assemblyman William Conrad - 2024.

**Lorie Sabo Advocacy Award**

Kathleen Chiavetta (Lake Shore CSD & Erie 2 CC BOCES) & Scott Johnson (Sweet Home CSD) - 2021, Erik Polkowski (Akron CSD) - 2022; Edward Schaefer (Cheektowaga CSD) - 2023; Michael Franey (Lake Shore CSD) - 2024.

**Ray Carr Award**

Kristy Pingitore (Akron CSD) - 2024.