



## Legislative Team Meeting

6:30 – 8:30 PM –September 22, 2022  
Erie One BOCES Building B; Rm B1

### APPROVED MINUTES:

#### Attendance:

**PRESENT:** Erik Polkowski (Akron), Carol Kiripolsky (Cheektowaga), Gary Sieczkarek (Cheektowaga-Sloan), Wesley Schlossin (Cheektowaga-Sloan), Dennis Priore (Clarence), Michael Montoro (Cleveland Hill), Paul Blowers (East Aurora), Linda Hoffman (Erie 2 CC BOCES & Area 1 Director), Davis Podkulski (Frontier), David Yoviene (Hamburg), Mary Jo Szucs (Holland), Jim Michalek (Iroquois), Lesley Battaglia (Ken-Ton), Kim Bukaty (Lackawanna), Michael Franey (Lake Shore), Michelle DeCarlo (North Collins), Ryan Anderson (Orchard Park), Scott Johnson (Sweet Home), Amy Battaglia (Sweet Home), Kristin Schmutzler (Tonawanda), Andrea Wisniewski (Tonawanda), Janice Dalbo (West Seneca), Dr. Susan McClary (Williamsville), Jane Sullivan (Erie 1 Program Services Manager and Iroquois), Dave Lowrey (Executive Director and Erie 2 CC BOCES), Sue Beier (Office Assistant).

**EXCUSED:** Ed Schaefer (Cheektowaga), Todd Bush (Depew), Kathleen Chiavetta (Lake Shore/Erie 2 CC BOCES & Co-Chair), Jennifer Pilarski (Maryvale), and Teresa Leatherbarrow.

**ABSENT:** Michael Bennett (Alden), Mark Smith (Amherst), Scott Lawrence (Buffalo), Jennifer Horschel (Eden), Renee Wilson (Erie 1 BOCES), John Waterman Jr. (Gowanda), Ashli Dreher (Grand Island), Michael Sage (Lancaster), Jessica Schuster (Springville GI).

**6:30 pm - Call to Order by Legislative Committee Chair – Scott Johnson called meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.**

**6:31 PM - Pledge to Flag**

**Approval of Agenda** Motion to approve agenda by Linda Hoffman, second by Erik Polkowski, MCU. April Meeting Minutes-previously sent to 2021-2022 team; listed on ECASB website Motion to approve minutes by Jim Michalek, Second by Wesley Schlossin, MCU.

**Introduction of the Chairs and New Membership** Welcome Scott welcomed all attendees and attendees introduced themselves and the district they were representing.

**Description of the role of the Legislative Team and the Chairs –** The job description for Legislative Committee had been sent out just prior to reorganization meetings. Scott and Jane reviewed the job description of the committee.

**Review of Legislative/Advocacy Activities since last meeting**

- (a) Bill Track 50 Updates; **New team members added. Training needed?** – Jane reviewed what Bill Track 50 was. She asked for those individuals that did not want access to let her know so that she can keep the data base up to date. She also said if new Legislative Reps and Alternates that are interested in having access to let her know. Jane will set up a zoom training for next Thursday (Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> which will most likely be taped for ECASB members that are unable to attend the zoom meeting).

- (b) Summer activity meeting with legislators – Jane participated in the Federal Advocacy over the summer. She asked if anyone else had worked with legislators. Erik Polkowski has contacted local legislators at the County level over the summer.
- (c) ECASB Takes a Stand
  - (i) Discuss draft document to finalize – Jane explained the purpose of the document and how the document came to be. The document will be updated every 2 years. It was pointed out that SEL and Mental Health really were not addressed. Jane explained that when the survey was conducted 2 years ago, Mental Health really was not on the radar – hence this could go under future concerns. The same would go for electric buses. The purpose of the document is to identify those items that are concern for ECASB member districts as a whole. There may be issues that are relevant to a few or individual districts that do not really affect the entire 30 districts of ECASB. There was a question about CVA legislation as well. The document is not meant to handle our “legislative priorities for the coming year” – that process will be narrowed down the Legislative Committee. In most cases, items that are included within the ECASB Takes a Stand, but not all issues would be addressed in a legislative session. It is important to know where the organization stands. The analogy of New York State School Boards was made. At the upcoming Business Meeting, there are 48 resolutions that will be introduced. These 48 issues WILL NOT all be addressed. Linda Hoffman suggested that transportation could become a larger issue with the shortage of drivers. There was a question as to what constituted short term goals versus long term goals. Long term goals would include short term goals...perhaps different terminology.
  - (ii) Ongoing plans to move forward – We will continue the process of developing the ECASB Takes a Stand Document with added information. This could be tied to a mini survey with a small addendum every year, since the ECASB Takes a Stand document will be produced every two years.
- (d) Update QRT (Quick Response Team) Members – The Quick Response Team sheet was passed out. This came about two years ago when legislators had inquired about how districts felt about a particular topic. The Quick Response Team is made up representative districts and not all districts. We have representatives from small city schools, large suburban, small suburban districts, rural districts, districts that are in the north towns and districts that are in the south towns. The people serving on the committee have committed to getting back to ECASB within 24 hours when we have a request from a legislator about a particular topic that may come up quickly.
- (e) questions/comments

### **Upcoming important info**

#### **New Business**

- (a) October 6 Student Leadership dinner – First time event, there is no cost. We are honoring those students that are non-voting members of a school board and those students who consistently report out at Board of Education meetings. It is a Thank You to students. Superintendent, Board President/Vice-President and the student were all invited. We also invited the parents of the students. The first part of the evening will be dinner followed by key note speaker Gunnar Haberel. The second part of the meeting will be round table discussions so that ECASB can be a resource to Student Non Voting reps. In addition, we want to compare and contrast differences in the way programs are set up with districts and protocols that are in place.
- (b) Legislative changes, Bills for Local Legislators to Sponsor – There are no bills that have been introduced. Jane reminded everyone that according to our speaker last spring,

**this is a two-year process. Bills that were introduced and died have to be reintroduced and the process started all over again.**

**(c) Fall activities**

- a. **Legislative Breakfast- Nov. 19 – Will be held off site at the Grapevine Banquet Center at 333 Dick Road so that we can include more people than we have had involved the last two years.**
  - i. **Ad-Hoc Committee? – Jane asked for individuals that might want to be involved in the planning of the legislative breakfast. There were no volunteers at this time.**
    1. **Presentation Slide Development**
    2. **Review Legislative Handbook – Jane asked for volunteers to serve on a committee to review and update the hand book.**
    3. **Day of Event Helpers – Jane is looking for volunteers to assist during the Legislative Breakfast to help present, help at registration, carry a microphone around for question and answers, and to make those legislators that are attending feel welcome.**
- b. **Rick Timbs Dinner- Oct. 13 Jane urged everyone to attend, especially if you have never heard Rick Timbs speak. He provides a lot of information that is helpful when we advocate with our legislators.**
- c. **Dave Little Dinner-Nov. 3 – Dave Little will present an Albany Update. He has a lot of knowledge about the legislative branch having worked in government both in the Senate and at NYSSBA in charge of Governmental relations. He now meets with many legislators in his role as New York State Rural Schools Association Director.**
- d. **Create committee to review Legislative Handbook-Volunteers? – See above**

**(d) Yearlong activities**

- a. **2022-2023 meeting schedule -**
- b. **Advocacy Training Day- Jan. 21, 2023 – In the past, there have been students that have attended this event. The same will happen this year. We also encourage all NEW school board members to attend since they need to make sure they are contacting local legislators. Dave mentioned that Nassau-Suffolk County School Boards Association is focusing on advocacy this year. Their theme this year is “Know Your Story, Tell Your Story, Sell Your Story”.**
- c. **Local Advocacy Week- Feb 1-4 – this is the week that we set aside to contact local legislators and their aides to discuss our concerns. Again, it is important to contact local legislators and tell your story.**
- d. **Legislative Dinner- May 11 – This will be a new event to have a few legislators meet over dinner to share their progress during the year and also discuss with ECASB members challenges that they are faced with when it comes to moving many of our issues forward. This will help us to better prepare in the following year, perhaps with building alliances and working with other groups collaboratively.**
- e. **NYSSBA**
  - i. **Virtual Business Meeting, when they develop their positions-Oct. 17, 2022 – Local school boards need to make sure they are registered NO later than October 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be two virtual training sessions for those who are the voting delegates scheduled for October 6<sup>th</sup> and October 12<sup>th</sup>. There will be a link sent out a few days prior to the meeting for those members that wish to view the proceedings of the Business Meeting that may not be the district’s voting delegate.**

- ii. Annual Convention in Syracuse, Oct. 27-29, 2022
  - iii. Capital Conference, Feb., 2023, TBA – **Capital Conference is split into two portions. The Virtual portion will be Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. This program usually prepares and educates Board of Education members about the upcoming conference. The in -person visitation will take place on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> in Albany.**
- (e) Add student advocate representatives? – **Jane threw out the question as to whether we wanted to include Student Non-Voting members at Legislative Meetings and Events. After much discussion, it was decided that Student Reps should not be in attendance at our events with the exception of the Advocacy Training. ECASB can provide training and workshops separate from ECASB events.**
  - (f) from our Superintendent Representative\* - **There was discussion about the history of this position. There is no information in the by laws. It was discussed that it most likely is a position that is filled by the ENSSA President. The ENSSA President can choose to fill the position or will appoint a Superintendent from one of the Erie County districts. Jane will reach out to the President of ENSSA.**
  - (g) **Other: Jane discussed the Resolution that was written by the Springville GI School Board. Copies of the resolution were distributed to the members in attendance.**

**Member Forum (2 minutes per person, advocacy related topics)**

**Erie 2 CC BOCES – Linda Hoffman – At NYSSBA they are focused on Mental Health. They recently had several presentations. There is a need for more psychiatrist and counselors in schools. Mental Health issues are tied to increases in violence. NYSSBA is looking to help school districts and wants to hear from school districts.**

**Akron CSD – Erik Polkowski – Has reached out to many of the County Legislators. The group can be helpful to our organization.**

**Cleveland Hill UFSD – Mike Montoro – District has many questions about electric school buses. (Mike Franey shared information that he had received from his district and he indicated that the information can be shared with the membership).**

**Tonawanda City School District – Kristin Schmutzler – has been in contact with Assemblyman Bill Conrad through the summer. He has assisted with funding for a new program. They are looking for an increase in SRO’s.**

**Holland CSD – MaryJo Szucs – “We need to focus on students” and not issues like buses”.**

**Iroquois CSD – Jim Michalek – Buses are a concern...everything from the infrastructure to roads and bridges in the district, lifts for buses in the Bus Garage. District now has an SRO in each building.**

**Hamburg CSD – David Yoviene – Discussed the group that ran against the incumbents and how they are still showing up at meetings. Moms for Liberty, although it is a small group, it appears that Hamburg is ground zero for the group. They meet at a former church “the well” in West Seneca. People are not going away and they are concerned about issues such as book banning, critical race theory and LGBTQ. Linda Hoffman pointed out that the policies need to be very strong.**

**Cheektowaga CSD – Carol Kiripolsky – Pass**

Orchard Park CSD – Ryan Anderson – They have some of the same issues as Hamburg CSD, but to a lesser extent.

Clarence CSD – Dennis Priore – Added a non-voting student rep to the board. One of the issues is that students are over extending themselves via taking additional courses.

Cheektowaga Sloan UFSD – Gary Sieczkarek / Wesley Schlossin – Now have an SRO at the high school and middle school. Would like to educate students on the Building Trades. It was suggested that all legislators should be required to purchase an electric vehicle that they can drive back and forth to Albany and install necessary charging equipment in their homes before requiring everyone else to make the switch to electric vehicles.

Ken Ton UFSD – Lesley Battaglia – Meeting with Brian Higgins went well. Still planning on addressing CVA in this legislative session. Monica Wallace is filming a commercial on Friday at 3:30 p.m. on Victoria Boulevard.

Sweet Home CSD – Amy Battaglia – Spoke about the Community Center. Dave suggested that on January 3<sup>rd</sup> when the ECASB Awards are released that they consider nominating the district for the Hodgson Russ Collaboration Award.

East Aurora – Paul Blowers – Working with advocacy. There is a better rapport with certain legislators within the district.

Jan Dalbo – West Seneca – Reminded everyone that they should just keep smiling and all the issues they are facing will eventually pass. She reminded attendees to remember the students.

**Motion for Adjournment: Motion by Dennis Priore, second by James Michalek, MCU.**

**Adjournment**