



Erie County Association of School Boards

Vol. 4; Issue 1; September 2024

ADVOCACY ALLIANCE MONTHLY

YOUR MONTHLY UPDATE

Dear Friends,

With just a few weeks into the new school year, there is already a lot of advocacy report.

Thurs., Oct. 10 is the NYSSBA Annual Business meeting. NYSSBA member boards vote on resolutions that will give NYSSBA guidance on their advocacy priorities. Each *NYSSBA member board* is entitled, and encouraged, to select a board member to serve as a voting delegate for the meeting. Voting Delegate registration closes October 4 at 12 p.m. and should be completed by district clerks. Registration information was emailed directly to district clerks.

Here at ECASB, we are working on our 2024-2025 ECASB Takes a Stand booklet. The Legislative team meets on Thurs., Sept. 19 to set the year's priorities. From there, we form the presentation for the Legislative Breakfast, to be held on Sat., Nov. 16, beginning at 8:30 a.m., at Resurgence Brewing Company. Watch your emails for registration information!

We are bringing back Rick Timbs on Oct. 17 and hope to see many members, as this presentation really helps us all understand the state of NYS Education Funding.

David and I we will be attending the NYSSBA convention at the end of October. If you can get there, it is always a wonderful conference. If you are unable to attend, this year NYSSBA will have a virtual component.

Hope to see everyone at an ECASB event in the near future.

Yours in Advocacy,

~Jane

Take Note...

- ⇒ Mark your calendar and save the date: Legislative Team Meeting Thurs., Sept. 19 6:30-8:30 p.m. Legislative Team Reps and Alternates, please email Sue Summers at ssummers@e1b.org if you will not be attending.
- ⇒ Rick Timbs Dinner at the Columns on Thurs., Oct. 17. See your email for details and register with your district clerk ASAP.
- ⇒ NYSSBA Convention in NYC from Oct. 20 to Oct. 22. Dave Lowrey and I will both be there.
- ⇒ Legislative Breakfast with our local state legislators: Sat., Nov. 16, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at Resurgence Brewing Company. All members are requested to attend. See your email for details and register with your district clerk ASAP.
- ⇒ Fall Speed Boarding is planned for Thurs., Nov. 21 from 6:30-8:30. Details will be released soon.

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POSTCARDS SENT

Bill S09018

“Fix Tier 6” Continued

On September 4, Governor Hochul signed bill S09018, making it a requirement for all public schools in New York State to designate an ex-officio student member to the board.

This means each school in Erie county now has a little less than a year to develop the method for fair and equitable student representation on the Board of Education.

The chosen student(s) will have a right to sit at the board table during all public meetings and hearings and may participate in other board activities and responsibilities at the discretion of the board; however, the student will not have voting rights, nor will the student be given privileges to attend executive session or attend meetings or hearings not open to the public.

This was not a bill ECASB supported. All assembly members (including our local members) voted in favor, with the exception of six nonlocal members who were absent. In the Senate, there were 13 Nays to 48 Ayes. Three Nay votes came from Senator Borrello, Senator Gallivan and Senator Ortt.

ECASB has issued thank you post cards to each which read:

“Thank you for voting no on Bill 09018. The bill passed and the governor signed it, but we still appreciate your vote just the same.

ECASB feels there were already avenues for student engagement at the board level and that this is overreach by NYS and SED.”

Response from Lindsay R. Lorigo Erie County Legislator | District 10

Thank you for reaching out to me regarding this matter.

In April, a law was passed for the New York State 2025 budget changing the calculation of pension for Tier 6 members. To emulate other tiers, an employee's pension will be calculated based on their top three years' earnings instead of the top five, ultimately increasing pension values.

As your Erie County Legislator, I can only vote on Erie County legislation. Any issue regarding these changes are at the state level, not the county. Since I have no jurisdiction over the state, I highly recommend you continue to contact the offices of Senator Patrick Gallivan and Assemblyman David DiPietro to voice your support:

Senator Gallivan's Office: gallivan@nysenate.gov | 716-656-8544

Assemblyman DiPietro's Office: DiPietroD@nyassembly.gov | 716-655-0951

I will continue to monitor the situation to remain abreast of any further updates. If there is any other way I can be of assistance with county related issues, please let me know.

Lindsay R. Lorigo

Erie County Legislator | District 10

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BILL ALERT

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.

Our Legislators Have Asked Us:

Jane sent out an email to the local legislators asking if they had sponsored any education related legislation they would like feedback from us on. Here are the resulting Bills to preview. Let your Legislative Team Representative know where your district stands on each.

[A00921 \(Early Intervention Services\)](#) - This bill amends the Public Health Law to provide an 11% increase in funding for early intervention services for the 2023 fiscal year. Specifically, the bill increases the gross statewide amount for early intervention services from \$40 million to \$44.4 million for the 2023 fiscal year. This additional funding is intended to support the provision of early intervention services, which are critical for children with developmental delays or disabilities. It is stuck in committee as of January 2024 and is locally sponsored by **Assemblyman William Conrad**. There is no companion bill.

[A04152 \(Related to BOCES\)](#) - This bill amends the Education Law to exempt the costs associated with the purchase of BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) services and programs from the real property tax levy limit. BOCES are regional public education service agencies in New York that provide shared educational programs and services. By exempting these BOCES-related costs from the tax levy limit, the bill aims to provide school districts with more flexibility in financing their educational services without being constrained by the tax levy limit. It is stuck in committee as of January 2024 and is locally sponsored by **Assemblymembers William Conrad and Karen McMahon**. **Companion Senate bill S01574** is in committee and has no local sponsor.

[A07481 \(Related to BOCES\)](#) - This bill amends the Education Law to put limits on the salaries of certain teachers and aides employed by Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Specifically, it states that the part of a teacher's, supervisor's, or other employee's salary that exceeds certain dollar amounts (starting at \$30,000 and increasing over time to \$60,000) will not be considered an approved expense for the purposes of BOCES aid. The bill also puts a 10% cap on administrative and clerical expenses for BOCES. Additionally, the bill changes the career education aid ratio calculation and the base amount used to calculate career education aid. The changes in this bill apply to BOCES aid and career education aid calculations starting in the 2024-2025 school year. It is in committee with changes as of May 2024 and is locally sponsored by **Assemblyman William Conrad**. **Companion Senate bill S05024** is locally sponsored by **Senators George Borrello and Patrick Gallivan**.

Our 2024 - 2025 Silver Sponsors



BILL ALERT CONTINUED

A08076 (CVA Cap) - This bill creates a school budget tax cap exemption for expenditures resulting from settlements or jury awards for civil actions brought against school districts under the child victims act. Specifically, it amends the education law to allow school districts to exclude from their tax levy limit any tax levy necessary to cover expenditures from court orders or judgments against the school district arising out of civil claims or causes of action brought under the child victims act. This bill aims to provide financial relief to school districts facing increased costs due to such legal actions. Referred to committee in January 2024, it is locally sponsored by Assemblymembers **William Conrad, Karen McMahon** and **Monica Wallace**. The companion **Senate bill is S08123** and was sponsored locally by former **Senator Tim Kennedy** before he vacated office to serve in the US Congress.

A08258-(Teacher retention)- This bill authorizes the New York State Education Department to contract with a non-profit organization for a three-year program to address public school teacher recruitment and retention in the state, subject to appropriation. This bill has been in committee since January 2024 and is locally sponsored by Assemblymembers **William Conrad** and **Karen McMahon**. There is no companion bill.

A04080 (Seal of Civic Readiness)- This bill authorizes the New York State Commissioner of Education to establish a grant program that provides \$50,000 grants to no more than 20 applicant school districts per year. These grants are intended to support public schools that have successfully completed both the Seal of Civic Readiness application and a commissioner-created grant application. The grants can be used for a variety of purposes, including hiring teaching or clerical staff, developing community partnerships, providing professional development, and designing curriculum and instruction to implement the Seal of Civic Readiness Program. It is locally sponsored by Assemblyman **William Conrad**. There is no companion bill.

A04136 (Social Media)- This bill establishes a statewide youth mental health and social media campaign to promote public awareness of the impacts of social media usage on mental health. The campaign, led by the Commissioner of Health, Commissioner of Education, Commissioner of Mental Health, and Director of the Office of Information Technology Services, will educate the public on the negative effects of social media, promote awareness of research and resources, and encourage healthy social media behaviors and alternative methods of self-expression. Additionally, the bill requires the incorporation of a social media usage component into the course of instruction for students from kindergarten through 12th grade, covering similar educational topics. It has been in committee since January 2024 and is locally sponsored by **Assemblywoman Monica Wallace**. **Companion Senate bill S07662** has no local sponsor and is also in committee.

Best Practices for Shared Decision Making in Advocacy

When school board members need to make a shared decision about advocating for or against a specific state legislative bill, several best practices can help ensure the process is thorough, transparent, and aligned with the best interests of the school district and community. Here are some key practices:

1. Gather Comprehensive Information

- **Understand the Bill:** Ensure all members fully understand the bill's contents, implications, and potential impact on the school district.
- **Consult Experts:** Seek input from legal counsel, educational experts, or policy analysts who can provide insights into the bill's potential effects.

2. Engage in Open Dialogue

- **Facilitate Open Discussions:** Create an environment where all board members feel comfortable expressing their views, concerns, and questions about the bill.
- **Consider Diverse Perspectives:** Encourage discussion from multiple angles, including potential benefits, risks, and unintended consequences.

3. Consider the Impact on Stakeholders

- **Engage with the Community:** Involve teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders in discussions to gather a wide range of opinions.
- **Evaluate Long-Term Effects:** Consider how the bill will impact the district in the long term, not just immediately.

4. Align with District Goals and Values

- **Consistency with Strategic Plans:** Ensure the decision aligns with the district's strategic goals, mission, and values.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Assess whether advocating for or against the bill aligns with ethical standards and the board's duty to the community.

5. Transparency and Accountability

- **Document the Process:** Keep detailed records of discussions, votes, and the rationale behind the decision.
- **Communicate Publicly:** Clearly communicate the board's decision and reasoning to the public, explaining how it aligns with the district's goals.

6. Legal and Policy Compliance

- **Adhere to Open Meeting Laws:** Ensure all discussions and decisions comply with state open meeting laws and other relevant regulations.
- **Policy Review:** Review and follow any existing board policies on advocacy or political activity.

7. Collaborate with Other Entities

- **Coordinate with Other Districts:** Consider collaborating with other school districts or educational organizations to strengthen the advocacy effort.
- **Leverage Associations:** Utilize resources and guidance from school board associations or other relevant bodies.

8. Develop a Unified Message

- **Craft a Clear Position Statement:** Develop a clear, concise statement that outlines the board's position on the bill.
- **Ensure Consistency:** Make sure all board members and district representatives are consistent in their messaging when communicating with the public or legislators.

9. Plan for Advocacy

- **Determine Advocacy Strategies:** Decide on appropriate advocacy strategies (e.g., lobbying, public statements, meetings with legislators).

Assign Responsibilities: Clearly assign roles and responsibilities for advocacy efforts among board members and staff.

10. Evaluate and Reflect

- **Review the Outcome:** After the legislative process concludes, review the outcome and reflect on the effectiveness of the board's advocacy efforts.
- **Learn from the Experience:** Identify lessons learned to improve future decision-making and advocacy efforts.

By following these best practices, school board members can make informed, thoughtful, and responsible decisions when it comes to advocating for or against state legislative bills.