

News & Notes

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Annual Award Winners Issue

Corinth Principal Named NYS Middle School Principal of the Year

SAANYS has selected Lisa A. Meade, principal at Corinth Middle School, as the 2015 New York State Middle School Principal of the Year. This award is given annually to recognize outstanding middle level principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession.



*Lisa Meade
Corinth*

Meade has also been chosen as the New York State representative for the National Principal of the Year Award sponsored by NASSP. In addition to selecting a National Principal of the Year from all the state finalists, NASSP honors all state principals of the year at the Principal's Institute held each year in Washington, DC. The Institute not only salutes the principalship but also provides a forum for honorees to advocate for education and share best practices and expertise.

Meade has been a member of the Corinth Central School District educational team since 2006 and an administrator at Corinth Middle School since 2012. During this time, Meade has been described as a transformational leader, creating a revitalized educational environment emphasizing collaboration, communication, high expectations, and respect for all.

Meade is noted for leading her team through a myriad of changes and being "on the cutting edge" in using data to raise student achievement and implementing the common core. "Mrs. Meade has caused a dramatic turnaround at the Corinth Middle School," commented special education teacher Terry Hoffman. "After experiencing Mrs. Meade's non-stop energy and highly developed work

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Suffolk Education Leader Honored for Life-Long Contributions

Dr. John Cassese, retired elementary principal from the Sachem Central School District, has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the Irving Schwartz Distinguished Retiree Award.



*John Cassese
Region 1*

Cassese has dedicated his professional life to public education and educational leadership. His steadfast commitment to the profession and this association is legendary among colleagues and the greater educational community on Long Island.

Cassese first served SAANYS as a member of its board of directors representing Long Island. After his retirement from Sachem he served as the association's deputy executive director for a number of years. Since retirement, he continues his work as a regional representative and negotiator for SAANYS and a mentor to all. Commented colleague Susan Goltz, "John is the quintessential mentor. There is little he does not know, but in the rare instance he doesn't, he will find the information for you. It will be

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At the April 2015 Board of Regents Meeting

The Board of Regents convened in Albany on April 13 and 14. In attendance were four new members appointed by the legislature in March, with five-year terms beginning April 1.

The new members are:

- Judith Chin, representing the borough of Queens. Dr. Chin, over the course of a career that spans more than 35 years with the New York City Department of Education was a teacher, principal, executive director of instruction and professional development, regional superintendent, and supervising superintendent.
- Catherine Collins, representing Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, and Wyoming counties. Dr. Collins is trained in vocational technical education and in education administration, and has school administrator experience. She is currently an associate professor at SUNY Empire State College and has two daughters, one of whom is a school administrator.
- Judith Johnson, representing Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester counties. Dr. Johnson served in teaching and leadership positions in seven diverse city and suburban school districts, and has served as superintendent of the Peekskill School District.
- Beverly Ouder Kirk, representing Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, St. Lawrence, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington counties. Regent Ouder Kirk has held positions as a general and special education teacher, as school principal and committee on the handicapped chairperson, and as school superintendent, and district superintendent.

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Regional Highlights



Region 11 Award Winners - Front row: Johanna Siebert, director; Vicki Gouveia, retiree; Karin Vay, Wegmans; Linda Lovejoy, Wegmans. Back row: Tim Cliby, director; Tyger Doell, student scholarship; Andrew Doell, subject of scholarship; Paul Benz, HS administrator.

Scenes from the Recent Google Camp





Executive Viewpoint

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

Seeing the Real Child

This edition of *News & Notes* honors our annual award winners. These individuals have been nominated by their peers and selected by a committee of current and former practitioners from among many qualified candidates.

Thankfully, I have no role in the selection process. It sounds like hard work. I was told by a selection committee member that the committee's decisions were difficult because of the high quality of the applicants. This did not surprise me. It does however stand in stark contrast to the narrative regarding public school educators

put forth by our governor, as well as many charter school advocates.

There is no doubt that the jobs of public school educators are more difficult now than they were in the past. Not only has the public discourse grown louder and more hostile, it also seems more centered on adults, frequently being driven by those with no apparent connection to public education (yes, I'm thinking of Campbell Brown, but there are many others, including a host of hedge fund managers who donate liberally to our governor).

The changed environment goes well beyond the

noise. After the financial meltdown of 2008-09, many teaching and administrative positions were lost and have not come back. A tax cap that limits a district's ability to locally raise money was imposed by the governor and legislature. This serves to increase the importance of state aid, which recently has been conditioned upon dancing to the governor's policy tunes. Mandates from the state and federal governments have poured forth as if educators were flush with time and money—DASA; unaccompanied minors/ELL; the implementation, without a pilot, of the common core learn-

ing standards, along with associated high stakes tests (at least high stakes for educators). We are now on the third iteration of a test-based evaluation system, likewise unpiloted. Perhaps that's why it is evaluation system number three.

After the passage of the state budget this year several lawmakers sent out emails explaining their vote. It was apparent many knew their vote was contentious. Some of the emails unintentionally made it clear that the lawmaker did not understand the content of the education provisions of the budget bill. Some referred to their vote as a compromise, where I see it more as a capitulation. The distance between legislators and teachers and line administrators seems greater than ever.

Despite these difficulties, our award winners, and many others like

them, continue to serve the students in their charge. They serve them regardless of needs or abilities. Educators do not create the environment from which the students arrive. Sometimes the students are challenged by family dysfunction, poverty, special needs, or language barriers, and sometimes not. Regardless, these children are consistently seen as something more than a test score.

When I look at our award winners, I strongly suspect that no matter how far removed from the daily realities of our schools, or how many times they choose to reform education, the legislators will never alter the vision of educators. ■



For information on any SAANYS professional development event, contact Karen Bronson. KBronson@saanys.org

Did you know that SAANYS can help you plan your summer administrative retreat? We have a range of topics and facilitators ready to build a program tailored to the needs of your school or

district. Just check out our new website, click on Professional Learning and then click on PD Your Way. You'll see links to over thirty topics that range from Team Building and Courageous Conversations to Google Docs and School Culture. If you don't see a topic you need, just let us know and we will explore it together. Whether you are looking for a half day workshop or a more extended program, send

me an email (kbronson@saanys.org) or call me here in the Latham office and we will get started.



Speaking of summer, Magellan Foundation was recently awarded a large grant to work in conjunction with our partners at NYSFSA (representing NYC, Yonkers, and Buffalo) to present professional development opportunities to enhance the skill sets of school leaders all across the state. LIFT NY (Leading

Instruction for Today's New York) will focus on Instructional Leadership Institutes on topics such as implementing new standards; building instructional data systems; and recruiting, developing, and retaining effective teachers and principals. Many programs offered with follow-up online support, designed to provide practical information to focus on critical aspects of the current educational landscape in NYS. Although this grant will run through December of 2016, the first of such institutes are already being planned for Rochester, Albany, and Long Island this July, so watch the SAANYS website for further details and more LIFT NY sessions throughout the year. These institutes would be great to attend with administrative or building teams!

The second Idea Swap will happen here at SAANYS on May 13 from 4:30-6:00 pm. Like the first held in February, this is an "un-workshop" in ed-camp mode: designed to be a conversation rather than a presentation. Attendees of the first workshop requested that we devote an entire next one to the complex topic of student use of mobile devices in school, so that's exactly what we are doing! Michele Kelley, communications specialist at Broadalbin Perth CSD, will help facilitate this Swap to explore such questions as the various policies and procedures

that are currently in place, the ways teachers are using mobile devices in instruction, and some of the issues and opportunities that end up on the desk of the building leader. One of the great things about the Swap format, in addition to the opportunity to take away a host of road-tested strategies, is the pure companionship of colleagues who are all facing the same challenges. Our roles can be pretty isolating, and getting out for a couple of hours at the end of a challenging school day to communicate and commiserate is a good thing! We hope to use the Idea Swap format on a regular basis around varied topics in the future. We would be happy to facilitate one in your district or region as well.

This is the last *News & Notes* until the new school year - so that means it's time to start planning your summer reading and well deserved relaxation which is hopefully just around the corner! ■

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CAPITAL UPDATE

At the April 2015 Board of Regents Meeting...

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The new members asked questions and contributed information and perspectives throughout the course of the two-day meeting, signaling their intentions to weigh in on Regents matters in an independent manner.

English Language Learners

At the opening meeting of the full board, information was presented in regard to the 2015-2016 Enacted State Budget. The fiscal item receiving the most discussion was the omission of an allocation to support the provision of educational services to English language learners (ELLs). The State Education Department recommended an allocation of \$14.75 million for this purpose, but no funds were allocated. Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch said, "Instead of this (the provision of services based on the revised Section 154 regulations) being an opportunity, it is turning into a burden – an unfunded mandate." She further intimated that it may be necessary for the board or department to identify possible "efficiencies" to reduce the fiscal impact upon school districts. Regent Betty Rosa also supported the identification of approaches to meet student needs in an efficient manner, but cautioned against signaling any permission to withhold services from students. Regent Roger Tilles pointed out two additional barriers in connection with the provision of services to ELL students, "a dearth of qualified teachers" and fiscal restrictions associated with the property tax cap.

Annual Professional Performance Reviews and SED Capacity

The issue receiving the most overall discussion at the Regents meeting was SED's responsibilities to enact

regulations required under The Education Transformation Act of 2015 – also known as the state budget. Regulations must be issued for:

- Scoring ranges for the weights among category subcomponents
- Parameters for growth for the student performance category
- Parameters for supplemental student performance measures
- Number, frequency, duration, and parameters of observations
- Observation rubrics
- Applicability to principals
- Waivers for districts to allow a student to be taught by an ineffective teacher for two consecutive years

Note: On Monday, April 27, SAANYS met with Acting Commissioner Berlin and other members of the department's leadership team to discuss each of the above items. Also, on May 5, the SAANYS Government Relations Committee met with the acting commissioner, the governor's deputy secretary for education, and with members of the state legislature to "tell their story" about the ramifications of the new APPR system in their respective school districts.

At this Board of Regents meeting, information items were expressly focused upon framing the general charge set for SED and Board of Regents for the promulgation of regulations and procedures; there was no discussion of prospective regulatory language to be adopted. Executive Deputy Commissioner Ken Wagner informed the board that necessary regulations are required to be issued (by emergency action) by June 30; however, the Board of Regents meeting is currently scheduled two weeks earlier, on June 15 and 16. Furthermore, in order to receive their allocated state aid increase, each school district must re-negotiate collective bargaining agreements, and receive SED approval of their new APPR plan by November 15, 2015. In light of SED's limited personnel capacity, Mr. Wagner expects that revised APPR plans will need to be submitted to SED in September. [See April 22 statement from Chancellor Tisch on evaluation time frame at saanys.org.]

Many Regents members expressed upset with the great magnitude of the charge set for them to accomplish within a too limited timeframe. Regent James Cottrell expressed that, "This is confusing and may harm students. Are there other options – this is so complex."

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For more information regarding the SAANYS legislative agenda, the New York State Board of Regents, the Educational Conference Board, or other government relations concerns, contact James Viola, SAANYS director of government relations, at JViola@saanys.org.

Congratulations Retiring Members

Richard Azof
Deborah Bauder
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Flora Cohen
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Nancy Crawford
Joanne Dunkle
Peter Gaffney
Patricia Gangl
Judy Gastwirth-Masone
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NYS Assistant Principal of the Year (NASSP)



Jennifer Drautz, an assistant principal at Maple Avenue Middle School in the Saratoga Springs City School District, has been selected as the 2015 New York State Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year. This award is given annually by SAANYS and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) to an assistant principal who has set the pace, character, and quality of education for the students in his or her school. Nominees are administrators who are committed to students, parents, and the community and have shown exceptional contributions to the educational process.

*Jennifer Drautz
Saratoga Springs*

Nominated by a team of teachers at Maple Avenue, Drautz is recognized for her “impeccable” work ethic, deep connection and working relationship with teachers, and an unwavering commitment to students. Commented Maple Avenue Teacher Tom Reilly: “Because there is a high level of mutual respect between this administrator and her teachers, a climate for growth exists. Ms. Drautz always says, ‘Schools were built for students, the reason why we are all here is to help them grow.’ This simple advice has a way of reminding us all of who we serve every day and why we are teachers.”

During a time of new and multiple state reform initiatives, Drautz has been credited for leading her team through the transitions smoothly and effectively. She is fully engaged in the school’s efforts to shift the curriculum to incorporate further student-centered and hands-on learning, as well as a renewed focus on curriculum mapping and data analysis. During the implementation of the new evaluation system, Drautz again demonstrated her professionalism and commitment to teacher development by sitting with each teacher to explain the framework, its true purpose, and ways that it could be used for growth. “We soon realized that the framework could become a strong ally to help teachers improve instruction,” commented a teacher. ●

NYS Elementary Principal of the Year (NAESP)



Charles Smilinich, principal at Colonial Village Elementary School in the Niagara Wheatfield Central School District, has been selected as the 2015 New York State Elementary Principal of the Year. This award is given annually to a member of SAANYS and NAESP who has set the pace, character, and quality of education for the children in his or her school. Nominees are administrators who are committed to students, parents, and the community and have shown exceptional contributions to the educational process.

*Charles Smilinich
Niagara Wheatfield*

A long time educator of a dozen years, Smilinich has served in his current position at Colonial Village Elementary School since 2011, in which time he has been credited with leading the school out of the significant challenges and troubles that were present upon his arrival at the school, which has a nearly 70 percent family poverty rate. This leader has turned the school around, creating an environment of inclusion, calm, and hope, with the goal that each student will thrive, be successful, and rise to their capabilities. To that end, Smilinich has worked diligently with the staff to implement team-based teaching, and was instrumental in receiving a district-wide counseling grant from the US Department of Education, which enabled the expansion of intervention services for the school. In order to increase morale and pride at Colonial Village, he changed the colors of the school hallways from gray to vibrant colors, encouraged teachers to post student work there, and every morning following his lively daily announcements, the kids chant the school motto “the greatest school in the universe,” which everyone continually strives to live up to.

Commented Superintendent of Schools Lynn Marie Fusco, “Through his persistence, passion, and personal commitment to the students and community, he has transformed the school into a well-managed, community oriented hub of student and family learning. He has created an environment where school pride abounds, and students and teachers feel safe, secure, and valued.” ●

The award winners will be honored for their contributions at an awards ceremony on May 8 at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany, N.Y.

Congratulations 2015

NYS Assistant Principal of the Year (NAESP)



*Michael Plotkin
Croton-Harmon*

Michael Plotkin, assistant principal at Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School in the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District, has been selected as the 2015 New York State Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year by SAANYS and NAESP. This program promotes educational excellence for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade (PreK-8) schooling and calls attention to the fundamental importance of the assistant principal.

Plotkin has served as an educator since 1993 and has been in his current position at Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School since 2007. Recognizing the unique social needs of middle school students, during his first year, Plotkin established a very successful three-pronged approach to changing the culture of the school. He implemented the Olweus Bullying

Prevention Program, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, and a middle school advisory program, for which he wrote the curriculum. Commented Carrie Beja, school counselor at Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School, “His innate understanding of the students’ need for belonging and emotional closeness with both their peers and the adults around them has undoubtedly helped fuel this highly successful program. By also understanding that no child can ever learn unless they feel safe – physically, socially, and emotionally – he has created an environment where all students can flourish and take risks.”

Plotkin is known as a committed and compassionate leader within his school. Commented Principal Barbara Ulm, “Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School is truly a different place today because of the tireless and ongoing work of Michael Plotkin. Thanks to the leadership of Michael Plotkin, the school is a safe and welcoming place where students grow and thrive.”

Noted Superintendent of Schools Edward Fuhrman, “Michael represents the best in our profession. He is a true educational leader who always keeps what’s best for children at the center of his work. Michael is a compassionate leader, a great teammate, and a consummate professional.” ●

K-12 Building Principal of the Year



*Barry Davis
Lyme*

Barry Davis, kindergarten-12 principal of Lyme Central School, a rural school in Jefferson County, has been selected as the recipient for the 2015 K-12 Building Principal of the Year Award. This award was created to recognize the unique characteristics of a K-12 building and the related demands, expectations, and challenges of a principal in this multi-level environment. It is given annually to a SAANYS member who is a successful K-12 principal, a recognized educational leader, and who demonstrates leadership in establishing the pace, character, and mission of the building and demonstrates creativity and resourcefulness in providing comprehensive programs and services for all levels and grades.

Davis, who has been an educator at this small rural K-12 school of 365 students for the past 30 years, has been its leader for the last eight years. He is known for his dedication and community relationship building within the local area. Commented Pat Gibbons, director of pupil services, “He is a champion for all students and has a deep concern for his ‘school family’... Mr. Davis is a strong advocate for our music, art, and theater departments. His personal love for the arts drives his desire to expose our students to opportunities they would not otherwise have.”

In conjunction with the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Davis recently wrote and received a grant to build a high tunnel greenhouse at the school. Not only are the students able to engage in science experiments and participate in growing their own food for use in the cafeteria, but the school was able to donate more than six hundred pounds of produce to the local community food pantry.

Cammy Morrison, interim superintendent of schools, stated “Mr. Davis continues to strive toward his goal of ensuring student, faculty, and district success as a building level administrator. He has a wealth of valuable experiences in the field of education and I believe is most sincere regarding his desire to continuously improve and build upon his aptitude as an educational leader. He genuinely cares for our stakeholders at Lyme, our students, their families, and our staff.” ●

15 Award Winners

NYS High School Principal of the Year (NASSP)



Kimberly Beukema
Johnson City

Kimberly Beukema, principal at Johnson City HS, has been selected as the NYS High School Principal of the Year. This award is given annually to a member of SAANYS who has set the pace, character, and quality of education for the students in his or her school. Nominees are administrators who are committed to students, parents, and the community and have shown exceptional contributions to the educational process.

Despite a steady increase in the community's poverty rate, graduation rates continue to rise due to the dedication of the high school team led by Beukema, who has been principal at the high school for the past four years. Beukema leads her school in the targeted use of data to drive student growth at multiple levels. Data is valued and analyzed to identify and assist students at-risk, to develop action plans for Regents-level success,

and to direct professional learning for teachers.

Commented Superintendent of Schools Mary Kay Frys, "With 67 percent of our students receiving free and reduced lunch, it would be easy for staff to believe that a high school diploma or educational excellence would be out of reach for many. However, this belief is non-negotiable for Ms. Beukema...Each year, she ramps up her targets for graduation and closely monitors her students' progress. This year, Kim has set 90 percent as her target graduation rate. Is it ambitious? Yes. Do I believe she can do it? Absolutely."

Kimberly Beukema fights for her kids. She has been known to pick up students for school and find others clothing and housing – supporting students and families in many ways so that all students have a chance at success. Noted colleague Robert Fauver, "When Ms. Beukema learned of the financial needs of our students ... she arranged for staff outings where the proceeds would benefit students. Fundraisers have been used to buy mattresses for students who slept on the floor and to pay down the dorm payment fee prior to the students receiving their financial aid awards. Ms. Beukema's stubbornness is driven by her passion for each student to succeed." ●

T. Walsh McQuillan Award



John Singleton
Valley Stream

John Singleton, principal of Clear Stream Avenue School in the Valley Stream Union Free School District 30, has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the T. Walsh McQuillan Award. T. Walsh McQuillan served the children and educational leaders of New York State throughout his life. He was the first person to serve in joint capacity as executive secretary to the predecessors of SAANYS and was an outstanding contributor to elementary education throughout his career. This award is given annually to a SAANYS member and administrator who has strong leadership skills and has made exceptional contributions to elementary education.

The principal of this culturally diverse elementary school since 2010, and an educator since 1996, Singleton has strived to foster a culture of inclusiveness and provide unique opportunities

to the students at Clear Stream Avenue School. Through his leadership and participation in the Courageous Conversations program, he developed a partnership with a "sister" school in South Africa. Discussions between the schools have opened up via teleconferencing and have given the students the ability to have real-time discussions on race and social justice.

As the leader of a multicultural school serving families representing 49 countries, Singleton has worked to provide a welcoming environment based on respect and acceptance, believing that feeling welcomed as part of the school community is the pathway to success. To that end, he participates in the Long Island Consortium of Excellence and Equity that meets monthly to discuss and share ways of including the school's culturally diverse community into the educational process.

Commented Nicholas Stirling, superintendent of schools, "In a world where there is social unrest, police brutality, school violence, and family dysfunction, someone has to ask the question 'what about the children?' John Singleton asks that question and reminds us that we are here to educate the whole child. Thus, he continually leads on developing social and emotional programs as well as resources to support our students." ●

James E. Allen Award



Anedda Trautman
Tonawanda

Anedda Trautman, high school principal of the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center (NCTEC) in Orleans/Niagara BOCES, has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the James E. Allen Award. James E. Allen, a pillar of educational leadership who served as commissioner of education in New York State, was known for his strong support of secondary school administrators. This award is given annually to a SAANYS member who is a secondary school administrator, supervisor, or coordinator who has given significant contributions to education and leadership at the secondary school level and service to the community and professional organizations including SAANYS.

A long time educator, Trautman has been affiliated with the Niagara Career and Technical Education Center since 2001, first as an instructor, then as assistant principal, and ultimately as principal since 2011.

Well known as an innovative and forward thinking leader, Trautman has worked diligently to bring new ideas and initiatives to the school, increasing academic rigor and career readiness. In particular she has developed partnerships and collaborations with local industry leaders through the Tech Centers that Work program, the Craft Advisory Committee, as well as an annual "bug out" contest where automotive students work to debug a car within a certain time frame, this is held in conjunction with the Niagara Frontier Automobile Dealers Association at the Buffalo Auto Show. Additionally, she has hosted a "thank you reception" at the school for industry advisory committee members, showcasing the students' work and providing an opportunity for students to receive internships and summer employment opportunities.

As noted by colleague, Jennifer Braun, "Mrs. Trautman's vision for the future of our school is limitless. Her student-centered approach to learning and insistence upon academic rigor are just two of the many components contributing to the success at NCTEC. She includes students, parents/guardians, faculty, constituent school districts, and industry into her vision for NCTEC, which are critical to the creation of a true 21st century learning community."

Commented Dr. Clark J. Godshall, district superintendent, "Her efforts have contributed to this BOCES' career and technical education programs and our enrollment being the third largest amongst the other 37 BOCES in New York State. Her tireless efforts and positive role modeling have strengthened our relationship with the 13 component districts and continue to distinguish her leadership locally and across New York State." ●

Outstanding Educator Award



Edward Kilmartin
East Greenbush

Edward Kilmartin, assistant principal at Columbia High School in the East Greenbush Central School District, has been selected for the 2015 Outstanding Educator Award. This award is given annually to a SAANYS member who has made outstanding contributions in New York State schools through public education, professional organizations, or research and/or writing in the field of education.

Assistant principal of this high school since 2008, Kilmartin has worked diligently on several initiatives to improve opportunities for Columbia High School students. He was instrumental in implementing the Operation Graduation program that reaches out to at-risk students and offers them diverse options toward completing graduation requirements, including extensive online learning and credit recovery courses.

This program has graduated 80 students since 2011. He also played an important role in developing a Distance Learning program at Columbia, which provides unique learning opportunities for many students.

Additionally, Kilmartin has been the driving force behind increasing Columbia High School's STEM offerings and bringing technology into the classroom by organizing an annual Technology Forum for teachers. As noted by Shay Harrison, board of education president, "His work on the Technology Committee, as one of the driving forces and organizers of the annual summer Technology Forum, and as the administrative lead for the Operation Graduation program has been exceptional... Ed has been a champion, advocate, and tireless supporter of the program since its inception." Harrison also acknowledges Kilmartin's work in the East Greenbush community through the Education Foundation board, which provides financial support to children who reside in the district for summer enrichment programs, as well as providing approximately 20 endowed student achievement awards.

Commented Lawrence Edson, Jr., assistant superintendent for school business finance, "Mr. Kilmartin always displays an optimistic attitude with administrators, teachers, students, and parents. He consistently looks out for the best interest of his students and develops a rapport with them to gain their trust and respect." ●

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Congratulations 2015 Award Winners

continued from page 5

Leadership and Support Award



Diane E. Lang
Orange-Ulster
BOCES

Diane E. Lang, director of instructional support services at Orange-Ulster BOCES, has been selected as the 2015 recipient of the Leadership and Support Award. The SAANYS Leadership and Support Award was established to recognize the outstanding leadership efforts of those members whose responsibilities require leadership through support services to educators and students across and between buildings and districts.

Lang is a long time educator of nearly 30 years and has been a leader in the Orange-Ulster BOCES administrative team serving eighteen school districts for the past three. Lang "has created and developed an instructional support services division that is not only highly effective, but also admired and recognized around New York State," commented Theresa Reynolds, assistant

superintendent for instruction. A well published and prolific writer, as well as a sought after presenter, Lang has written and secured numerous large scale grants and has lead several initiatives including the design and implementation of a Mandarin Chinese distant learning program that is continually growing and currently has nine school districts and 319 students participating.

Lang is also well known as a mentor among colleagues. Carol Bartik, principal of Greenwood Lake Elementary School noted, "As I transitioned from my position as an assistant principal to principal, Diane supported me. She coached and nourished me with professional ideas and strategies as well as emotional support." Added Theresa Reynolds, "A great leader is interested in and focused on developing the skills and knowledge of every person involved in the educational endeavor. Dr. Lang not only has this sweeping and genuine philosophy, but she also has the ability to develop and nurture relationships with fellow administrators in order to help them promote the highest level of student and educator learning and achievement." ●

Corinth Principal Named NYS Middle School Principal of the Year...

continued from page 1

ethic, staff members want to be a part of a team that is moving quickly in a positive direction."

Part of the revitalized environment at Corinth comes from Meade's steadfast dedication to teachers and professional learning and development. Faculty meetings are no longer staff meetings, but mini learning sessions where teachers are expected to share and learn from one another. Always learning herself, Meade has also brought the growing national trend of makerspaces to Corinth – a place for students to get hands on with STEM concepts and experiments.

Meade is committed to enhancing learning opportunities beyond the school walls as well. An advocate for leadership development and collegial sharing, Meade has lead popular book studies for her colleagues and has published and presented on the successes that Corinth has experienced with its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program. In addition, she is a regular columnist for SAANYS' *Vanguard* magazine and worked with colleagues to bring EdCampUNY to upstate New York educators.

Said Corinth Superintendent of Schools Daniel Starr, "I am blessed to have her in this district, but the community is even more so."

Meade received her bachelor of arts degree from the College of New Rochelle, her masters degree from Vermont College of Norwich University, and did advanced studies in school and district administration at SUNY Plattsburgh. ●

Friend of Education Award



Scott Spino
Foundation
Rochester

Geri and Jerry Spino of the Scott Spino Foundation have been selected as the recipients of the 2015 Friend of Education Award. This award is given to an individual, group, or organization that has consistently contributed to the support and advancement of outstanding public education and the students of New York State.

The Scott Spino Foundation was founded by parents Geri and Jerry Spino in memory of their son and Rochester City School District teacher, Scott Spino, who was killed at the age of 28 by a drunk driver in 2004. Commented Association of Supervisors and Administrators of Rochester Executive Director Tim Wagner, "How do you go on after losing a son in such a manner? From day one, the Spino's took the positive road. First they came to the school and spent the first days

consoling students. The students were devastated, but the presence of the Spino's was one of the most powerful scenes I have ever witnessed. No crisis team could have been so effective."

The Spino's are dedicated and community minded supporters of public education, continuing their son's passionate commitment to the success of each of his students and "living a life that matters." In the more than ten years since Scott's tragic death, the Foundation has awarded 29 scholarships, given 12,000 new coats, 16,000 new hats, 16,000 new pairs of gloves, and 30,000 new books, investing approximately \$340,000 into the greater Rochester area.

The Scott Spino Literacy Program is currently active in 22 Rochester schools. The more than 200 volunteers spend time reading one-on-one with early elementary students. Each month, the volunteers purchase one or two books to read with their students, after which each student is able to keep the book as their own.

Understanding the great needs of many of the students, the foundation annually distributes new hats, gloves, scarves, and coats, as well as a new book to more than 2,000 children in the Rochester City School District each holiday season through the Scott Spino Warm Program. ●

Suffolk Education Leader Honored for Life-Long Contributions...

continued from page 1

at your doorstep before you can reflect that you had asked him for it in the first place. It matters little that you are a student or parent, a teacher or a fellow administrator. He is a wonderfully generous fellow, who inspires us to educate, exemplifies the word "service," and continues to be one of the most ardent teachers."

Cassese has embraced his retirement years as enthusiastically as he approached his earlier career days. He has held many interim administrator assignments, including working as an assistant principal and summer school principal at Westhampton Beach Learning Center, a Western Suffolk BOCES school facility serving severely handicapped students. He has also formed the company Legacy Plus – its divisions involve everything from the development of teacher in-service programs for Dowling College to managing theatrical services for performance artists. A musical artist himself, Cassese performs weekly at Casa Basso in Westhampton. He is also a board member for the Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts.

"John has demonstrated throughout his career a remarkable ability to build relationships, to touch people personally, to inspire, and to lead," said Thomas Payton, principal of Roanoke Elementary School. "I can think of no individual more deserving of the SAANYS Irving Schwartz Distinguished Retiree Award than Dr. John Casesse."

Irving Schwartz was a founding member of SAANYS. This award is given annually to a retired SAANYS member who, in retirement, has made significant contributions to the welfare of the association, education, and the greater community. ●

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David Berliner

We live in a time when the very foundation of public education is at risk. Come and hear David Berliner, nationally acclaimed author of *50 Myths and Lies That Threaten America's Public Schools*, share his controversial but powerful ideas about "the grand myth that America's public schools do poorly compared to other countries" and other "myths" including the value of standardized testing and increased "rigor." His keynote address promises to be a timely and thought provoking experience!

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2015 CALENDAR



MAY

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

May 3-9 Teacher Appreciation Week

May 3-10 National Music Week

May 4-8 School Nutrition Employee Week

May 4 Horace Mann's Birthday

May 5 National Teacher Day

May 6 National School Nurse Day

May 8 VE Day

May 10-16 Food Allergy Awareness Week

May 10 Mother's Day

May 17-23 National Educational Bosses Week

May 23-25 Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)

May 25 Memorial Day



JUNE

Great Outdoors Month

June 5 World Environment Day

June 12 Anne Frank's Birthday

June 14 Flag Day

June 15 Magna Carta Day

June 21 Father's Day

June 21 First Day of Summer



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At the April 2015 Board of Regents Meeting...

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Regent Collins pointed out, "This is a monumental task" and expressed concern about the timeline in light of department capacity. Building on timeline concerns, Regent Johnson said, "...these are important policies that affect children – two months is not enough." Regents Lester Young and Johnson spoke of the need to consult with experts in psychometrics and personnel evaluation; to which the senior deputy commissioner responded that \$1 million was appropriated in legislation for this purpose, but two months is not enough time to access the funds and implement the consultation.

Regent Charles Bendit asked, "What happens between June 30 (the due date to promulgate regulations) and November 15 (the date when the new APPR system is required to be implemented in school districts)?" Vice Chancellor Anthony Bottar responded, "Last time, the department was virtually shut down to meet a similar review requirement, by January." Senior Deputy Commissioner Wagner indicated that the department plans to identify "process efficiencies," but Acting Commissioner Elizabeth Berlin interjected, "Last time we had Race to the Top funds to support the reviews, which we do not have this time." Chancellor Tisch said that she is concerned about the timeline: "The department has capacity issues, and districts do too." Perhaps Regent Tilles best summed up the actions to be taken by SED by pointing out the need to establish the new system based upon research and best practices. He pointed out that SED acted in a hasty manner in establishing the current APPR system due to Race to the Top application timelines, and advised against acting too hastily again. Finally, in depicting what is expected to be SED's course of action, he said, "We are willing to work to make it (the APPR system) as good as we can get it; but that doesn't mean that what we will get done will be good."

Sentiments such as those in the above two paragraphs permeated much of the Regents meeting.

NYSED Leadership

Deputy Commissioner Cosimo Tangorra, Jr., who joined the State Education Department in July of 2014, will assume the position of school superintendent of the Niskayuna School District, located in Schenectady, New York, on June 2, 2015. His resignation from the State Education Department will be effective sometime in May, and his participation at the May meeting of the Board of Regents is uncertain.

For more information about the Board of Regents meeting or the provisions of the Education Transformation Act of 2015, contact James Viola, director of government relations at JViola@saanys.org and watch saanys.org for updates. Any educators or interested citizens wishing to comment upon the new regulations regarding the new APPR system may do so by writing directly to the State Education Department at eval2015@nysed.gov.

APPR: What Can be Learned From Other States?

Sponsor Opinion piece by Cynthia E. Gallagher, APPR Coordinator, Educational Vistas, Inc.

So here we go again, with hastily developed policies and regulations to implement a revised but still contentious teacher and principal evaluation system. Reengineering a three component evaluation system to two will be challenging and require substantial revisions to district APPR plans. This is not a welcomed task, but it does present an opportunity to reflect on district needs. Rubrics and processes that were not working, and may not be the right fit for the new requirements should be abandoned and replaced with comprehensive, powerful, and integrated systems that support this complex work.

The choice of rubrics will be more important than ever and is a good starting point for revising APPR plans. The construction of approved rubrics and how each one captures the work of teachers is essential. As we know now, the new APPR requirements prohibit the use of lesson plans, artifacts, and portfolios as components of the composite score. However, the use of such items as evidence within domains may be possible, depending upon how rubrics are constructed. Another consideration should be the management of the rubric itself. With the mandated use of external evaluators and optional use of peer reviews, the consistent and manageable use of rubrics becomes more important than ever. Districts have been frustrated with their prior choices and this may be an opportune time to make a change.

The second area that will be equally taxing is SLOs. Districts may need to consider a more structured SLO approval process to ensure that SLOs across grade levels and courses are comparable. There has been a great deal of variability in SLO target setting, and a balanced approval process may be beneficial. Also, as student participation in state assessments becomes less stable, group and school wide SLOs may be worthy of serious consideration.

Regardless of how APPR plans are revised, it is clear that districts need a comprehensive APPR system to manage teacher and principal evaluations. An ideal solution must be able to handle each component of APPR, provide districts easy access to multiple years of data, store evidence with the actual observations, allow staff to develop SLOs in an integrated way, and synch with multiple data sources. Adoption of a new product should efficiently support this complex work - not complicate it further. ■

The statements and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily imply or reflect the opinion or philosophy of the School Administrators Association of New York State.

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