

# News & Notes

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www.saanys.org

## Annual Award Winners Issue

### Capital Region BOCES NERIC Educator Honored for Leader in Digital Education

Michael Sylofski, managing program coordinator — e-learning services for the Capital Region BOCES North-eastern Regional Information Center (NERIC), has been selected as the first recipient of the SAANYS Leader in Digital Education Award. This award recognizes a SAANYS member who has demonstrated exceptional, creative leadership in harnessing the potential of technology to further teaching and student achievement. The candidate will have demonstrated excellent organizational and communication skills in supporting and promoting such innovative digital practices for his/her learning community.



*Michael Sylofski*  
BOCES NERIC

Known as a leader in implementing e-learning opportunities, Sylofski and his team developed a successful regional interactive video distance learning program for high school students. This program has grown into its own virtual “mini high school” and serves more than 2,500 participating students from 69 organizations with 150 daily courses. The program is considered a national model and was highlighted by Cisco Systems in 2014 as a case study for its Education Industry Solutions YouTube channel.

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### West Genesee Director is SAANYS' Outstanding Educator

William Davern, director of fine arts for the West Genesee Central School District, has been selected for the 2017 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.



*William Davern*  
West Genesee CSD

Well known as an energetic and passionate leader for the arts, Davern led the curriculum redesign and growth of the music, visual arts, and dance programs for West Genesee's 3,500 fine arts students. Specifically, Davern worked tirelessly to revitalize the West Genesee music program that had been experiencing declining enrollment. Through his efforts, the program has since rebounded and now serves 30 percent more students within the district. A testament to his passion, this past spring he had the privilege to lead a 630 member alumni marching band in the town's annual Memorial Day parade, for which many past students traveled from across the country to participate! Commented Camillus Middle School Principal

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### LEGAL BRIEFS

### Contract Negotiation Tips

Every year, SAANYS assists members in collective bargaining for as many as 60 to 100 contracts. This article addresses some of the critical steps needed to ensure you receive an excellent contract that you well deserve. Also, SAANYS provides some important information about negotiations that will help local units during the process.

Preparation is critical to negotiating an excellent deal. Each spring, bargaining units that have their contracts expire a year out, should start preparing for negotiations. We recognize it may be hectic after the spring break to organize a negotiating team for the following year, however, it is important to select the negotiating team then. Generally speaking, select members to serve on the negotiating team who are respected and/or well-liked by district administration. SAANYS recommends an odd number to serve on the negotiating team, most typically three people serve, because these members must vote eventually to take an offer back to the rest of the unit. It is also important to select particular types of people for the negotiating team. One type of person is a long-tenured administrator who is conversant with the history of the bargaining unit. Another type of person to select is a “numbers” person, though understand SAANYS provides those services, which include costing out each party's proposal, analyzing and interpreting comparable salaries, and determining the district's ability to pay. Another type of person is the note taker who will clearly record the events of every bargaining session.

Once the negotiating team is set, the team should notify SAANYS requesting assistance with collective bargaining. The negotiating team also should send

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*See page 8 for more information*

### Q&A With:

**MARYELLEN ELIA**  
NEW YORK STATE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION  
AND PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE  
OF NEW YORK





## Executive Viewpoint

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

# What is Our Responsibility on Mental Health?

In the recent past, SAANYS sent out a brief, unscientific survey to some of its members in order to attempt to identify issues deserving of priority attention. We were uncertain whether the results would provide any real clarity, as our membership is diverse in any number of ways, and I for one expected responses all over the board. I was wrong.

One question asked if you were given \$50,000 (a completely random figure) tomorrow to use in your building or district for any purpose, what would it be? About 70 percent of the responses (responses were

free form; no checklist of options was provided) identified a need for mental health services, increased school psychologist staffing, and other forms of student support services. That was an eye opener for me.

I don't know if there are increased numbers of students who could use mental health services compared to ten or twenty or thirty years ago, or if we are getting better at identifying mental health issues and that there may be a declining stigma associated with needing such services. I suspect there are in fact more people suffering from mental health issues today, but I

would be the first to admit that this suspicion is not based upon any data, but rather a gut instinct. Perhaps more importantly, I have no idea why this might be the case.

Shortly after receiving the aforementioned survey results, I was at a meeting of the Educational Conference Board (ECB), a board made up of the major educational advocacy groups in New York State. Its members, in addition to SAANYS, include NYSUT (teachers), NYSSBA (school boards), NYSCOSS (school superintendents), NYSASBO (business officials), NYSPTA and the Conference of the Big 5 school districts. Near the conclusion of the meeting, the executive director of NYSSBA, Tim Kremer, shared that his association was organizing a one day symposium addressing what he called "the growing mental health crisis among students," and solicited assistance from any organization that was

willing to assist. Thinking of our own survey results, I volunteered SAANYS on the spot. We are cooperating in hosting this day-long summit on May 20 in Latham (Albany County) entitled, "Your Role in Addressing the Growing Mental Health Crisis Among Students." (See saanys.org for details.) Several other organizations are also cooperating, but this symposium which includes, among others, SED, the Mental Health Association of New York State, and mental health experts from the University at Albany, SUNY has been driven by Tim Kremer at NYSSBA. Both Tim and NYSSBA deserve kudos for creating a venue to focus on an issue that many recognize exists, but few know how to deal with. I sincerely hope you will consider attending.

After that ECB meeting and having no connection to it at all, on March 30 the *Albany Times Union* reported on a survey

conducted by SUNY of 19,000 of its students. The survey showed that 49 percent of them self-identified as having an anxiety disorder, 36 percent self-identified as having depression, and 26 percent self-identified as having another major mental health disorder. SUNY acknowledged they were having trouble keeping up with the demand for mental health services.

Those that responded to the SUNY survey mostly came from your school districts. It seems unlikely to me that their needs first developed at college. With awareness comes a duty to act. I believe there is a need for identification of mental health issues and interdiction at a much younger age. I know this will cost money. Let's not get caught up in what those services might cost. Instead, we might consider the cost of failing to act. ■

## 2017 CBT – Reflections From the Field

Sponsor Opinion Piece by Scott B. Crowder, CEO, Educational Vistas, Inc.

As more schools move from paper-based (PBT) assessment administration to computer-based (CBT) test delivery, some important feedback, information, and recommendations are being gathered during this "operational" year. The goal of the NYSED is to be completely (where appropriate) computer-based for the ELA and math grades 3-8 by the year 2020. Recently, the commissioner has stated that this may not be a hard and fast date for the statewide adoption of CBT. We do find that goal is still referenced online within their current guiding documents.

Let's start with a review of the use of the Questar Assessment, Inc.'s Nextera™ test delivery system. Local administrators are assigned as either District Test Coordinators (DTC) or School/Site Test Coordinators (STC) and manage the entire process at the district/school level for all sessions. This is the "heavy-lifting" aspect of CBT. The more that a district spreads the work of "programming" or configuring the system over additional personnel, the faster and easier it is to prepare for each testing period. Overall, administrators that we have spoken with about this year's process were pleased or even very pleased with the software and requirements. However, it helped if the district participated in the field testing of CBT last year.

If district technology specialists set the web browsers up for kiosk mode and the computers, operating systems, and internet band-width requirements were met, then most schools had little to no problems this year. Nonetheless, there were some issues with secure sessions locking-up or "freezing" while the student was taking the test. In most cases these were short-term episodes that resolved quickly. In worst-case scenarios the computers were rebooted and the proctor pin number was reentered and the session continued with no loss of student work and responses. The auto-upload every 60 seconds to the server was very reassuring to staff. The identification of students who opted-out of the entire assessment or one or more sessions could be made more efficient by allowing the STC to choose the complete test, not each session individually.

It was very interesting to talk with teachers about the migration to CBT and to get their thoughts about the future of testing in NYS. They spoke with one voice to us and proclaimed loudly: "There is no way that we are going back to paper testing - ever!" ■

*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.*

## Congratulations Retiring Members

Valerie Angelillo  
Thomas Antis  
Frances Bennett  
Thomas Bowen  
Christine Brady  
Susan Brady  
Cynthia Bullis  
William Clayton  
Sharon Comerford  
John Corregedor

Mary Costagliola  
Cynthia Crandall  
Janet G. Elman  
Sarah Everts  
Deborah Finamore-Flint  
Evelyn Fiske  
Phyllis Flaherty  
Susan Gage  
Donna Gaynor  
Miriam Goodman

Charles Goodykoontz  
Maureen Gushlaw  
Timothy Hayes  
Dave Hazer  
Lisa Hibner  
Lawrence Hinman  
Larry Jenne  
Laney Johnson

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## News & Notes

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# CAPITAL UPDATE

## Summary of the April Board of Regents Meeting

The April meeting of the Board of Regents filled two, very full days of meetings and presentations. The following provides a summary on some agenda items that may be of particular interest to school leaders. Scan the QR code for a full review of the Regent items.



### ESSA State Plan

An important issue for the board was the ongoing discussion on the ESSA State Plan. Each month the board has focused on one area of the State Plan. This month's discussion was on the overall strategy for identifying low performing schools. This discussion follows the completion of the most recent round of regional meetings and the one-day intensive retreat at Mercy College. The goal of the discussion was to provide a policy framework for the identification of the lowest performing schools. A critical part of the discussion was the selection of indicators to identify low performance for accountability purposes. The Regents have discussed the concept of using tiers of indicators. Tier 1 would be required ESSA indicators. Tier 2 indicators would be used to inform continuous improvement and would be available across all districts and schools. Tier 3 indicators would include measures that the state would make available, and districts could choose to use to improve learning and teaching. Tier 4 would include indicators that schools and districts could adopt for their own purposes. However, individual indicator placement in one tier or another did not always equate with the level of importance that members of the board felt should be given to the indicator. For example, much discussion by the board focused on the importance of civic readiness and measures of parent/community involvement. Each of those measures was very important to the board, but are placed in Tier 3 due to the type of indicator they are according to ESSA. Scott Marion from

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## WHY?

### The Transition to Superintendency Program

this summer - four full days

Moving from principal or central office administration to the superintendency is a reward, a challenge, and a risk. There is a knowledge base, a skill set, and a values base to the superintendency. This position has a steep learning curve, but some of that curve can be overcome prior to entering the superintendency. A high degree of preparation correlates with a high degree of success.

The four-day *Transition to Superintendency Program* is for principals and central office administrations who:

- Are newly interested in the superintendency and want to understand what is needed to transition
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716-672-5473 [jmerrins@cecomet.net](mailto:jmerrins@cecomet.net)

the Center for Assessment used an interesting framework for the Regents to use to guide decisions regarding the selection of indicators. The key questions that should guide decisions regarding indicators can be found below.

- Is this indicator required (federal or state)?
- To what degree can school personnel control changes in this indicator?
- Is this an outcome, input, or process?
- If schools improve on this indicator, what other downstream improvements should we see?
- What are the potential (unintended) negative consequences associated with using this indicator?
- Does this indicator add new information to the system?
- Does the indicator have sufficient technical and policy properties to differentiate among schools and be comparable, disaggregated student groups, avoid corruptible, and provide quality data?

**Discussion points that school leaders may find particularly important are:**

- The graduation rate indicator in Tier 1 is likely to include 4, 5, and 6 year rates, weighted equally.
- Chronic absenteeism may be used, instead of attendance. An attendance indicator does not provide sufficient differentiation between schools. Most districts have relatively high attendance rates and differentiation between schools and districts within those high percentages does not do a sufficient job in separating school performance or quality.
- The board is considering the use of a Seal of Biliteracy to identify schools successfully meeting the needs of students who read and speak multiple languages.
- Several indicators in Tier 3 received much attention. Measures of student integration and measures of parent/community involvement and engagement emerged as very important to the board members. Some of the discussion stemmed from a report by the UCLA Civil Rights Project (2014) that identified New York State schools as the most segregated in the nation. Deep concern and possible interventions were discussed, one of which relates to the identification of an indicator used for accountability purposes.

Profile/Decision Rules Example--Elementary						
School	Achieve	Progress	Growth	Absent	ELP	Overall
PS 1	4	4	4	4	4	Level 4
PS 2	3	3	3	3	3	Level 3
PS 3	2	2	2	2	2	Level 2
PS 4	1	1	1	1	1	Level 1
PS 5	1	2	4	2	3	Level 1/2?
PS 6	3	1	2	2	3	Level 2/3?
PS 7	2	4	3	2	4	Level 2/3?

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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 Cynthia Gallagher, SAANYS director of government relations, at [CGallagher@saanys.org](mailto:CGallagher@saanys.org).

A set of the indicators that was discussed may be found by scanning the QR code.



The next decision point discussed was the best model to use for identifying low performing schools using the selected indicators. The board reached consensus on a model that identifies levels of performance, rather than weighting indicators and assigning a numerical average. The model selected would identify Title I schools with very low achievement levels, followed by a performance using growth indicators, and other indicators selected for use (perhaps five high priority indicators). The various assigned levels would result in an overall rating level that captures school performance across the included variables.

Next steps for the ESSA State Plan will be unfolding quickly, as a draft will be submitted for discussion at the May meeting.

This article continues on [saanys.org](http://saanys.org) and includes discussion of English Language Learners. ■

## Congratulations Retiring Members

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Cynthia C. Keeling  
Susan Knors  
William G. Krupp  
Debra Lidowsky  
Julie Linton  
James Lipuma  
Adel Luciano  
Glen Maisch  
Phyllis McGill  
Annie Metcalf  
Andrea Miller  
Victor Owen  
M Dawne Owens  
Roy N. Paisley  
Barbara J. Partell  
Charles Pheta  
James Polewczak  
Margaret Porter  
Lori Saland  
Mario Scarano  
Thomas M. Schiener  
Jacqueline Sinatra  
Genna Suraci  
Frederick Thornley  
Anthony Tolbert  
Daymon Yizar ■

## NYS Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year



*Nicole Ey  
Port Jervis CSD*

Nicole Ey, assistant principal at Anna S. Kuhl (ASK) Elementary School in the Port Jervis City School District, has been selected as the 2017 NYS Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year by SAANYS and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). 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.

An administrator in a school facing challenges due to a merger within the district, as well as frequent staff turnover, Ey is credited with leading the effort to turn around the morale at the school by strengthening communication among

all stakeholders and implementing a positivity and character program called "Doing Things the Right Way." Commented parent Tanya Duryea, "The climate of ASK and the sense of community was indeed healthy and allowed my girls to thrive. I know the sense of community, trust, and excitement was a direct result of [Ey's] positive strategies. She certainly made an extraordinary difference in the lives of so many children in Port Jervis."

Needing to address overcrowding at the school, Ey also spearheaded the revitalization of a little used (and often neglected) courtyard space into a vibrant outdoor learning classroom. She secured a grant from Lowes, and spent a summer organizing community volunteers and other donations. The space has become a popular venue for regular instruction and special events.

Superintendent of Schools Thomas Bongiovi remarked, "I have been in education for 29 years and have had the honor of working and collaborating with some of the finest professionals in New York State. I can say without hesitation that Nicole Ey is one of the top educators that I have ever had the pleasure of working with." 🍌

## NYS Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year



*Thomas Kachadurian  
South Colonie CSD*

Thomas Kachadurian, an associate principal at Colonie Central High School in the South Colonie Central School District, has been selected as the 2017 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.

Nominated by a team of teachers, students, and parents from Colonie Central HS, Kachadurian is known as a dedicated leader with limitless energy, empowering both students and staff to embody a culture of caring and commitment to the greater school community. Parent and

PTSA president Stephanie Cogan noted, "He constantly brims with ideas/solutions/innovations. He thinks and plans big, and is absolutely positive that plans (and dreams) will come true." Along those lines, Kachadurian embarked on an effort to return the high school culture to a place of "Raider pride" where all students and staff share ownership and responsibility for their shared community.

To that end, Kachadurian created Raiderfest, an all day event focused on celebrating community and raising charitable funds; and developed the iCARE program at the high school. iCARE is a unique character education program standing for integrity, community, accountability, respect, and empathy. Kachadurian notes that iCARE was designed to "give voice to the voiceless, and empower the marginalized and disenfranchised." A hallmark of this program is allowing the students to lead. As noted by elementary principal, Jill Penn "Each step of the way, Tom Kachadurian was there, a silent leader and tireless champion of what it means to be a person of character who never stopped encouraging the students to try and take their vision of iCARE to the next level." 🍌

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## Congratulations 2017

## NYS Elementary Principal of the Year



*Jeremy Rich  
Central Valley CSD*

Jeremy Rich, principal at Barringer Road Elementary School in the Central Valley Central School District, has been selected as the 2017 New York State Elementary Principal of the Year by SAANYS and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). 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.

An educator for many years, Rich has served the Central Valley CSD as a teacher or principal for more than two decades. Former principal of the now closed Remington Elementary School, Rich helped facilitate the successful merger of the Mohawk and Ilion school districts. Rich then became principal of the Barringer Road Elementary School, which was originally set up as a pre-k through 4 building. Just a few years after that change, it is now serving grades 2 through 4 for the entire district. Throughout this time of uncertainty for the school, Rich was known as a leader who created a culture of "encouragement, modeling, being involved, staying positive, finding solutions, being creative, working hard, and persevering when life gets tough, which then translates to profoundly impacting students to have the ambition, know how, and drive to create a better tomorrow."

As part of his efforts for advancing a positive climate in the building, Rich, teachers, and the PTO implemented a character education program for the students called "Barringer Road Shining Stars," as well as a "Buddy Bench" on the playground, so that no student need feel alone. In addition to recognizing students, Rich shares a daily story centered around a positive character trait, and ends each morning announcement with "make it a great day." The staff also looks forward to his daily "Inspiration Morning Coffee" email, which has now grown to a district-wide distribution. As noted in the numerous letters of support while speaking about the students and the character program, a colleague wrote, "Transforming them into people with empathy, generosity, patience, kindness, respect, responsibility, and all around integrity could not happen without the leadership of a man who also displays these character traits on a daily basis."

Believing that "Awards are a collection of efforts," Rich noted that, "The Barringer Road staff is an amazing, thoughtful, hardworking, committed, and caring group of teachers that have dedicated their lives to the teaching profession and the many hats that we all wear to help students find success. I am part of that team." 🍌

## Irving Schwartz Distinguished Retiree



*Thomas Long  
Cazenovia CSD  
(retired)*

Thomas Long, retired high school principal from the Cazenovia Central School District, has been selected as the 2017 recipient of the Irving Schwartz Distinguished Retiree Award.

Embracing retirement as an opportunity for continued community service, Long has worked tirelessly to serve SAANYS and numerous other community organizations, all with an eye toward benefitting education. Commented colleague Frederick Kirsch, "Tom Long is a distinguished educator and effective SAANYS leader. Respected by teachers, parents, and students, Tom was an impeccable instructional leader. In retirement, Tom spent many years advocating for SAANYS members."

He is active as a board member for the Cazenovia Area Community Development Association, and successfully lobbied to add a high school representative to the board of directors, becoming "an impactful program for both the participating students and for the development of our board" as noted by Executive Director Lauren Lines. He is also a current member of the Lions Club Foundation, which has helped to raise nearly \$10,000 to help the Cazenovia CSD implement an anti-bullying campaign known nationally as Rachel's Challenge. Commented fellow member of the Lions Club Nick Kagey, "For all Tom does for his community, the one characteristic that stands out to me most of all is that he serves with great humility. Others are drawn to service because of the humility that is omnipresent in everything he does. Tom leads by example."

Commented Cazenovia CSD Superintendent Matthew Reilly, "Tom Long has given me the model for my eventual retirement. He has continued to help students and others in his community. He selflessly shares his time and wisdom with others as he relentlessly strives to make the world a better place." 🍌

# 17 Award Winners

## NYS Middle School Principal of the Year



*Mary Beth Fierro*  
Oswego CSD

Mary Beth Fierro, principal at Oswego Middle School in the Oswego City School District, has been selected as the 2017 New York State Middle School Principal of the Year SAANYS and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). 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.

A long-time educator of more than 30 years, Fierro has served in her current position as principal of Oswego Middle School for the last 6 years. During that time, she has worked diligently to lift up the school from SINI (School in Need of Improvement) status from the State Education Department to a

flourishing school with a shared vision for all students and staff. Commented Superintendent of Schools Dean Goewey, "Although I have known Mrs. Fierro for over 40 years, my observations of her as our middle school principal have distinguished her in my mind as an agent of change for her school. She took the reins of a school in accountability status and has brought it to a high performing school. Her commitment to excellence for all students is evident in her leadership and love of her school."

Well known as a mentor to fellow teachers and administrators in the district, Fierro has also implemented several mentor programs for students at the middle school. In her first year there, she introduced the Mentor-Scholar program where at-risk students are paired with a mentor from the SUNY Oswego School of Education working one-on-one with their mentee twice per week after school. For two years, the school was also able to offer a Mentor STEM program centered on forensics and robotics, which provided supplemental programming to highly interested students. Additionally, in an effort to reach students struggling with learning in a traditional classroom setting, Fierro implemented a PLATO (Standards Based Online Learning Program) Learning Lab. Nominated by a team of teachers, they noted, "These are only a small portion of Mary Beth's actions as a leader that have made her school a great place to work and educate students."

Commented Minetto Elementary School Principal Julie Kimmel-Gorman, "I am always amazed by the devotion Mary Beth has to the Oswego Middle School and the surrounding community. She treats every student like they were her own. She honestly wants what is best for each and every one of them. The best part is, she will go the extra mile to make it happen." 🍌

## Leadership and Support



*Christopher McGinley*  
Williamsville CSD

Dr. Christopher McGinley, instructional specialist for k-12 mathematics at Williamsville Central School District, has been selected as the 2017 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.

A dedicated educational administrator, McGinley is known as a trusted leader in the community and a tireless advocate for all. Believing that "communities are the backbones of our society and that our educational community is not just comprised of the one in which we work," he routinely invites educators from local colleges and from outside the district to professional develop-

ment opportunities. Some of these have included regional math conferences; Common Core math institutes; a support group centered around implementation of standards, best practices, and assessment; as well as recurring parent math nights. Dodge Elementary School Principal Charles Smilnich commented, "Dr. McGinley is one of those rare educational leaders who truly understands the holistic nature of the k-12 educational system and how to support fellow administrators – both within and among school districts."

McGinley was also recognized by the US Congress in 2006 for outstanding and invaluable service to education, advises NYSED in the area of mathematics, curriculum, and assessment by serving on the commissioner's Content Advisory Panels, and has formed his own advisory group in Western NY. Commented colleague Eileen K. Ryan, "Dr. McGinley is highly regarded as a steadfast advocate for educators. It is little wonder that literally hundreds of teachers volunteer to work on teams and committees led by Dr. McGinley."

Noted in a joint letter by Superintendent of Schools Anthony J. Panella and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology Ryan Schoenfeld from the neighboring Amherst CSD that "the handful of examples shared in [their] letter only scratches the surface of the contributions that Dr. McGinley has made to the field of education." 🍌

## NYS High School Principal of the Year & NASSP NYS Principal of the Year



*Thomas Hall*  
Brighton CSD

SAANYS has selected Dr. Thomas Hall, principal at Brighton High School, as the New York State High School Principal of the Year. The 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.

Hall will also represent New York as the NASSP NYS Principal of the Year as sponsored by SAANYS' national affiliate, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (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.

Hall's nomination was supported by teachers, students, community members, and fellow administrators, all noting his commitment to school climate, student supports, and teacher growth. In the past four years under Dr. Hall's leadership June graduation rates have increased from 86.4 percent to 96 percent and notably, June graduation rates for special education students rose to 88 percent, the highest special education graduation rate in Monroe County. This is not by happenstance, but rather a result of Hall's creation of support and monitoring teams put in place to offer targeted interventions to students. "He never loses sight of the individual child," commented fellow administrator Robert Thomas.

"When a school is lucky enough to have a principal with Dr. Hall's passion, ingenuity, intelligence, and genuine kindness, its students are prepared to achieve greatness," said student leaders Ally Thayer and Matthew Lipschitz. "Dr. Hall feels as though he succeeds when his students succeed; however, we feel it is time for him to receive recognition solely as a reflection of him."

"Never can I recall feeling as though an honor was more deservedly or accurately being awarded," said Brighton Superintendent Dr. Kevin McGowan. "Dr. Tom Hall is an outstanding leader. He is an even better person." 🍌

## K-12 Building Principal Award



*Sheelarani Webster*  
Rochester CSD

Sheelarani Webster, kindergarten-12 principal of the World of Inquiry School #58 in the Rochester City School District, has been selected as the recipient of the 2017 SAANYS K-12 Building Principal Award.

The K-12 Building Principal 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.

Webster has been the principal at the World of Inquiry School since 2010 but has deep roots in its unique learning environment, starting there as a teacher over 20 years ago. The school began as a K-6 school and has grown out into a K-12 using the EL Education approach since 2002. The growth was purposeful, using EL to "put the inquiry back into World of Inquiry." The school is focused on the values of tenacity, inquiry, compassion, self-discipline, and integrity and Webster is known for her empowerment of teacher leadership and trust to make this vision a reality for the entire school community.

"We have a school work plan that outlines what a rigorous approach for education looks like at our school and Sheila is tenacious about analyzing data that provide evidence as to whether or not the plan is being implemented with fidelity," commented teachers in a letter of support. "The fact that we have almost 100 percent retention... and a graduation rate of 90 percent in a district where the graduation rate averages [46 percent] is strong evidence that her approach is working." The school also boasts a 100 percent college acceptance rate for its graduates.

Webster has won the hearts of her students along the way. "Mrs. Webster is making Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream come true because she is loving, caring, and respectful," said a student. "She never gives up on us and she believes in all of us and our school." 🍌

*The award winners were honored for their contributions at an awards ceremony on May 5.*

# LEGAL BRIEFS

A Message From  
the SAANYS  
Legal Department



## Contract Negotiation Tips

*continued from page 1*

out a survey to unit members seeking information on proposals.

Over the summer, a SAANYS attorney and/or labor relations specialist will meet with the negotiating team and review the relevant data noted above. For example, SAANYS can perform an intra-district analysis that carefully reviews the salary and other benefits provided to central office administrators, teachers, and other school employers to determine district trends in salary raises over the past few years and what, if any givebacks employees/units have made. One argument we often hear is that teacher step/increment is not considered “new money.” Don’t be fooled! Each step is indeed new money as is shown by the increase each year in the district’s budget line for teachers’ salaries. In addition, SAANYS can perform an inter-district analysis of the compensation and other terms and conditions for similarly situated administrators working in comparable school districts, usually in the same county. Recently, SAANYS has enhanced its data bases to include

quicker access to SED’s database regarding BEDS data and TRS’s pension reports, the latter of which reveals how many teachers earn less than, the same, or more than administrators in the same district. This type of data provides compelling arguments to justify raises at the bargaining table. Finally, SAANYS keeps abreast of the United States Department of Labor economic reports, such as Personal Consumption Expenditure Price Index and the Consumer Price Index, to reasonably predict economic forecasts.

Once all the data is analyzed and discussed, the bargaining team should formulate proposals aided by the survey information. Again, SAANYS can assist by drafting the proposals in proper form. Prioritize your proposals. The most important aspect of preparing proposals is costing them out. Note if the unit’s proposals will cost a school district an unrealistic amount of money, like seven percent, the unit will lose legitimacy at the bargaining table. Costing out the proposals is critically important.

At the bargaining table, the negotiating team must have a complete financial picture of the employer and a good awareness of the contracts of similarly situated administrative units in the area. The team must be prepared to explain the rationale for each of its proposals. During negotiations, remember there will be give and take moments and the proposals may change during actual bargaining. An important tip is that the unit negotiating team may accept or reject in whole or in part each of the district’s proposals. As a result, it is critical that the designated note taker for the negotiating team meticulously record the events and statements/beliefs related to the parties’ proposals and the subsequently agreed upon terms. These notes become critical years later, when disputes arise over the meaning of specific contract language. Unfortunately, by that time, the negotiating team members are long retired. In fact, SAANYS is currently prosecuting a number of arbitrations where contract negotiation notes will play a significant role. To avoid problems with retrieval of collective bargaining notes, SAANYS has started to electronically store negotiations notes. To that end, when you have completed negotiations for a successor contract, please provide SAANYS a copy of your new contract and the official notes recorded during collective bargaining. In this way, we can better serve the union in the years to come.

A final point about negotiations relates to the applicability of retroactivity of salary increases. Over the past year, several contract settlements were temporarily delayed because of misunderstandings over who is entitled to retroactive salary increases. By law, retroactive salary increases are a mandatory topic. SAANYS takes the negotiating position that we will not negotiate any new/successor collective bargaining agreement that does not include retroactive increases for members who were already hired and working for the district prior to the contract expiring or for those members who retired after the contract expired but before the new contract was settled. However, problems arise with members who were hired after the contract expired but before the new contract was negotiated as to their rights, if any, to salary increases. Issues also occur with former unit members who leave the school district for employment elsewhere before the new contract is negotiated and demand salary increases for the period of time they worked in district before leaving.

As in the former group, the law is that newly hired unit members negotiate their starting salary with management without the unit input. Accordingly, if the contract expired on June 30, 2015, a person was hired on July 1, 2015 and subsequently a new contract was negotiated granting union members a 2.5 percent raise on July

1, 2015 for the 2015-16 school year, the new person is not legally entitled to a raise since their salary was set by their own individual negotiations. In one school district recently, a business official verbally told new hires that they may receive an additional raise depending on collective bargaining. Unfortunately, without a written agreement to substantiate the business official’s oral promise, such alleged representation is unenforceable. However, if the new contract continued to be unsettled until January 2017, then that same new hiree would be entitled to the negotiated raise for following school year, the 2016-17 school year, but not the 2015-16 school year, his/her first year of employment in the district.

As to the group of unit members who leave the school district for employment elsewhere, school districts almost always resist giving retroactive salary increases for these members. The often heard rationale from school districts is why would we give money to individuals who have left our district for employment elsewhere. However, although rare, a Long Island negotiating team was successful in negotiating retroactive annual salary increases (but not sizable longevity increases) for members who left the district for work in other school districts. Their efforts in gaining this increase reinforces a SAANYS’ guiding principle that you will never get anything you do not ask for. ■

## Contract Settlements

NOTICE: Please send copies of your unit’s settlements in the event that SAANYS did not negotiate the contract. This information is important and is helpful to fellow SAANYS members.

### Plainview-Old Bethpage Administrators Association, Region 2

The Plainview-Old Bethpage Administrators and Supervisors Association negotiated a four-year successor contract that aimed to retain the administrative personnel, who had been consistently leaving the school district for employment elsewhere. The negotiating team was comprised of Unit President Jim Murray, Maria Carnesi, Suzanne Gray, Ronelle Hershkowitz (since retired), Laurie Lynn-Chaps, and Tom Schwartz. The group was assisted by SAANYS General Counsel Art Scheuermann.

In the face of the negotiating team’s arguments about administrators leaving for higher paying jobs, the district agreed to pay annual salary increases retroactive to July 1, 2015 and then each July 1 thereafter of 2.6 percent, 2.8 percent, 3 percent, and then 2.8 percent. Retroactive salary increases covered administrators who retired from the school district as well as those who left the district for jobs in other school districts. In addition, the team successfully restructured longevity as follows: At the beginning of the 5th year of service: \$3,000, after 8 years of service \$6,000, after 10 years of service \$9,000, and after 15 years of service, \$12,000. Longevity shall be continuous but not cumulative. The district also agreed to increase its per member contribution to the Welfare Trust by \$200 on July 1, 2015, and by \$50 per year for each year of the contract. Also, the negotiating team memorialized into the CBA its

past practice relating to bereavement leave. The only give back was a modification of the health insurance buyback from 50 percent of the applicable plan to 50 percent of the cost of the individual health insurance plan.

### Hewlett-Woodmere Administrative and Supervisory Association, Region 2

The Hewlett-Woodmere Administrative and Supervisory Association (HWASA) negotiated a new five-year successor collective bargaining contract lead by Ted Fulton, Liz Murray, Kevin Bayen, Colin Thompson, Al Bauer, Lynne Einberg, and Ginette Orlando. The negotiating team was assisted by SAANYS General Counsel Art Scheuermann and Labor Relations Specialist Frank McDermott. HWASA is a diverse unit comprised of principals, directors, assistant principals, psychologists, guidance counselors, department chairpersons, assistant directors, deans, social workers, P-12 chairpersons, and summer school principal and assistant principals. Some of the titles’ compensation is tied to the teachers’ salary schedule with an additional administrative stipend.

Due to salary compression for members on the various administrators’ salary schedules, the negotiating teams restructured the current six-step salary schedule, but preserved the step schedule for any member still not on top step. Retroactive salary increases in year one of 2 percent, and 1.5 percent (years 2-5) were negotiated for the current schedule for those members still on the step schedule.

For current members on top step or who reach top step during the duration of the CBA, they shall receive a 2 percent annual increase each year thereafter. Also, most stipends were increased by 2 percent a year as well. The unit also memorialized a past practice

stipend for the athletic director. For new members, the team negotiated new minimum starting salaries. Once hired, in subsequent years, the new hires will receive 2 percent per year for the duration of the contract. Department chairpersons, grade level supervisors, guidance counselors and psychologists will continue to receive annual increase and step as stated in the teachers’ salary schedule plus an annual 2 percent increase to their administrative stipend. Social workers salary schedule was increased by 2 percent per year plus an additional \$1,000 payment to base salary after the annual 2 percent increase is calculated for anyone at step 15. In addition, every member’s salary and most unit stipends were increased by \$1,500 on July 1, 2016 after the annual increase. Further longevity payments were increased

*continued on page 7*

# Congratulations 2017 Award Winners

## Friend of Education



Kim McCluski  
Pittsford

Kim McCluski has been selected as the recipient of the 2017 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.

A highly respected supporter of public education through her long-standing membership on the Pittsford Board of Education, McCluski has also served as president on the Monroe County School Boards Association and the Nazareth College Board.

Honored with the PTA Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996 by the Pittsford District PTSA for her leadership and the many program improvements she instituted at the district level since joining the organization in 1988, PTSA Co-President Elizabeth Nortén noted, "Kim is an innovative thinker, always looking for creative ways to solve the complex issues facing school districts today."

Together with the Pasley family, who had originally established the event, and honoring the memories of her son, Ryan and the Pasley's daughter, Katie, McCluski helps facilitate the annual Rainbow Classic Basketball Games between the district's two high schools for both varsity boys and girls. This event raises money for Golisano Children's Hospital where Katie and Ryan were treated. Over the past 16 years, they have donated close to \$500,000 in Pittsford School's name, all while teaching the students there the importance of volunteering, giving back to the community, community service, and compassion. Said McCluski, "It has been a wonderful way for me to use my grief towards uniting our schools and community with the hospital."

## West Genesee Director Honored

continued from page 1

Beth Anne Lozier, "The pure force of his nature and energy for his work are just that visible to all of us who have the privilege to work with him. Bill's outstanding leadership is rooted in his passion for excellence, razor-like focus on our district's vision, combined with a collaborative approach."

Under his direction, the Wildcat Marching Band captured an unprecedented twelve consecutive NYS Field Band Conference National Class State Championship titles, were three-time Grand National Finalists, as well as the 1990 Class AA National Champions. Additionally, many of the district's ensembles have received numerous Gold and Gold with Distinction ratings from NYSSMA.

Davern is recognized as a leader among his peers, taking numerous leadership roles within the West Genesee Administrators Association. Davern was also recognized as Citizen of the Year by the local Camillus Chamber of Commerce, was the first recipient of the Syracuse Area Music Awards for Lifetime Achievement in Music Education, and was inducted into the NY Field Band Conference Hall of Fame.

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## Capital Region BOCES NERIC Educator Honored

continued from page 1

Commented NERIC Director Dale Breault, "Mike's leadership has led to the creation of a system where any student, no matter where they go to school, can have access to a diverse and high quality curriculum taught by our region's best teachers."

Sylofski and his team were also instrumental in the growth of the Model Schools program, which now includes 44 districts across ten counties in northeastern New York. Noted Sylofski, "This program is geared towards helping teachers integrate the use of technology tools and resources to impact student learning." He continued, "and is having a meaningful impact in participating schools by supporting technology integration professional development, assisting districts with local technology planning, creating a regional community to share best practices in technology integration, and introducing new technology resources into schools including robotics, coding, makerspaces, and virtual learning environments."

In addition to these programs, Sylofski also serves on the board for the NYS Association for Computers and Technologies in Education (NYSCATE), currently as president-elect; and was a member of NYSED's Instructional Technology Plan Work Group.

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AXA commissioned this study to quantify the value a financial advisor brings to 403(b) plan participants' retirement goals. The study was conducted by deKadt Market Research. Respondents to the survey were drawn from 19 providers, including Fidelity, MetLife, AXA, Prudential, Voya, Nationwide, Lincoln, VALIC and TIAA-CREF. Fewer than 9% of the more than 1,000 respondents were AXA clients. (01/2015)

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## Contract Settlements

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by a lump sum effective July 1, 2015 and then multiplied by 2 percent per year for the remainder of the contract. In exchange, the unit agreed to a 2.5 percent increase in health insurance starting July 1, 2016, bringing the employee contribution to 76.5 percent. A retirement incentive was also discontinued.

## Lynbrook Administrators and Supervisors Association, Region 2

The Lynbrook Administrators and Supervisors Association negotiated a successor collective bargaining agreement led by a team comprised of Joe Rainis, Sean Fallon, Thom Graham, Theresa Macchia, and Joe Pallotta. The negotiating team was assisted by SAA-NYS General Counsel Art Scheuermann. The association's contract is unique in that the unit currently enjoys a 20 step salary schedule, a rarity for administrator bargaining units. Also, the association's contract provides administrators with additional compensation for working evening and weekend school events. With that said, we turn to the terms of the new contract.

The salary schedule is built on a step worth 1.75 percent increase per year. The unit negotiated annual increases of .75 percent for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years and 1 percent increase to the schedule in the 2018-19 school year. In addition, the unit negotiated a new \$1,000 tenure stipend. After several years without longevity, the association also reintroduced a 20 year longevity of \$5,000. The amount of compensation for evening and weekend supplemental pay increases each year: 2016-17 \$95 per event, 2017-18 \$100 per event, and 2018-19 \$105 per event. Finally, the group negotiated a \$1,200 increase to their sick leave payout upon retirement, which money is deposited tax free into an IRC Section 403(b) plan. In exchange, the unit agreed to modest increases to employee cost sharing for health insurance coverage of 1 percent in 2017-18 (individual 17 percent and family 20 percent) and an additional 1 percent increase for individual coverage in 2018-19 to 18 percent.

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*Cooperstown*

A message from a  
 SAANYS corporate  
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The implementation and adoption of truly active learning approaches is top of mind with educators, and yet there is no clear path as to how technology can make the implementation easy, adoption more rapid, and what specific actions lead to incredible educational achievements. Recent research initiated by SMART Technologies studied insights from schools around the world, exploring what needs to be done to ensure technology helps achieve the successful student outcomes educators look for.

The research confirms that student success is enhanced when classroom technology is paired with pedagogical best practices. In fact, educators are 342 percent more likely to achieve outstanding success when using teaching best practices and technology frequently.

**Additionally:**

- Certain types of technologies support student and teacher outcomes significantly better than other types of technologies.
- The use and frequency of teaching and learning best practices makes a difference in technology rich classrooms.
- The research showed software is more closely related to success as compared to hardware and devices. More specifically, when software, such as whole class collaborative software was used daily or for most lessons for student co-creation, respondents achieved positive success.
- Concerns of technology being a distraction are most prevalent with less experienced educators and increases as students age.

To discover how technology can enable the success we all want for our students, read the full report at:  
<http://go.smarttech.com/ttlresearchfullreport>. ■

## Featured Speakers:



### DR. LUELLE BROWN & TEAM THE ITHACA STORY

When the superintendent is tweeting articles on “Why Music and Art are Key to Engaging Students” and “Why Kids Shouldn’t Sit Still in Class,” you know that something different is going on. This is the Ithaca story – the story of how one dynamic and determined superintendent brought a school community together to not only drastically raise achievement but to change what it means to work together as a team to heighten student outcomes in every way.

SAANYS is excited to welcome Ithaca’s Luvelle Brown, the 2017 New York State Superintendent of the Year, to the SAANYS Annual Conference. Brown will be joined by members of his administrative team as they talk about the district’s shift in organizational culture that has led to a 64 percent reduction in discipline referrals, a 58 percent increase in enrollment in co-curricular programs, and a graduation rate that has skyrocketed from 78 percent to above 90 percent. Educators and young people in Ithaca are transforming teaching and learning practices, realigning priorities, engaging the community, and overcoming situational constraints resulting in these dramatic achievement gains.

A former teacher, coach, principal, and school chief information officer, Brown has received various awards and recognition for his leadership. He was honored by the National School Boards Association as a “20-to-Watch” and received the Center for Digital Education Top 30 Award. In 2014, he received the eSchool News Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award. He was also selected by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the nation’s top 100 innovative superintendents. Join us and be inspired by The Ithaca Story.

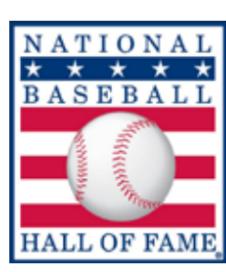


### Q&A With: MARYELLEN ELIA NYS COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION AND PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

MaryEllen Elia is the New York State Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York. In this role, she oversees the work of more than 700 school districts with 3.2 million students; 7,000 libraries; 900 museums; and 52 professions encompassing more than 850,000 licensees. A native New Yorker, Ms. Elia has 45 years of experience as an educator. Prior to her appointment in New York, she served as superintendent of schools in Hillsborough County, FL, for 10 years. In Hillsborough, which includes Tampa and is the nation’s eighth largest school district, she successfully implemented higher learning standards, partnered with teachers to develop a comprehensive evaluation system, and earned national recognition for gains in student achievement.

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*Register online at [saanys.org](http://saanys.org)*

## Contract Settlements

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### Kingston Administrators Association, Region 5

The Kingston Administrators Association informally negotiated a new contract led by Vince DeCicco, Julie Linton, Stacia Felicello, and Andy Sheber, with assistance from SAANYS General Counsel Art Scheuermann. The new deal shows continued growth in salaries and with modest concessions. Kingston administrators’ salary increases are comprised of annual increases, range movement, credit hours, and longevity. In each year of the contract (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2019) administrators’ salaries shall increase 2.5 percent per year. Under range movement, every member shall receive \$1,400

range movement each year computed before the annual increase, except that four members shall receive an additional \$1,100 for only the 2016-17 school year. Longevity milestones also were increased as follows: after 5 years – \$1,500 (incr. \$450), after 10 years – \$2,000 (incr. \$550), after 15 years – \$3,000 (\$800), and after 20 years \$3,800 (\$600). In addition, the sick leave payout upon retirement increased by \$5 per day per year up to a cap of 220 days starting at \$95 per day for 2016-17 school year, or \$20,900, which money is deposited tax free into an IRC 403(b) account for the retiring employee. In exchange, the association agreed to increase employee cost sharing for health insurance from the current rate of 13 percent to 14 percent on July 1, 2017, and 15 percent on July 1, 2018. ■