November Meeting of the Board of Regents

A Report from Cindy Gallagher, SAANYS Director of Government Relations

The Board of Regents met in November with items for discussions ranging from the results of pilot projects on school climate to new processes for the review of capital projects. A few highlights from the meeting are as follows:

Promoting Healthy Schools

This presentation highlighted pilot projects from the Buffalo and Schenectady City School Districts that implemented initiatives to improve school climate. The discussion focused on the importance of school climate, restorative practices in schools, and implicit bias. A few of the practices to improve school climate that the districts implemented included:

- Establishing mental and physical health clinics.
- Saturday academies.
- Creation of mindfulness rooms.
- Establishing trauma sensitive schools through designated and trained teams, accompanied by comprehensive training throughout the district.

Shifting mindsets to view disruptive behaviors, not so much as incidences requiring interventions, but rather diagnostic opportunities.

District results include significant reductions in disciplinary events and improved academic results. The chart (see page 3) was presented to frame a discussion on restorative practices.

Moving toward restorative justice practices was undertaken with an understanding that current practices were not providing desired results for students. Data presented to reinforce this predisposition included:

- Youth with disciplinary suspensions are three times more likely to drop out of school.
- Youth with a first arrest are two times more likely to drop out of school.
- Youth with a first arrest and a court appearance are four times more likely to drop out of school.
- Youth with juvenile court involvement are seven times more likely to have adult criminal records (Sweeten 2006).

The concluding part of the presentation focused on the need for students to gain increased social and emotional competencies. In districts where instruction included skill development in these areas, students had an eleven percent point gain in academic performance. For every one point increase on a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) scale in kindergarten, students were:

- two times more likely to attain a college degree (presumably after completing grades above kindergarten) and
- 54 percent more likely to earn a high school diploma and 46 percent more likely to have a full time position by age 25.

More information on this presentation can be found by scanning the QR code on the right.

Certification

Another item that may be of interest was the proposed regulations regarding transitional certificates. The proposed regulations would:

- Allow candidates employed under a pre-professional certificate to complete the student teaching program requirement in Section 52.21 of the Regulations while continuing to be employed by that district.

SAANYS – YOUR VOICE, YOUR SOURCE, YOUR ASSOCIATION

Vol. XLVI No. 9 • December 2017

Announcing Personal Finance Webinars Series

Financial Fridays

Grab your lunch and join us the first Friday of each month at noon for Financial Fridays with AXA. These short 30 minute online sessions are meant to offer tips and ideas for securing your personal financial success.

Each Friday centers around a new topic. See page 5 for more details.

• Your Family, Your Future - Jan 5
• Basics of Taxes - Feb 2
• Pension Maximization – Mar 2
• Student Loan Forgiveness – Apr 13
• Social Security, Medicare, Long-Term Planning - May 4
• Planning for College - Jun 1

Why Do You Love Public Education Photo Contest

The School Superintendents Association announces the 2017 Love Public Education Photo Contest. Suggested themes for the submissions are success stories in public schools, equity in education, and the future of public education. Contestants are invited to capture an inspirational moment and submit it for the chance to win up to $1,000.

The winning contestants will be notified on or about January 15, 2018. More information on this contest can be found at: http://www.sscoss.org

SAANYS Annual Awards

Application Deadline: January 2, 2018
see page 6 for more details

For additional information contact: Susan Jaronski, sjaronski@saanys.org

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**Executive Viewpoint**

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

Commissioner Richard Mills

Former Commissioner of Education Richard Mills died unexpectedly on November 1, 2017 while hiking in the Adirondack Mountains. He served as commissioner of education for New York State from 1995 to 2009. The commissioner of education is responsible for all education in New York State. Additionally, the commissioner regulates professions, libraries, museums, and public broadcasting. The breadth of responsibilities is both impressive and daunting, and it is hard to imagine persevering for fourteen years in that stress and responsibility-filled position.

A commissioner of education is hired by, and reports to, a seventeen-member Board of Regents. Members of the Board of Regents are elected by members of the state legislature as a whole, (given the distribution of seats between the parties, this process can in effect give the selection of members of the Board of Regents to assembly democrats, as long as they are a block) which adds to the inherently political nature of the position. Politics is also present in that the State Education Department, while having some independence of governance, is dependent upon the state and federal governments for its funding.

Commissioner Mills is probably best known for his implementation of standards-based reform, which was a source of some controversy. That reform was not limited to students, as standards applicable to teachers and school leaders also increased under his watch. He also helped close the achievement gap and increase high school graduation rates.

I never worked for Commissioner Mills and I can’t say I knew him well, but we did have a few interactions that made an impression upon me. Shortly after I first became executive director of SAANYS in June of 2006, his office called to invite me to a one-on-one “get to know you” meeting. I confess that this temporarily inflated my sense of self-importance, until the reality of the world later deflated it. I can remember

Review & Response to 2018 NYS ELA Testing Design

At the moment just about everyone is aware of the State’s decision to move from three to two days of ELA and math testing this school year. This is not a surprising move due to the upheaval of implementing Common Core and related assessment without adequate time and assistance.

My focus is on the ELA design. While the reduction in testing time is welcomed by most, it does bring with it certain challenges. First of all, here is a depiction of the new ELA design for 2018.

In 2017, NYS ELA testing grades 3 and 4 had 31 MC items (six of which were field tested) and seven SR items, plus two ER items. Grades 5 through 8 had 42 items, plus two ER items. I should note that in grades 4 through 8 of any of the ER items required a response to paired passages. How this will play out in 2018 is unclear with only a single ER.

What is clear in the new ELA testing design is that writing tasks will focus on three passages which will require a deep reading understanding of the texts and command of textual evidence to support inferential questions. In addition, SR items should require no more than three sentences in a student’s responses. Scoring state assessments to date shows that students do not need to respond in complete sentences and that an SR prompt only calls for an inference and two (2) supportive details from a text. And, of course, the response is to be written in complete sentences.

Finally, an extended-response item means precisely that. Extended-response items mean that students to demonstrate their ability to write a coherent essay using textual evidence to support their answer. What is clear in the new ELA testing design is that writing tasks will focus on three passages which will require a deep reading understanding of the texts and command of textual evidence to support inferential questions. In addition, SR items should require no more than three sentences in a student’s responses. Scoring state assessments to date shows that students do not need to respond in complete sentences and that an SR prompt only calls for an inference and two (2) supportive details from a text. And, of course, the response is to be written in complete sentences.

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The New York State My Brother’s Keeper Community Network reached a significant milestone and now includes more than 20 member communities, State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia announced. The program recently added connections with Poughkeepsie and East Ramapo, the 20th and 21st communities to join the growing initiative to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.

“Reaching more than 20 My Brother’s Keeper communities is a substantial milestone,” said Board of Regents Chancellor Betty A. Rosa. “It’s a testament to the important work being done to bring greater equity and opportunity to New York’s students, particularly students of color. Poughkeepsie and East Ramapo are welcome additions to our MBK network.”

To join the MBK Community Network, a community formally accepts an invitation from the Board of Regents and makes a commitment to support the national MBK milestones and the six New York State MBK goals. Upon becoming a member of the statewide network, a community gains the support of NYSED’s Office of Access, Equity and Community Engagement Services to help build a community initiative and develop a local MBK action plan.

The MBK communities, as well as other school districts, use grants awarded by NYSED to implement programs and strategies to help boys and young men of color succeed. For example, the Buffalo School District used the MBK Challenge grant to start a summer internship program allowing students to earn a stipend while working on developing professional skills. In Hudson, the Family and Community Engagement Program (FCEP) grant helps to fund a mentoring program that teaches middle school students discipline, perseverance, and structure while focusing on academic improvement and career exploration.

In 2015, the New York State Board of Regents convened a Blue Ribbon Committee consisting of state, regional and national experts including practitioners representing education Pre K-20, community based organizations, youth development, health, elected officials, and state-wide professional organizations. The committee was charged with examining the educational challenges and opportunities boys and young men of color face on a daily basis and to recommend strategies to address the challenges and expand opportunities to increase their educational successes. SAANYS is proud to be represented on this committee by Executive Director Kevin Casey.
SAANYS is the official state affiliate to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and their annual awards programs.

SAANYS/NAESP Assistant Principal Award
The NASSP National Assistant Principal of the Year program annually recognizes outstanding middle level and high school assistant principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students. These assistant principals are acknowledged by their peers for the exemplary contributions they have made to the profession. From these state winners, three finalists are named as contenders for the National Assistant Principal of the Year Award. The NASSP National Assistant Principal of the Year is selected from among the finalists.

SAANYS/NAESP Elementary School Principal Award
This award is given annually to a SAANYS/NAESP member who has distinguished herself/himself as an elementary school principal.

SAANYS/NAESP Middle School Principal Award
This award is given annually to a SAANYS/NAESP/ member who has distinguished herself/himself as a middle school principal.

SAANYS/NAESP Principal of the Year Award
The NASSP National Principal of the Year program recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. NASSP honors all State Principals of the Year at the Principal’s Institute held each year in Washington, D.C. From these state winners, three finalists are named as contenders for the National Principal of the Year Award. The NASSP National Principal of the Year is selected from among the finalists. Candidates must have served as a principal at one or more middle level or high schools for three or more consecutive school years. Middle level and high schools are defined as those containing some portion of grades 6 through 12.

Application Deadline: January 2, 2018

For additional information contact Susan Jaronski at: sjaronski@saanys.org.
Recently we held our first “Lessons Learned” session here at SAANYS. The idea, to bring seasoned administrators together with newer colleagues to share hard earned wisdom, came originally from Gene Gordon and our Region 6 retirees. They were looking for a way to reach out to colleagues still in the trenches to share perspectives on the kinds of thorny issues that many of us encounter during the course of our years as school leaders.

I would facilitate a panel discussion which would include Gene, Bonnie Tryon, Peter Griffin, Bruce Ballan, Ed Balaban, and Barbara Goldsmith. We began by meeting months ago to plan the program. We decided that we would each contribute a ‘classic’ kind of scenario that despite the advances in technology and all of the changes and demands that school leaders face now, still persists: How do you handle negative factions among faculty that try to undermine good work? What if you and your superintendent or board disagree on tenure recommendations? What if you are a new administrator drowning in paperwork and stuck in innumerable meetings that keep you away from the things that matter most? Sharing the lessons learned regarding leadership, relationships (we have to say it three times: relationships, relationships, relationships…) and navigating dicey challenges that demand reasoned and thoughtful responses would be the focus of our workshop.

We held it at a convenient time after school from 4:30-6:00pm, served some nice refreshments, and focused on true conversational interaction between participants and panel members, rather than a ‘sit and get’ format. It is precisely that sparkly interaction that made this event such a success. We were able to focus on two scenarios chosen by the attendees (“Faculty Factions” and “Never Enough Time”). The time flew and everyone left with new comments:

Everyone agreed that this was time well spent. Here are some comments:

“Networking with current and former administrators was great. Having access to the wealth of knowledge and experience on the panel was awesome! The best part was practical advice and feeling that I am not alone!”

“Being a principal can be a lonely world. I liked hearing that I am not alone as I come across difficult situations. It was great hearing from experienced leaders.”

“The format encouraged good dialogue about best practices.”

“We could have used more time – it flew!”

Thank you to our panel members and participants who made this event such a success.

We are planning a second “Lessons Learned” session in March, learn more at saanys.org.

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Thinking About Retirement

Around the holidays, many of us have the opportunity to spend more time with family and loved ones. In the case of SAANYS members, these opportunities frequently lead to thoughts of retirement and spending even more time with those we care about. It is in this atmosphere that we frequently receive a host of questions regarding the retirement process.

In addition to any private retirement savings, SAANYS members, as public employees, are generally part of either the New York State Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or New York State Employee Retirement System (ERS). Most often, instructional titles will be in TRS while all others, such as Civil Service titles, will be in ERS.

To be eligible for retirement depends upon the system you are in. Both systems use tiers, based on years of service. To find out penalty, Tier 6 members must retire at age 62 or older with any amount of service, or at age 55 or older with at least 30 years of service. For TRS members in Tier 5 retiring without penalty involves retirement at age 62 or older, or at age 55 with 30 years of service. ERS Tiers 1-5 may retire either at age 62 or older with any amount of service, or at age 55 or older with at least 30 years of service. For TRS members in Tier 5 retiring without penalty involves retirement at age 62 or older, or at age 55 with 30 years of service. Finally, to avoid penalty, Tier 6 members must retire at age 63 or older, with 30 years of service. To find out your individual tier you can ask your employer’s personnel department, your applicable retirement system, or the SAANYS Legal Department. After finding out if you are eligible to retire in either system, the next step when contemplating your retirement decision is to look at your individual or unit contract and see if there are any retirement incentives or due dates for when to give notice of retirement. Many contracts have incentives or penalties for giving notice at a certain date.

How the retirement systems calculate your pension is then calculated off of a general formula using your final average salary. For ERS Tiers 1-5, this final average salary is based upon average wages for the past three years of employment. For Tier 6, it is based off of average wages from the past five years of employment. The following types of wages count as final average salary in the eyes of ERS: contractual salary, holiday pay, longevity, overtime, and vacation pay with certain exceptions. Note, Tier 6 members are not permitted to count vacation days as wages. With sick days, they may be counted as salary if your employer has chosen to offer the optional sick leave benefit as provided by Section 41(j) of the New York Retirement and Social Security law. All other forms of compensation do not count for retirement purposes. This includes retirement bonuses, health insurance buybacks, and salary raises of more than 10 percent during the final average salary time period.

For TRS members, a similar system exists for calculating final average salary. For members in Tiers 1-5, retired prior to April 1, 2012, the final average salary will be based on average wages from your highest three consecutive years of employment, which may or may not be your last three years of employment. For Tier 6 members, the average is based upon the last 5 years of employment. Similarly, wages include contractual salary, holiday pay, longevity, vacation pay with certain exceptions, and overtime. Other applicable monies in TRS are wages from instructional time, including: coaching, the excellence in teaching program, forms of compensatory time, and tutoring. Generally, all instructional time will count for purposes of retirement. The 41(j) rule also applies to TRS, allowing employers to count time, and thus, members may plan accordingly. Therefore, it is important to consult the applicable retirement system, SAANYS, and the district before submitting one’s retirement paperwork. Happy retirement planning!

SAANYS has always been there for members who need advice or assistance from legal counsel on job-related matters. Now, SAANYS has partnered with the law firm of Feldman, Kramer and Monaco to help when you need legal advice and assistance.

$85 annually provides a simple will, power of attorney, health care proxy, living will, and unlimited advice by telephone. Enrollees will also receive certificates good for two free hour-long office consultations with a local legal expert. For services beyond this package, rates depend. Contact Feldman, Kramer and Monaco, the law firm that administers the plan for SAANYS members, at 1-800-832-5182 or 1-800-978-6055. Be sure to include your area code when leaving your number.

SprintWorks’ for Educational ProfessionalsTeachers, administrators, and other education staffs enjoy special savings through the SprintWorks Program. It’s our thanks for your good work.

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LEGAL HIGHLIGHTS

The SAANYS Legal Department - Working Tirelessly for Members Statewide

Below are just a few highlights of our many current and pending cases:

Region 1

SAANYS assisted an administrator’s rebuttal to counseling memo.

Region 2

SAANYS presented to a bargaining unit on the legal and negotiations services offered to SAANYS members.

Region 3

SAANYS settled a case with a Memorandum of Agreement for the unit’s benefit.

Region 4

SAANYS assisted potential members with information needed.

Region 5

SAANYS reviewed a Memorandum of Agreement for a teacher that provided for an equitable salary increase for a member in exchange for the unit negotiating to consult and have input on any new hire’s starting salary.

Region 6

SAANYS negotiated a separation agreement.

Region 7

SAANYS filed an improper practice charge relating to transferring bargaining unit work.

Region 8

SAANYS submitted a Memorandum of Agreement for a member taking a leave of absence to try to new position.

Region 9

SAANYS submitted a demand for arbitration relating to a unilateral change in evaluation procedure.

Region 10

SAANYS assisted a member in preparing a rebuttal to a counseling memo.

Region 11

SAANYS assisted a member with an issue regarding possible failure of the district to grant tenure and possibility of a JUIU agreement.
School Administrators Association of New York State

SAANYS Benefits

Legal Advice and Assistance
SAANYS’ Legal and Labor Relations Department offers comprehensive, aggressive representation on job-related matters, with no dollar cap. Attorneys are available directly and immediately. A 24/7 paper is available 800-978-6055 for access to an attorney, even during the evening and on weekends.

Labor Relations Services
Services include advice, assistance, and representation throughout the entire negotiation process. Negotiators and teams are provided with extensive resources, including multiple research databases of salary information.

Professional Growth and Mentoring
SAANYS helps members meet their continuous learning needs and requirements through a year-round, comprehensive professional development program. SAANYS also offers individual and group mentoring by highly trained mentors. In an effort to keep members current and informed, membership also includes two award-winning publications (News & Notes newsletter and the Vanguard & Practices magazine), and various online communications and services.

Government Relations
Members can be assured that their voices are heard loud and clear on issues such as education funding, tenure, mandates, retirement issues, education reform initiatives, and federal policy. A member-composed plan includes two award-winning publications (News & Notes newsletter and the Vanguard & Practices magazine), and various online communications and services.

Abortion Discount
Abortion is a national discount partner providing with SAANYS to bring members savings on travel, restaurants, home and garden, apparel, movies, theatre, sporting events, and more.

Personal Legal Services Plan
This program offers members significant discounts on non-work related legal issues through a national legal services provider. Upon enrollment, the plan includes a simple will and phone advice and consultation.

Online Defensive Driving Course
A discounted defensive driving course provided through the National Safety Council. Members are eligible for up to a 10 percent discount on auto insurance and a reduction of up to 4 points.

National Affiliation
SAANYS is the official state affiliate of both the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals and their state/national principal of the year programs.

Auto and Home Insurance from Liberty Mutual
As a member of SAANYS, you can receive exclusive savings on your auto and home insurance. To learn more about Liberty Mutual insurance or get a free, no-obligation quote, call 800-524-9403 or visit www.LibertyMutual.com/saanys.

Sprint Discount
Sprint offers a variety of wireless products, services, and solutions along with a 19 percent discount on select data services and other promotional offers to NYS school administrators and employees. More information at: www.sprint.com/myeducation.

BOSE Discounts for Educators
BOSE offers special pricing on select products for educators—call 1-800-277-5016 and mention the “educators’ program.”

Amenity Discounts
Amenity is a national discount partner providing with SAANYS to bring members savings on travel, restaurants, home and garden, apparel, movies, theatre, sporting events, and more.

SAANYS’ Legal and Labor Relations Department offers comprehensive, aggressive representation on job-related matters, with no dollar cap. Attorneys are available directly and immediately. A 24/7 paper is available 800-978-6055 for access to an attorney, even during the evening and on weekends.

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Farmingdale CSD Students Selected for All State and All National Performing Groups

Farmingdale School District students were recently selected by the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) to participate in All State and All National performing groups. Eight outstanding students were hand-picked by judges to perform in these elite groups and three students were selected as alternates.

In order to compete for this recognition, students prepared a musical piece to perform at the annual NYSSMA festival and receive a rating. NYSSMA levels range from 1-6 with level 6 being the most difficult.

Ambassador Opportunity with WEF - USA

World Education Forum - USA
Promoting quality education for all children

SAANYS would like to pass along notice of an opportunity that may be of interest to some of our active or retired members. The World Education Forum - USA (WEF) is seeking an ambassador from each state, who will help promote the organization's mission of increasing the number of children who have access to public education. The WEF influences national policy decision-making on a global scale by setting standards for educational investments for all countries, and they establish relationships between schools and initiatives, programs and projects aimed at improving education.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Darrell Rud, Past President of NAESP, at dclrud@gmail.com and visit http://wefusa.net.

Applications Now Being Accepted for the New York State Teacher of the Year Program

Application Deadline: February 1, 2018

The New York State Teacher of the Year program, now in its 48th year, is administered by the New York State Education Department. It is affiliated with the National Teacher of the Year program, which is administered through the Council of Chief State School Officers and sponsored by leading education associations.

Let a great teacher know that they are making a positive impact on their students and school community, nominate them for the 2019 New York State Teacher of the Year Program. Remember, anyone can nominate a teacher. Great news – the application is now only five pages! Scan the QR code to download the application.

Let Abenity Help You With Your Holiday Shopping

Thousands of Discounts Available to Members

Access hundreds of free printable grocery coupons with new discounts added daily.

Thousands of BOCES contracts and services that we provide to schools in both NY City and upstate. The products and services that we provide are available directly from EVI as well as through many ROSES contracts across the state.

We bring a systemic, integrated approach and efficiency to everything that we do. This translates directly to cost savings, faster and better decision making, improvement in data and information quality, and the elimination of data redundancy. We are techno-byte-head-geeks and educators working together to provide the best products and services available.

By linking to any existing district data system(s), we quickly install and configure our web-based software solutions to make them available to schools as soon as possible. This process also allows us to upload critical data from any of these systems for unlimited numbers of years. File conversions, data integrity checks, and modifications are normal services that we provide on a daily basis.

We stand ready to assist any and all districts that require our expertise and unique capabilities. Our reputation is built upon the successes we have had in the past and on the client retention and growth we enjoy today.

SAANYS Career Center


Simply click on the “Career Center” button on the homepage.