Educational Conference Board Calls for a $2.1 Billion State Aid Increase for 2020-21

New York State Educational Conference Board

and Foundation Aid to be funded and updated …

Based on estimates for educational expenses in the coming year and growing student needs, New York’s major education organizations, including SAANYS, released a report detailing the need for a $2.1 billion state aid increase for 2020-21.

The funding increase recommended by the New York State Educational Conference Board (ECB) contains two primary components: $1.6 billion to continue current educational services based on available cost estimates for school expenses in the year ahead; and

Mental Health Needs Top Concern in Survey

In a fall survey of building principals, issues surrounding student mental health were clearly the top concern of the 236 respondents.

The numbers tell the story. The survey asked, “For the 2018-19 school year, please indicate which of the following was of utmost concern in your work as a school administrator?” (Check your top 3)—the graph clearly shows what’s on the top of minds in school buildings today.

Logically it followed that when asked, “Please check the top 3 areas most important to your own professional growth,” “addressing student mental health” was once again a top issue according to 60 percent of respondents.

Principals are also focusing on professional growth in the year ahead; and

Legal Briefs

Retirement Health Insurance Coverage

Your collective bargaining agreement must protect your retirement health insurance benefit. Once you retire, you are no longer a member of your local association. Hence, whatever rights you have for health insurance benefits in retirement may be found in the applicable contract under which you retired. The best way to protect your retirement health benefits is to state clearly in the contract what your retirement health insurance benefits are when you retire.

Years ago, many administrators retired at age 55, thereby committing them to the district’s active employee health insurance plan for ten years until the retiree turned 65 years old and enrolled in Medicare. The ten-year health insurance benefit was valued at the ten-year cost of the health insurance, typically in excess of $200,000. To ensure that administrators receive retirement health insurance, it is critical to spell out in the contract the health insurance plan with specific reference to deductibles, out-of-pocket expenses, and co-payments levels.

Also, the retiree’s contribution toward health insurance in retirement should be fixed at the time of retirement (not subject to active employees’ contribution levels). Further, health insurance coverage in retirement should include language that the benefit is for life. Of note, some clients mistakenly believe that if they predecease their spouse, the spouse has the right to survivorship health insurance coverage automatically; that is incorrect. The truth is that the right to survivorship is rare and must be collectively bargained for in the contract.

At the bargaining table, negotiate a contribution structure for premium cost sharing in retirement that is based on years of service to the employer. For example, if you work for the employer for 10 to 14 years, you will contribute 15 percent toward the premium cost of health insurance. If you work 15 to 19 years, you will contribute 10 percent. If you work more than 20 years for the employer, you will receive free health insurance.

As a practical matter, contact your employer’s benefits clerk and inquire whether it will be cheaper to subscribe to two individual health insurance plans in retirement for you and your spouse instead of one family plan. If it is cheaper, it would be the preferred way to go.

Medicare and Your Retirement Health Insurance Coverage

When you turn 65 years old, almost all health insurance plans in New York require the covered retiree (and spouse) to enroll in Medicare, a federal health insurance program providing coverage for individuals over 65 or who are found to be permanently disabled. Medicare provides coverage for hospitalizations (Part A) and physicians (Part B) on an 80-20 split. Note that if you are still actively working past the age of 65, you do not have to enroll in Medicare Part B, but you must enroll in Medicare Part A, meaning that Medicare will become your primary insurance upon enrolling at age 65 and your employer provided retirement health insurance coverage will become secondary. Because your employer provided insurance will now be secondary, your former employer will remove you from its active employee health insurance plan and enroll you in a less costly Medicare Supplemental Plan to cover its 20 percent obligation. Note that in some parts of the state, like western New York, the employer ceases health insurance coverage when you enroll in Medicare. Don’t let that happen. Try to negotiate for continued health insurance coverage after enrollment in Medicare. If you will not have health insurance coverage post Medicare enrollment, you may purchase a Medicare Supplemental Plan from the federal government, which

continued on page 6

Now Law Changes Fire Inspection Process in Schools

Governor Cuomo has signed legislation to modernize the process of conducting annual fire inspection reports for public and private schools. The bill prohibits unqualified persons from conducting the inspection and requires the state to request inspection from the local fire department or certified fire inspector. The bill also provides schools with flexibility in meeting the public notice requirements associated with these inspections and eliminates the “hold harmless” provision that has allowed inspectors who made errors in inspection reports to evade liability.

While current law requires schools to submit an annual fire safety report which includes an inspection of school buildings, there is no recourse for schools who fail to do so. The bill clarifies the current power of the commissioner to deny the certificate of occupancy if a public school fails to correct defects following an inspection.

$15 Million to Support Pre-Kindergarten Programs Statewide

Fifteen million dollars has been awarded to 26 school districts to increase access to high-quality pre-kindergarten for over 2,000 three and four-year-old children across New York. This funding will also support the expansion of pre-K to high-need and underserved school districts as part of the state’s ongoing effort to promote early education and improve academic outcomes for all students.

Funding was awarded to school districts based on the quality of applications and other factors such as school and student need, the state’s effort to target the highest need students, and a focus on maximizing the total number of children served in pre-kindergarten programs. For details on district awards, visit: https://on.ny.gov/2Mtwkuj

Visit: https://on.ny.gov/2Mtwkuj
Opportunities

The article I wrote for the December issue of News & Notes was on the guidance recently released by the State Education Department (SED) regarding equity in education, and how implementation of much of that guidance, in the face of competing concerns, would be influenced in significant ways by lack of available funding. For many districts those guidelines will remain aspirational.

This month I want to revisit a topic that is not “guidance” (essentially an official suggestion) but rather a mandate that will directly impact school accountability measures that the Common Core and Civic Readiness Index of the ESSA Plan, which is associated with the issue of equity in education. In September of 2017, the Board of Regents adopted the Next Generation Learning Standards in ELA and math, and laid out a three-year implementation timetable. Phase I, from winter of 2018 to spring 2019 was a period to raise awareness and engage in professional development regarding the new standards. Phase II, from spring of 2019 to summer of 2020, is to build capacity and further engage in professional development. Phase III is the full implementation phase, with instruction aligned to the new standards beginning in September of 2020. The 3-8 ELA and math assessments administered in spring 2021 will be aligned to the new learning standards.

In September of 2021, grades 9-11 instruction is aligned to the new ELA learning standards, while grades 10 and 11 remain aligned to the NYS P-12 Learning Standards for ELA and Literacy (2010). In September 2022, grade 10 moves to the new ELA standards while grade 11 remains aligned to the 2010 standards. In September 2023, grade 11 moves to the new standards and June of 2024 has the first ELA regents' exam aligned to the new standards. June of 2025 will be the last administration of the ELA regents’ exam aligned to the 2010 standards. With respect to high school mathematics, instruction aligned to the new standards for Algebra I begins September 2021, with the first Algebra I regents exam aligned to the new standards being administered in June of 2022. Instruction aligned to the new Geometry standards begins September 2022, with June 2023 being the first Geometry regents exam aligned to the new standards as well as the last Algebra I exam aligned to the 2011 standards. For Algebra II, instruction aligned with the new standards begins September 2023, with June 2024 being the first Algebra II regents exams aligned to the new standards. Also this year the last Geometry exam aligned to the 2011 standards. Consistent with this rolling implementation schedule, the last administration of the Algebra II regents exam aligned to the 2011 standards will be in June of 2025. I recognize that the last two or three paragraphs of this article are a somewhat dry summary of information that may be readily found on the SED website, but several recent conversations have suggested the level of awareness, and implementation steps taken to date, vary widely from district to district, and in some instances from building to building within the same district. SED informs us that it will soon be asking district superintendents to assess the progress of implementation of the new standards among their component districts. We suggested SED develop an implementation checklist that principals can use to assess their readiness. Unfortunate- ly, the reality is that in some districts there is sometimes a lack of communication and coordination between central office and the district buildings, and we would like to help make sure our members are not caught unaware or unprepared for the upcoming changes that have already been set in motion.

New School Start Times and Master Schedule Opportunities

Sponsor Opinion Piece by Kenneth A. Facin, Solutions Facilitator, Educational Vistas, Inc.

Master schedules detail each minute of the school day with regards to teacher and student obligations and whereabouts. The learning climate and culture of a school is directly influenced by the master scheduling of physical space and allotted human resources. How a student experiences learning and resources. How a student navigates the school day with regards to teaching and student obligations is sometimes a lack of information that may need to be modified to better suit today’s students.

Next Generation Learning Standards—Time to Get Ready

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

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Vol. XLVIII No. 10

SAANYS News & Notes (USPS 625-346) is published monthly with the exception of June, July, and August, by the School Administrators Association of New York State, 8 Airport Park Blvd., Latham, NY 12110. Phone: 518-762-0080 Fax: 518-765-6562

SAANYS is chartered as a professional association by the New York State Education Department and is affiliated with NASSP and NAESP.

A copy of each issue of News & Notes should be sent to each SAANYS member, $7.50 ($7.30 each member) of the dues will be for a year’s subscription to this publication.

Periodical Postage Paid Latham, NY and at additional post offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Notes, SAANYS, 8 Airport Park Blvd., Latham, NY 12110

The statements and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily imply or reflect the opinion or philosophy of SAANYS.

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Principals have the dual challenge of adhering to teacher collective bargaining agreement considerations as well as meeting the school’s learning needs. How you approach these challenges will determine the extent to which your schedule supports the priorities and vision that you want your students to experience each day.

Kenneth A. Facin, Solutions Facilitator / Educational Vistas. Ken worked for 32 years in public schools as a high school science teacher, principal, and superintendent of schools. He can be reached at kfacin@edvistas.com.

SAANYS News & Notes
Summary of the December Board of Regents Meeting

The last meeting of 2019 of the Board of Regents was held on December 9th and 10th. The two days were primarily filled with updates, a few regulatory matters, and actions on two charter schools.

Full Board Meeting

Update on the Graduation Measures in New York State Initiative

The director of Achieve, Marie O’Hara, presented data and research on graduation measures used in other states. The presentation examined four states and a shifting landscape in terms of graduation accountability and innovative programs.

Some of the key points from the presentation included:

• The number of courses and the specificity of courses varies greatly across states.
• The findings indicate that there are four main categories for how states use assessments for graduation.

Assessments Factor Into Students’ Grades or Graduation Requirements

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Regent Tilles emphasized that whatever we decide about graduation requirements will impact the whole P-12 system. He also stated that futurists indicate that there is a 50/50 chance that whatever career a high school graduate chooses this year will not exist in five years.

Regent Mead raised the question as to whether staff has examined the use of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This test is required for every candidate wishing to enroll in the National Guard. It is a standardized test that measures eight areas such as general science, math reasoning, language, electronics, and mechanical skills.

Regent Young would like to first lay out what experiences all young people need to be successful before concluding which graduation measures should be established. Such an approach would establish the courses and supports needed to exit high school for all students.

Regent Cushing suggested that using a mastery type approach for courses required for graduation would suggest that it may take longer to graduate. Therefore, flexibility is needed to ensure that all students may access challenging courses.

Regent Reyes questioned how other states were thinking about using civic readiness/citizenship courses and how they fit into graduation requirements. He questioned as to whether other states were using “seals” added to diplomas or whether states included such topics within coursework.

Regent Chin was buoyed by information indicating that other states are providing opportunities for career readiness and the importance of life experiences in art and health areas. The PowerPoint presentation used for this presentation may be found by scanning the QR code.

State Aid Subcommittee

For the next state budget the Board of Regents will ask for:

• A phase-in of $4.7 billion in foundation aid over three years.
• A minimum increase for all school districts of one percent.
• An accelerated phase-in during 2020-21.
• $1.2 million for staff to work on the foundation aid formula.

The item on state aid may be found by scanning the QR code.

P-12 Subcommittee

This subcommittee took action on two sets of regulations:

1.) Emergency regulations were passed pertaining to extending the age eligibility for students participating in inclusive athletic activities. This item may be found by scanning the QR code.

2.) A discussion was held on a proposed regulation pertaining to bus driver training. This item may be found by scanning the QR code.

The P-12 subcommittee also reviewed the Early Childhood Blue Ribbon Report and the recommendations proposed by the panel. The comprehensive report was well received by the Board and the report may be found by scanning the QR code.

Subcommittee on Higher Education

The subcommittee heard a presentation on a Principal Management Talent System, which is a software program that will provide school districts the ability to customize searches for persons to fill administrative openings. Potentially, districts will be able to tap into a larger pool of candidates for specific district needs and goals. It is anticipated that the program will be operational in this school year.

This report may be found by scanning the QR code.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss any to these items, please feel free to contact Cindy Gallagher at cgallagher@saanys.org or (518) 782-0060.

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.
I recently had the pleasure of attending a meeting of the School Leader Collaborative held in St. Louis, Missouri on December 11-13. This was a meet-up of those who lead school leader associations across the country and included representatives from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Washington, and Wisconsin. The agenda began with each attendee sharing something related to educational leadership that he or she was grateful for in his or her home state. Here are some responses:

- **Illinois:** “Tech capacity is growing rapidly across the state to even the playing field for school leaders in rural schools. Now, the same learning can be delivered to educators in small remote towns as the learning available in Chicago and other large cities across the state.”
- **Indiana:** “We are focusing on supporting assistant principals in big urban districts with mentoring tailored to their needs, which can be different from rural school districts. Our question is always, ‘How can we serve you better?’”
- **New Jersey:** “What has made a difference has been bringing members of our organization together from around the state to develop a vision along with our state education department.”
- **New York:** “There is a much needed focus in our state on issues of educational equity for all learners and that is also resulting in a sharper focus on growing a more diverse body of educational leaders.”

Another focus of the meeting was on the School Leader Paradigm: Becoming While Doing. Members of the School Leader Collaborative have sought to find new ways to help school leaders effectively navigate the “impact, complexity, and messiness” of their work by re-thinking principal leadership in a way that not only details the work principals must do within their learning organizations, but also accounts for how principals must be personally invested in developing their own leadership competencies and attributes to becoming learning leaders.

In other words, there needs to be as much of a focus on the becoming as there is on the doing.

Jason Leathy, executive director of the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) who has been instrumental in the development of the School Leader Paradigm, put it this way: “In the past, we have always focused on the doing side, the activities required of the role of school principal. However, in our organization, we found that the calls we were getting were not related to the doing side, they were not from members who were struggling with raising test scores. Instead, the reason members were contacting our office was because they were struggling with relationship issues, ethics issues, and an overall inability to manage themselves. What we found we needed to do was to bring the two domains (doing and being) together since these dispositions and attitudes were the truly foundational aspects of school leadership.”

There was a general sense that because school leaders get mired down in all the stuff, one of the primary roles of supporting those leaders is creating a sense of hope amidst the stressors and growing requirement of the role.

If some of this is sounding familiar to you and you would like to see the School Leader Paradigm, you may do so at https://ilprincipals.org/grow/school-leader-paradigm/.

It is an excellent roadmap for reflection and growth that captures the multiple kinds of intelligences (personal, social, and systems) that combine in a learning leader as well as the three domains (cultural, learning, and systems) domains that are hallmarks of successful learning organizations.

We often leave some of the best conferences feeling that we are less alone in our challenges and more connected to those who face the same issues and opportunities for growth. This was an example of that kind of gathering of colleagues separated by distance but connected in so many ways.
SAANYS RETIREMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP

This workshop will consist of two parts:

AXA Presentation

AXA specializes in working with New York State employees, helping them to get the most out of their NYS pension plan. AXA will provide specific information on understanding the true value of your NYS pension, how to protect your pension during your working years, what to consider when choosing a payout option, as well as examples of how to maximize your pension payments in retirement. The presentation will also discuss the importance of appropriate asset allocation within 403(b)s and other retirement savings plans.

New York State Teachers’ Retirement System

Even in turbulent economic times like these, you can achieve future financial strength and security by building a strong pension at NYSTRS. This presentation will provide an overview of the important benefits NYSTRS provides, with an emphasis on issues pertaining to members approaching retirement. Highlights include a review of the fundamental pension components such as service credit and final average salary, key retirement thresholds to reach for, the tools needed to maximize these benefits, retirement benefit options, the filing process and much more. Hopefully you’ll leave our meeting with a handle on what’s needed to plan wisely on your road to retirement, as well as what costly errors to avoid along the way.

Financial Fridays

Financial protection products guard individuals and their families against financial juggle, from the financial obligations of raising a family while still planning for your long-term financial future.

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.

Register online at saanys.org

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Coming soon near you!

March 4, 2020

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School Services Building – Main Campus

200 BOCES Dr., Yorktown Heights, NY

March 11, 2020

NASSAU BOCES, ROBERT E. LUPINSKIE CENTER FOR CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND TECH

Conference Room LLB

71 Gorton Rd., Garden City, NY

March 19, 2020

BRENTWOOD CSD – SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Library, 785 Candlewood Rd., Brentwood, NY

March 31, 2020

NORTH COUNTRY TEACHER RESOURCE CTR.

SUNY PLATTSBURGH

(Use the George Angell Drive entrance, across from Plattsburgh High School)

Sidley Hall, Plattsburgh, NY

April 28, 2020

LAKE SHORE YACHT AND COUNTRY CLUB

6777 Lakeshore Rd., Cieno, NY

FREE | 4:00 pm-6:00 pm

Register online at saanys.org.

Contact Karen Bronson at kbronson@saanys.org if you need additional information.

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NASSAU BOCES, ROBERT E. LUPINSKIE CENTER FOR CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND TECH

Conference Room LLB

71 Gorton Rd., Garden City, NY

March 19, 2020

BRENTWOOD CSD – SOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Library, 785 Candlewood Rd., Brentwood, NY

March 31, 2020

NORTH COUNTRY TEACHER RESOURCE CTR.

SUNY PLATTSBURGH

(Use the George Angell Drive entrance, across from Plattsburgh High School)

Sidley Hall, Plattsburgh, NY

April 28, 2020

LAKE SHORE YACHT AND COUNTRY CLUB

6777 Lakeshore Rd., Cieno, NY

FREE | 4:00 pm-6:00 pm

Register online at saanys.org.

Contact Karen Bronson at kbronson@saanys.org if you need additional information.

SAANYS RETIREMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP

Coming soon near you!

March 4, 2020

PUTNAM NORTHERN

WESTCHESTER BOCES

School Services Building – Main Campus

200 BOCES Dr., Yorktown Heights, NY

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Retirement Health Insurance Coverage

is commonly referred to as Medicare Part C. For the past ten years or so, the Medicare Part C supplemental plan has been on par with those supplemental health insurance plans you can purchase private-ly, such as through AARP. Otherwise you will need to purchase a supplemental insurance plan on the open market. The cost of a Medicare supplemental plan will run around $5,000 on Long Island and in other urban/suburban areas in the state.

What most clients are unaware of is who pays for their Medicare coverage. Part A hospitalization premium costs have previously been paid through their FUTA/FICA payroll taxes. However, if their spouse has not worked outside of the home, they will have to pay for Part A. Medicare Part B premiums are made by the enrolled retiree either from their Social Security payment or by direct pay from the retiree to the federal government.

Under the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, the amount of the Medicare Part B payment is calculated based on your adjusted gross income two years prior to the year in question. Remember that 85 percent of your monthly Social Security payments are taxable income, as is your pension and any other money you earn or remove from IRC Sections 401k, 403(b), 57, or other types of private annuities or investments. The standard or base premium cost for Medicare Part B coverage for a husband and wife who earn less than $174,000 in adjusted gross income for 2020 is $146.60 per month per person or $1,735.20 for the year. From 2019, that is a $10 increase per month. However, if you and your spouse earn between $174,000 and $218,000, your monthly premium will be $202.40 per month; if you and your spouse earn between $218,000 and $272,000, your monthly premium will be $280.20 per month; if you and your spouse earn between $272,000 and $326,000, your monthly premium will be $376.00 per month for the first three separate nego-
tiations across the state, employers have attempted and some did in fact, reduce their Medicare Part B reimbursement obligation to only the standard rate or elimi-
nated the reimbursement obligation altogether. Under-
stand that the Medicare Part B reimbursement benefit is valued currently at around $35,000 for the retired employee. Add another $35,000 for the spouse of the covered employee. Hence, that is a $70,000 deferred compen-
sation benefit that you will have to pay for until death, which is actuarially projected for men at age 83 and women at age 84. Thus, fight to keep this benefit in your contract.

Recentl, a school district unilaterally changed its reimbursement policy and only provided the standard reimbursement amount instead of the longstanding IRMAA. SAANYS successfully liti-
gated that case, which is now on appeal.

Retirement Prescription Drug Considerations

Until 65 years of age, your employer insurance will be your primary insurer. Like active employee prescription drug coverage, retirement pre-
scription drug coverage should be spelled out in the contract. It is better to be more specific and identify the drug plan and mail order plan, and if applying for a number of tiers and associated co-payments with each tier. Some employers attempted to negotiate the exclusion of drug cover-
age in retirement, don’t let that happen. According to industry standards the average person over 50 years old takes six drugs daily. If you do not have prescription drug cover-
age in retirement, buying it on the open market will be costly. Understand you can purchase prescrip-
tion drug coverage from the federal government as part of your Medicare enrollment at age 65, i.e., Part D coverage. However, the premium costs of Part D coverage also have IRMAA adjustments based on your annual adjusted gross income from two years before. Thus, if you opt to purchase Medicare Part D coverage, it could prove very costly. Again, choose to negotiate collective bargaining that the em-
ployer will include your prescription drug cover-
age into retirement.

Legal Highlights

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 you with personal legal advice and assistance. $85 annually provides a simple will, power of attorney, health care proxy, living will, and unlimited advice via telephone. Enrollees will also receive certificates good for two free hour-long office consultations with a local referral attorney. For services beyond this package, discounted rates apply.

CONTACT: Feldman, Kramer and Monaco, the law firm that administers the plan for SAANYS members, at 1-800-832-5182.

SAANYS Legal Department - Working Tirelessly for Members Statewide

Region 1
SAANYS advised a member regarding the ability to get tenure early as a principal.
Region 2
SAANYS advised a member in receiving accommodation from the district regarding a health related issue.
Region 3
SAANYS assisted a member with a rebuttal to a counseling board.
Region 4
SAANYS assisted a member in negotiating a faculty contract.
Region 5
SAANYS assisted a member with a separation agreement on their pension.
Region 6
SAANYS advised a member of the effect of a separation agreement on their pension.
Region 7
SAANYS filed an impact bargaining charge and a transfer of work charge at PBR.
Region 8
SAANYS provided the best interest.

“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”

—Benjamin Franklin
SAANYS Diversity Committee

Friendships Are Built on Love, No Matter What They Look Like

Gary M. Manuse, Assistant Business Official, Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES

This article is a true story based on an interview I recently did with an adult named Marie, who reflected on a specific childhood experience which has always been on her mind, way into her 70 plus adult years.

Let’s travel back to the 1950s in the inner city of Rochester, New York. Marie is a white little girl who had lots of white friends, but she was also friends with two black little girls named Beverly and Helen, who happened to also be siblings. They were the two “Little black girls” in the neighborhood and they lived across the street from Marie. They were so wonderful to Marie that she became very fond of them and preferred to spend most of her time playing with them.

It was a gorgeous summer day in the city in 1953. The sun was shining. The birds were singing exuberantly. It was the perfect day for bicycle riding, playing hopscotch on the sidewalk, and picking berries from the mulberry tree at Marie’s house. That’s what Marie, Beverly, and Helen were doing, laughing and carrying on together like typical young girls at the ages of seven, eight, and nine. They spent the whole day with each other. Not only on that day, but every day since they were old enough to go outside and play together. They were all best friends, and none of them cared that they were different. Sure, they were slightly different in ages, but the color of their skin is what really made them different. Marie being white; and the two sisters, Beverly and Helen, being black. Stigmas and prejudices were predominantly conventional in that day and age in the inner city of Rochester in 1953, and it was a time when blacks and whites in the city did not mingle much at all. I guess you could say that these little girls were precedent setting at the time.

As the summer went on, Marie’s mom began to notice just how close all of the girls were becoming and that Marie was spending less time playing with her white friends and playing mostly with Beverly and Helen. One hot, humid evening around 5pm in late August, as the clouds began to roll in for a thunderstorm, the sound of distant thunder began and lightning could be seen from afar. As the girls were playing on the sidewalk in front of their houses, Marie’s mom opened the front door and yelled out to her to come home because it was going to storm and that dinner was almost ready. When Marie entered the house and sat at the dinner table, her mom looked at Marie with such seriousness and said that she wanted her to start playing with her white friends and not to play with the black girls anymore. This devasted Marie. For the rest of the summer, until school started, Marie would sit on her porch and see her forbidden black friends across the street playing outside, and she was heartbroken that she couldn’t play with them anymore. She was so upset and did not understand why her mom was so abrupt in ending the friendship. As Marie became older, she began to understand that her mom was concerned that if she continued to become closer with black people, that she might fall in love with and marry a black man, and the idea of an interracial marriage was disgraceful in most families at that time.

Fast forward 60 plus years, and this story still upsets Marie. So, upon persistent encouragement from her son, Marie decided to look for her two former friends on Facebook. She wanted to let them know how much she really cared about them. Marie messaged and attached an unforgivable picture of the three little girls sitting on their front porch from years ago in the summertime. Finally, after several attempts to make contact with the older brother, he replied to the messages with delight. His delay was not because he was ignoring the contact attempts, but it was merely because he hardly uses Facebook. He provided Marie with Beverly and Helen’s contact information and after over sixty years, Marie finally made contact with both of them via their computer cameras. They enjoyed reconnecting and the specific reasons why they stopped playing together and their friendship ceased was never continued on page 8
Friendships Are Built on Love, No Matter What They Look Like

continued from page 7

spoken about. As adults, the unspoken inferences were clear… It was prejudice based on color. You see, their friendship was built on love, no matter what they looked like. However, it was the societal prejudices and pressures that made the adult in this situation (Marie’s mother) negatively influence the friendship. Marie’s mother forced the societal stigma and discriminations on the girls’ friendship, which broke apart their unconditional bond.

Nowadays, Marie wholeheartedly embraces diversity in all forms. Her only two children are gay and lesbian. She has all types of friends in her retirement community. She is a true advocate for equality. She has attended numerous gay pride events and marched in parades with her children. I truly believe that this childhood situation, as heartbreaking as it was at the time, helped to shape the open-minded and loving person that she is today. I am proud to say that Marie is my mother. This situation has always bothered me, and I have always felt terrible for my mom that she had to endure losing contact with her two best friends. Today my mom realizes that life in the 1950s was full of inequalities and prejudice. She does not have ill feelings toward her mom’s decision, because it was the societal prejudices and pressures that made the adult in this situation negatively influence the friendship. Marie, Beverly, and Helen keep in touch on a regular basis.

In conclusion, we, as school leaders in 2019 and beyond, need to be open to hearing stories like this and reflect on how our actions are influencing diversity, not only in our educational settings and school communities, but also in our personal lives with our family and friends. We can use this as a learning experience to make the right choices as we move forward. I hope that you have enjoyed this story and that it has helped you, as it has for me, to make a difference and I hope that this story does that for you.

Educational Conference Board Calls for a $2.1 Billion State Aid Increase for 2020-21

continued from page 1

$500 million for targeted investments in five critical areas: strengthening school safety and mental health services, supporting receivership schools, addressing the cost of providing specialized services such as special education and English as a New Language, college and career pathways, and professional development.

The $1.6 billion increase to continue current services is based on cost estimates for 2020-21 in areas such as salaries, pension costs, and health insurance costs from sources such as the State Division of Budget and Teachers’ Retirement System. This figure represents the state funding required to maintain student programs and services after accounting for local revenue that might be raised given the tax cap.

Based on the CPI data for this year so far, EBC is projecting a tax levy growth factor of 1.74 percent in the tax cap formula – meaning schools could again face a limit that is more restrictive than the 2 percent widely associated with the law. The paper includes recommendations to make the tax cap simpler and more predictable for school districts.

The organizations note that the Foundation Aid increase recommended for 2020-21 would put the state on a trajectory to fully fund the formula in three years. They emphasize the importance of establishing a set timeline for this phase-in.

The paper includes three longer-term Foundation Aid recommendations designed to update the formula based on current financial and student learning factors: conduct a new cost study to determine the foundation amount per pupil; review and adjust how student needs are accounted for in the formula; and restructure the regional cost index. Read the full paper at https://bit.ly/2FFyCg.

Riverhead Principal Named Next Zone 2 Director to NAESP Board

Thomas Payton, principal of Roanoake Avenue Elementary School in Riverhead, New York has been elected as the next Zone 2 director to the NAESP Board of Directors (National Association of Elementary School Principals). The NAESP Zone 2 director represents the states of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Payton will join the board officially on August 1, 2020 and complete the term of office ending July 31, 2023.

A longtime SAANYS member, Payton has most recently served on the SAANYS Board of Directors as the New York representative to NAESP. Current SAANYS Executive Director Kevin Casey, “Tom is a dedicated school leader and has been an exceptional advocate for the profession at the local, state, and national levels. I can think of no one better suited to represent our region in this official capacity at NAESP.”

Thousands of Discounts Available to SAANYS Members

SAANYS provides members with an elite collection of local and national discounts from thousands of hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, retailers, florists, car dealers, theme parks, national attractions, concerts, and events through Abenity.

Go to saanys.org under the “Membership” section.

A message from a SAANYS corporate sponsor

PASSPORT & GOOD

Passport for Good, the web and mobile solution supporting students and school districts across New York state by chronicling community service, career development, and participation in clubs and organizations, has earned the prestigious iKeepSafe certification. Certification involved proving its technology used by children in educational settings meets demanding state and federal safety and security standards, governing student data privacy.

iKeepSafe (the Internet Keep Safe Coalition) aims to create a safe digital landscape for children, schools, and families by supporting the protection of student privacy, while advancing learning in a digital culture. The nearly 15-year-old national organization provides data privacy certification to technology companies, educational resources to schools and information to the community.

Using Passport for Good, students are able to build a non-academic transcript of their community engagement hours; obtain electronic verification of the hours; and export their non-academic transcript for class/graduation requirements, college applications and scholarships, and employment applications. It also provides student engagement data to help schools meet national education standards and to enhance linkages between service learning, skill development, and academic and career exploration. Schools and parents can now be confident that Passport for Good has an extra stamp of approval, has signed the Student Privacy Pledge, and has met the highest standards of compliance with New York education law 2-d, FERPA, COPPA. Passport for Good’s mission is not tracking students but measuring impact.

For more information, reach out to info@passportforgood.com or call (844) 557-4461.