At the July Board Meeting of the New York State Rural Schools Association, David Little was unanimously appointed to serve as the organization’s next Executive Director. David Little has most recently served as the Director of Legislative Services for the New York State School Boards Association, a position which he has served in for the past fifteen years and from which he will formally retire at the end of October.

David Little’s extensive background working with the New York State legislature aligns well with the priorities of the RSA. Mr. Little is a graduate of Wittenberg College and the Capital University Law School. Prior to his work with NYSSBA, Mr. Little served as counsel for the NY State Assembly before assuming a similar role working on behalf of the NY State Senate. Mr. Little previously served as a Board of Education member, and the Board President for the rural Brittonkill School District in the Capital Region. Mr. Little obtained further governmental experience through service as a member of the Rensselaer County legislature.

Concerning David Little’s appointment to replace outgoing Executive Director, Dr. Bruce Fraser, Rural Schools Association Board Chair, Ed Engle observed, “We are pleased that an increase in membership allows us to bring David Little on as our organization’s first full time Executive Director. Our members have made clear that one of their highest priorities is promoting understanding of the needs of rural school districts with the state legislature. We believe we have hired an individual with tremendous strengths in that area. David will be based in Albany and will focus upon advancing the interests of the districts that make up our membership.”

An introductory greeting from David can be found on the following page.
Letter from Incoming RSA Executive Director David Little:

Friends,

I am honored to have been selected as the new Executive Director for RSA. To follow in the footsteps of folks like Bruce Fraser, Dennis Sweeney and Larry Kiley in representing the interests of our rural schools, is truly a privilege. It probably raises some questions in your mind though, about why the Director of Governmental Relations of the New York State School Boards Association would be the appropriate selection to represent the interests of rural schools. The answers take you back a way.

I was born in Ohio and raised in Illinois in the middle of corn country. My first job was detassling corn, so that Funk Seeds could create new hybrid strains. When I moved to New York State, I worked through high school and college at Troy Bilt’s experimental farm and threw hay for Mr. Miller (the farmer across the road). So while it’s true that my career has been in Albany, it’s also true that my home’s a lot closer to the Vermont border, in a Rensselaer County “Right to Farm” community. The short answer to why I would gravitate to rural schools is that’s where my heart is, plain and simple.

For me, it’s a natural fit, but for RSA my selection as Executive Director is a change in focus. Past executive directors have been former school superintendents. I believe that in choosing me, the RSA board intends to have RSA become more visible and influential in its efforts to educate legislators and rural school leaders on the impact of current and proposed public policies. I’ll be based in Albany and travel frequently to Cornell, instead of the other way around. Our state leaders, both at the State Education Department and in the legislature, need to be informed about the vital role being played by our rural schools.

They need to learn how critically important our schools are to the health and vitality of our rural communities and (just as importantly) how important those rural communities are to the health of our state and our nation. Without our rural culture, our rural values and our products, America declines. In an era where our children don’t return to their home communities, where our businesses struggle with high state taxes and bureaucracy and where our rural schools have become the “forgotten political demographic” that is frequently left out of state aid and other educational policy discussions, we are challenged like never before. Challenged, but not defeated.

Together, we can change the discussion. We can meet with state leaders to be sure they are fully aware of the impact of current and future policies. We can rally our communities to be vocal in their self-defense. We can enlist the significant resources of our partners in the academic and business communities. We can be heard, and in so doing make sure that New York State both supports and benefits from healthy rural schools and communities.

I have no illusions about why I have been selected to lead this effort. I am well known in Albany and in our schools. I have a reputation for being a strident advocate and there are benefits to my relationship with leaders in both our schools and our government. To take advantage of that visibility, our work together will be intensive. Rural schools have significant needs and RSA will help them, both individually and collectively. I fully intend for our efforts to be strategic, exhaustive and ultimately, successful.

I owe a great deal to my rural roots and I firmly believe that my legal, legislative and educational advocacy background have uniquely prepared me to succeed in improving the lives of our rural students and the communities that support them. I can’t pledge that we will succeed in every endeavor, or that the wheels of government will turn more quickly as a result. What I can pledge to you is that I will do everything within my power to make you proud of being a resident of a rural school district and a member of the Rural Schools Association.

All the best,
Dave
Thomas Marzeski to Serve as RSA Interim Executive Director from September 1 to November 1

NY State Rural Schools Association Deputy Director, Thomas Marzeski has agreed to serve as the organization’s Interim Executive Director from September 1 through the November 1st arrival of new Executive Director, David Little. Tom has served as Deputy Director for the past two years. Prior to working in that role Mr. Marzeski had served as a member of the RSA Board of Directors. Through his Deputy Director duties Tom has provided strong leadership organizing, promoting and operating the RSA’s Annual Conference. Tom has also advanced RSA membership in the Central New York region through his focus upon recruitment and retention of member districts. Tom frequently meets with legislative representatives both in their CNY regional office and in Albany. Tom retired in 2011 after serving as the Superintendent of the Chittenango Central School Districts. Earlier in his career, Mr. Marzeski has held education leadership positions in the Cherry Valley-Springfield, Cortland, and Berne-Knox-Westerlo School Districts. Tom’s Central New York location lends itself to him being in the Cornell Office regularly over this two month period.

While he will be returning to Western New York and entering semi-retirement, current RSA Executive Director, Dr. Bruce Fraser has agreed to continue handling responsibility for the RSA Newsletter through the transition period, and overseeing the organization’s Summer/Fall membership drive.

Congratulations to Cosimo Tangorra:

We extend sincere congratulations to the New York State Education Department’s new Deputy Commissioner for PK-12 Education, Cosimo Tangorra. Cosimo most recently served as the Superintendent of the newly merged Central Valley School District. Cosimo had previously served as the Superintendent of the Ilion Central School District (which merged with Mohawk CSD last July to form the Central Valley district); Trumansburg CSD; and the Oppenheim-Ephrata Central School District. Cosimo will replace Ken Slentz who recently assumed Superintendent duties on behalf of the Skaneateles Central School District.

Some RSA members expressed concern that Cosimo Tangorra may have been selected to serve in this role based upon the leadership he demonstrated merging the Ilion and Mohawk school districts. As an organization that opposes altering the process required merging two school districts the RSA hopes that Cosimo Tangorra was not selected for this position to bring changes in the process utilized in merging school districts. It remains the RSA’s position that local school boards and local voters should remain the key decision makers regarding district mergers. As someone who has led RSA member school districts throughout his career, we trust Cosimo Tangorra will work inside NYSED as an advocate for adequate PK-12 school funding and for equity in how those funds are allocated. We know Cosimo to be a principled leader and advocate and are pleased he brings a rural district perspective to this leadership position at NYSED.
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A Word from the Executive Director…Dr. Bruce Fraser

Where we Are—And Where we Are Going...

As I prepare to move into semi-retirement, the RSA faces a critically important transition. Maintaining forward momentum working through a leadership transition could prove to be a challenge for everyone associated with the RSA over the next few months. RSA member school districts have been under tremendous pressure over the past several years as they struggled in the face of state funding cutbacks that disproportionately impacted low and average wealth school districts. Simultaneously with resource cutbacks, districts have been called upon to implement a number of challenging new mandates. With our member districts facing multiple challenges, I could not be more pleased that the Board of Directors chose David Little to serve as the organization’s next Executive Director. Based upon his history of success working in Albany, we are excited that David Little will become the RSA’s first full-time Executive Director. Additionally, I want to point out that David Little’s hiring was not the only significant action authorized by our Board at their July meeting. The Board authorized the hiring of two additional Regional Associate Directors when they adopted the RSA’s annual budget at Cooperstown. On behalf of the Board, we are appreciative that the RSA’s membership growth over the past two years permits our organization to enhance staffing and strengthen our commitment to service on behalf of member school districts. It is anticipated that the two new Regional representatives will serve the North Country region, and the Far Western Region of the state. As the RSA shifts its focus to Albany, we anticipate that the role of these Regional representatives will become critical in providing services to member school districts. Look for more detailed information on how regions will be served by Regional representatives in next month’s newsletter.

Optimal Impact—A Plan for Putting the Final Piece of the Puzzle in Place:

Optimality is the theoretical performance state every member driven organization should strive to reach and maintain. Defined simply, optimality is the point when any change in inputs, or operational procedures, diminishes outcomes. As someone who traveled regularly from Ithaca to Albany during the critical January to April budget deliberation process—I am pleased that David Little will work from an Albany base while traveling to Ithaca regularly. In recent discussions with the Board of Directors, and in greater detail during discussions with the RSA’s Executive Committee, I pointed out a need for an additional (fractional) staff position at Cornell. While the RSA remains in solid financial shape, right now we are not in position to support a fractional position in Ithaca without depleting reserves at an unacceptable rate. One alternative, that would allow us to establish a fractional support/research position in Ithaca is for the RSA to generate additional revenue. Our Board remains cautious about raising member dues, knowing the financial challenges rural districts have endured recently. District memberships and our Annual Conference remain the RSA’s major sources of revenue. We look to include additional advertising in upcoming newsletters as one means to generate additional revenue. Additionally, our regional representatives will double their efforts to recruit new members (right now we have picked up ten new member districts for 2014-15). While we have not offered many regional training programs over recent years, we are discussing regional events that fulfill member district needs while potentially generating additional revenue for the organization. We believe that a more entrepreneurial RSA will allow the addition of a fractional support position based at Cornell very soon! While this position may not have the high visibility associated with Executive Director David Little, or the RSA’s expanded crop of Regional representatives, the support provided should be of value to RSA members.

Timing Critical—Follow-Up Concerning RSA’s Call for Unity and Action:

Each day we receive e-mails notification from districts that adopted the two resolutions we requested local Boards of Education enact. Those two resolutions call for the complete elimination of the GEA when the next state budget is enacted, and for an independent Berger-type Commission to be empaneled to address school funding equity. If your School Board has not already acted on these resolutions we, once again, encourage you to support this initiative. The RSA represents slightly more than 40% of New York’s school districts, but
only one in eight public school students in the state. As such, we are most effective when we act in unity. We are also more effective when we act in partnership with similarly impacted organizations. Three other organizations (the Statewide School Finance Consortium, Mid-Hudson School Council, and Long Island based REFIT) have picked up on the RSA’s call for passage of these resolutions. Additionally, the timing for these efforts remains critical. With November’s election rapidly approaching we can have the strongest impact upon legislator positions right now! Once again, we encourage all districts to enact these two resolutions this month! Links to templates for each resolution (End GEA, Berger Commission), district data (GEA Database) that allows you to conveniently modify the resolution templates for your individual districts, and suggested follow-up correspondence are found here (Draft Letter). We are strongest when we act in unity!

Impact of Resolutions & Talking Points for Follow-up Discussions:

We see early evidence that our campaign calling for the end of the GEA is having an impact. Both Senator Michael Nozzolio, a mid-state Republican, and Senator Ted O’Brien, a Rochester area Democratic Senator have recently taken positions calling for the legislature to utilize funds from settlements with banks to end the GEA. Only a month ago Senator Nozzolio was a sponsor of legislation ending the GEA over two more state budgets. Last month we promised school districts that enacted our two resolutions a series of talking points that could be utilized in a follow-up meeting with local legislators. We encourage each school district to schedule a meeting with local legislators after enacting these two important resolutions. We suggest that the meeting include key members of your local community (including representation from groups like the PTA, Music and Sports Boosters, etc.). Background information and talking points that can be used at that meeting are provided at this link.

Attempt to Link/Confuse Two Issues Viewed as Evidence of Legislative Concern:

We want to warn you in advance of posturing member districts may encounter when meeting with local legislators. Reports have come back to us from representatives of member districts indicating some legislators are trying to link two unrelated issues. Several legislators are trying to create anxiety by emphasizing that the focus of the Berger Commission was about closing and repurposing hospitals. Equitable allocation of school funding and the procedure used for merging districts are two distinct topics. Our organization’s push for a Berger-style Commission is based upon the precedent established when of the legislature used outside expertise to de-politicize the difficult task of streamlining NY’s state’s healthcare system. Under current New York law merging of school districts requires multiple votes by local Boards of Education, along with two approvals by votes supported by residents of both districts. If you encounter a legislator who attempts to link these two separate issues please call our office (607-255-8056), or e-mail our office ( btf27@cornell.edu ) with that information. I will follow up by phone, or in person with that legislator. Again, this effort to create confusion and undermine our position is a sign that legislators are concerned about the RSA’s message!

RSA Awards Highlight Conference Program:

One of the highlights of the RSA’s Annual Conference was the Sunday night’s banquet wrapping up with the awarding of the RSA’s three Annual Awards. Linda King was presented the Association’s Anne Z. Paulin Distinguished Service Award in appreciation of her many contributions to the RSA. Linda had been a long term member and officer of the Lake George Board of Education and continues to serve that region of the state as a member of the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES. In addition, Linda has served the region as President of the Adirondack Area School Boards Association. Linda recently served on the Selection Committee that handled the hiring of
Jay Boak, the retiring Superintendent of the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES was recognized with the William H. Deming Award for his many years of service to the children attending the Rural Schools of the State of New York. Jay was mentioned in multiple nominations submitted by Superintendents from his BOCES region, and by many of his fellow District Superintendents. In addition to his many years of service to the students of the Jeff-Lewis BOCES region, Jay deserves much appreciation for his long term leadership of NY REAC a once viable rural council that has suffered from a lack of state support. Always a strong advocate for rural regions of the state, we appreciate that Jay utilized an opportunity to visit with Regent Dawson during Sunday night’s program to discuss the importance of revitalizing REAC.

The final recipient of the evening was New York State Senator James Seward. Senator Seward represents the sprawling 51st district. Sixty-one of school districts that Senator Seward’s represents are member of the NY State Rural Schools Association. During the final stages of the most recent state budget deliberations Senator Seward graciously hosted a meeting that allowed RSA officials to speak to a large number of State Senators and their staff members. We hope that opportunity will continue in the future. Senator Seward’s schedule prevented him from attending our program in Cooperstown. Interim Director Tom Marzeski will schedule a meeting to present Senator Seward the award over the summer.

We are appreciative of how many RSA members took time to submit a nomination. The number of nominees made the decisions of the Awards Committee a challenge. The Awards Committee was again chaired by Jim Loomis working alongside of Committee Members Ed Engel and Tom Marzeski.

Outreach to NY State Grange:

On July 25th I traveled to Cortland to meet with the leaders of the NY State Grange. During our discussions we found a number of areas where our interests closely align. We look forward to building a stronger, ongoing partnership with the Grange on issues that impact rural communities. Efforts to strengthen these types of partnerships have been a genuine priority for RSA Board Chairman, Ed Engel who initiated contact with the Grange leadership.

A Couple of Reminders:

First, Tom Palmer, the Superintendent of the Tri-Valley Central School District has reached out to Superintendents with a survey that requests information concerning the impact the Local Tax Levy Cap has had upon rural school districts. The RSA believes this study has high value to our member school districts. We recognize how busy district leaders are as we move into mid-August, but ask that you search your e-mail and complete that survey if time permits!

Second, if you have completed registering for the NYSSBA Conference in NYC we ask you to consider attending the Breakfast Program the RSA is Co-Sponsoring. The breakfast will feature an update on the recent legal challenge brought by Michael Rebell following up on the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case. The program will be held at a restaurant immediately adjacent to the Conference location and is scheduled not to conflict with the NYSSBA Conference Program. We have less than half of our tickets for this event remaining—so we encourage prompt follow up by those interested in attending! All registration information is found in the flyer on Page 16 of this newsletter.
Get all your back to school items through TCPN

Overseeing district purchasing requires a lot of effort and planning. The Cooperative Purchasing Network (TCPN) helps simplify your steps and reduce your costs. TCPN’s contracts leverage the purchasing power of over 37,000 actively engaged government entities. All contracts are competitively bid and awarded by a single governmental entity – Region 4 Education Service Center. TCPN monitors contracts through third-party compliance reviews to ensure vendor accountability. You can rely on TCPN’s lead agency’s ISO certified processes, 100+ combined years of government purchasing experience and 50+ combined years of auditing experience – we know what it takes to keep schools running.

Keep your school purchasing on time and on budget.
Go to www.tcpn.org and sign up today.
The New York State Rural Schools Association represents approximately one of every eight public school students enrolled in NY State. We believe every one of those students has a right to a sound basic education. We are committed to equitable funding for all students who attend New York school districts.

Progress on High School Completion Rates for Rural Schools Exceed Those for Other High Need Districts:
Minority Completion Rates for Rural High Need Districts Exceeds That of the State

Over the past four years the progress shown by High Need Rural School Districts in improving their Four-Year HS Completion Rates has statistically exceeded that of other types of NY State school districts. Data recently reported by NYSED are summarized in the table found below. **We take pride that progress over the most recent year by High Need Rural Districts doubles the progress reported for the state as a whole.** We also note, that on a longer term comparison (Four Years) the progress shown by HN/Rural Districts easily exceeds the progress of the state as a whole. **RSA** membership (2013-14) predominantly comes from High Need/Rural Districts (116 districts) and Average Need School Districts (152 Districts). SED points out that the recently reported data reflects genuine progress as recent graduates met a higher set of graduation standards than were in place four years ago. Further, the **RSA** frequently notes that High Need Rural Districts and Average Need Districts rely heavily upon State Aid and have been impacted “first” and “to a greater degree” by Gap Elimination Adjustments that have caused cutbacks in staffing and support for many of these districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Type</th>
<th>Four Yr. Grad Rate</th>
<th>Progress (One Year)</th>
<th>Progress (Four Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban-Sub. High Need</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural High Need</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Need</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Need</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Districts (State)</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of the RSA/Gates Foundation Statewide Effort to Reduce Rural Dropout Rates Recognized

The long term progress High Need Rural school districts have shown in HS Completion rates, in part reflects the statewide work of the **RSA** which utilized grant funding from the Gates Foundation to support an extensive program aimed at reducing rural drop-outs. Key leaders in that effort were former **RSA** Executive Director, Dr. Lawrence Kiley; **RSA** Deputy Director Dr. Dennis Sweeney; and Cornell Professor, and Director of the New York State Center for Rural School, Dr. John Sipple. School districts that participated in the **RSA** led initiative developed multi-faceted plans to meet their own district’s needs in an attempt to head off dropouts. A significant part of the **RSA**’s efforts was to make certain rural school districts did not view district drop-outs only as a high school issue. Districts were encouraged to develop interventions that went down to the middle-school, and even to the elementary school level to increase their four year completion rates.
Handling Diversity in Rural Settings

Minority Completion Rates for Rural High Need Districts
Exceeds State Completion Rates-
A Concern for Minority Male Completion is Evident

The graphs found below indicate that minority completion rates in High Need/Rural Districts exceed those for the state as a whole by a wide margin. It must be noted that while the graduation rates for minority males in HN/Rural districts compare favorably with those for the state as a whole, a focus needs to be placed upon improving the completion rates of minority males! Rural schools are expected to become more diverse over the next decade and it will be critical to improve completion rates for minority males over that time period.

Notable Graduates of RSA Member District …

Frank Gannett… Media Magnate - Bolivar High School (now Bolivar-Richburg CSD)
The Bodine Brothers … NASCAR Superstars … Waverly CSD

Please send us names of your district's distinguished graduates to recognize in future editions!!
Recent NY State Grade 4 NAEP Results Raise Concerns:  
Are They The Canary in the Coal Mine?

Since I have served as the Executive Director of this organization two facts have remained consistent. For set of student performance data that I have reviewed, students from NY rural school districts outperformed (1) the measured student performance of NY State as a whole, and (2) the performance of rural students across the nation. In reviewing the Rural School and Community Trust’s recent, Why Rural Matters 2014 publication that came out at the end of May, it jumped out to me that NY State results for 2013 Grade 4 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing for Math and Reading raise concerns. That data, portrayed in the Chart below show NY State Rural Grade 4 students not keeping pace with (1) the performance of NY State (as a whole), or with (2) rural students tested across our fifty states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Grade 4 Math-NAEP Results</th>
<th>2013 Grade 4 Reading-NAEP Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean Scale Score</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Rural</td>
<td>237.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rural</td>
<td>242.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Statewide</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We hope that the performance of NY 4th Grade students is an anomaly based upon NAEP sampling problems. We note that results for New York State Grade 8 students on Math and Reading reflect the performance pattern we are used to seeing (NY Rural students solidly outperforming the state as a whole and rural student nationally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Grade 8 Math-NAEP Results</th>
<th>2013 Grade 8 Reading-NAEP Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean Scale Score</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Rural</td>
<td>288.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rural</td>
<td>286.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Statewide</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NY State’s rural student performance on the NAEP Grade 4 Math and Reading assessments looks so far out of line with the 2011 comparative chart (below) that we need to monitor if this may be an emerging trend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Grade 4 Math-NAEP Results</th>
<th>2011 Grade 4 Reading-NAEP Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mean Scale Score</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Rural</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Rural</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NY Statewide</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **NY State Rural Schools Association** has been concerned that the combined impact of State Aid reductions (GEA’s) in conjunction with the local levy cap have had upon school funding. We often state that low property wealth districts were impacted “first” and that the program and staffing reductions they were forced to make have impacted member school districts by causing disproportional reductions when compared with other NY communities. We hope that the increase in elementary class size and the decimation of strong AIS programs that rural Superintendents often comment upon are not the underlying cause of this troubling drop in comparative student performance. Unfortunately, the change in state assessments last year leaves districts with limited comparative data (causing reliance upon anecdotal observation) as we assess the underlying cause of this drastic slide in measured student outcomes. *We hope the 2013 Grade 4 NAEP Assessments are not the “canary in the coal mine.”*

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### 2014 RSA Annual Conference

- **Sunday Night Keynote Speaker** Dean Norton, President of the NY Farm Bureau & Darrell Griff, RSA Farm Bureau Representative
- **Dr. Rick Timbs,** Executive Director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium, Monday Night Keynote Speaker.
- **FFA Oratorical Contest Winner** Stacie Bliss, Yorkshire-Pioneer CSD & Conference Chair Jacklin Starks at Monday Luncheon.
- **Dr. John Sipple,** NYS Center for the Rural Schools, Monday Early Bird Session
- **Ms. Stacey DeLaney,** Schoharie CSD, presenting on Monday morning.
- **RSA Executive Director Dr. Bruce Fraser** and Regent James Dawson

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**Join us for the 2015 RSA Annual Conference**

**July 12-14, 2015**
Another Example of Why New York State Needs a Berger Type Commission to Take Politics Out of School Funding Allocation Decisions: Tier F GEA Restoration Funds Are Targeted to “Phantom Students”

As a function of higher incomes wealthier communities typically send higher percentages of their children to private, or parochial schools. When large numbers of students choose to attend private schools, most school finance experts view this as relieving communities of the costs of educating a relatively segment of the children that reside within school districts. It is generally true that when a high percentage of local students attend private schools it provides relief in relation to the burden placed upon the local tax base.

We acknowledge that school districts need to provide some services (transportation, textbooks, Title services, etc.) for students served in private/parochial school options. That being said, Tier F of the Gap Elimination Adjustment restoration formula makes it a priority to restore additional funding for “phantom students” who choose to attend private/parochial schools. Language describing Tier F of the ten tiered formula for 2014-15 Gap elimination Adjustment restorations states:

Tier F. For districts whose 2013-14 nonpublic school enrollment (district of attendance) is greater than 25 percent of 2013-14 nonpublic and public school enrollment, the product of that percentage multiplied by the EN percent multiplied by 2013-14 public school enrollment multiplied by $350.00; and,

The highly contrived provision of Tier F that stipulates only school districts with more than one quarter of their young people opting for private/parochial options would be eligible to be aided for their “phantom students” is a clear indication that Tier F is politically targeted to benefit certain districts!

The total funding for Tier F is not a huge amount (only $4.195M). Based upon the Tier F eligibility language only thirty one districts in NY State qualify for funding under this Tier. More than eighty percent of the funding under this tier is directed to ten school districts. The chart below identifies those ten school districts; their 2014-15 funding under Tier F; and, each district’s relative wealth (Combined Wealth Ratio). The chart also identifies the State Senator(s) that represent Tier F recipients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Tier F Amount</th>
<th>CWR</th>
<th>% Tier F</th>
<th>Senator (s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Ramapo</td>
<td>$ 1,513,124</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td>36.06%</td>
<td>Carlucci/Larkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniondale</td>
<td>$ 418,482</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>9.97%</td>
<td>Skelos/Hannon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Plains</td>
<td>$ 356,023</td>
<td>1.479</td>
<td>8.49%</td>
<td>Stewart-Cousins/Latimer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Huntington</td>
<td>$ 252,775</td>
<td>0.905</td>
<td>6.02%</td>
<td>Marcellino/Flanagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>$ 220,044</td>
<td>2.914</td>
<td>5.24%</td>
<td>Skelos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarrytown</td>
<td>$ 170,924</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>4.07%</td>
<td>Stewart-Cousins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe Woodbury</td>
<td>$ 142,170</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
<td>Bonacic/Larkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hicksville</td>
<td>$ 131,115</td>
<td>1.147</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
<td>Marcellino/Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenburgh</td>
<td>$ 101,751</td>
<td>2.227</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
<td>Stewart-Cousins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach</td>
<td>$ 83,462</td>
<td>1.728</td>
<td>1.99%</td>
<td>Skelos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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80.78%
In general, the other twenty one school districts that receive funding under Tier F are some of the wealthier school districts in their region of the state.

Noted school finance expert, Dr. Rick Timbs of the Statewide School Finance Consortium, notes that New York State now utilizes forty different ways to count/weight students in the overly complex and heavily politicized aid formulas that have been enacted by legislators. Directing additional aid to districts that serve a high number of “phantom students,” should be understood as a clear example of the political manipulation of school funding.

**Frankly, the Rural Schools Association has seen no evidence that New York’s annual budget process can move the state in the direction of school funding reform.** The New York State Rural Schools Association is calling for “depoliticizing” the allocation of school aid through use of an independent, outside panel of school funding experts. It is understandable, even acceptable, that politicians may fight over highway funding, or which prison to close, but government representatives in New York need to reject that model of leadership when it comes to fair funding of public schools. When a politician claims they “have brought home the bacon for the districts I represent,” the other side of that statement is that children elsewhere in the state are being provided diminished educational opportunity while residents of those communities pay higher local property taxes! New York needs leaders who push for equitable school funding statewide—for every student in the state. **Distribution of education funding must become “free from politics.”**

**NYSSBA Complimentary Seminar Information**

In a previous newsletter we gave members a “heads up” to hold September 18th for a complimentary seminar in the Binghamton region made available for our members through the New York State School Boards Association. The program features Dr. William Daggett from the International Center for Leadership in Education. A link to detailed information concerning this event is provided at [www.nyssba.org/events](http://www.nyssba.org/events). Registration for this event is being handled through NYSSBA at the link listed above. We are most appreciative of NYSSBA’s sponsorship of this event and encourage attendance from RSA member school districts.

**Welcome Extended to Ten New Rural Schools Association Members**

**Thanks for coming aboard!** Working in a unified manner our message becomes stronger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brocton CSD</th>
<th>Caro-Meridian CSD</th>
<th>Eden CSD</th>
<th>Gowanda CSD</th>
<th>Northeast Clinton CSD</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUNY-Oswego</td>
<td>Peru CSD</td>
<td>Romulus CSD</td>
<td>Warrensburg CSD</td>
<td>Wellsville CSD</td>
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</table>
“New York spends the most per pupil of any state…”
What Governor Cuomo Doesn’t Tell You…

Data From the NEA’s Annual Ranking Publication
Indicate:

♦ For the latest year that comparative data is available New York ranks tied for 9th when compared with the nation’s fifty states for the portion of each $1,000 in personal income utilized to support K-12 public education.

♦ Data from the past decade show that New York has consistently ranked in this range (tied for 9th) on this measure.

♦ New York ($45) commits a smaller share of every $1,000 in personal income to support K-12 than neighboring states Vermont ($60), New Jersey ($51) and Pennsylvania ($49). NY’s share compares closely with other N’eastern states (Mass.=42, Ct.=43)

♦ Comparative data on this measure over the past decade indicate that New Yorkers are now devoting a smaller portion of every $1,000 of their personal income to supporting K-12 Education than they did a decade ago ($49 in 2001-02 vs $45 in 2011-12).

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1. Wyoming 60
2. Alaska 57
3. Wisconsin 54
4. New Jersey 51
5. Delaware 49
6. Pennsylvania 49
7. West Virginia 48
8. Maine 47
9. Georgia 45
10. New York 45
11. Wisconsin 45
12. New Hampshire 44
13. Connecticut 43
14. Idaho 43
15. Indiana 42
16. Missouri 42
17. South Carolina 42
18. Arizona 41
19. Kansas 41
20. New Mexico 41
21. Iowa 41
22. Kentucky 40
23. Maryland 40
24. Ohio 40
25. United States 39
26. Hawaii 39
27. Illinois 39
28. Louisiana 38
29. Oregon 37
30. Alabama 35
31. Indiana 35
32. Michigan 35
33. Montana 34
34. Nebraska 34
35. North Carolina 34
36. New Hampshire 34
37. New Mexico 34
38. New York 34
39. North Dakota 34
40. Tennessee 34
41. Texas 34
42. Utah 34
43. Virginia 34
44. Washington 34
45. Wisconsin 34
46. Wyoming 34
47. Illinois 33
48. Florida 33
49. Missouri 32
50. Mississippi 32
51. District of Columbia 32
MID-HUDSON SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL
announces a Breakfast Forum for Board Trustees and Superintendents

An opportunity to hear the most current information on the politics, economics and legal matters involving the state’s funding of public education.

October 27, 2014 7:15-8:45am
Rosie O’Grady’s
800 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. New York, NY
Cost: $45.00 per person

Featuring Panelists

Michael Rebell
Executive Director of the Campaign for Educational Equity at Teachers College

Larry Levy
Executive Dean, National Center for Suburban Studies, Hofstra University

Elizabeth Lynam
Vice President and Director of State Studies, Citizens Budget Commission

RSA Registration Form / Invoice ~ Trustee and Superintendent Breakfast Forum
October 27, 2014 7:15-8:45 am
Rosie O’Grady’s (Seating is Limited)
800 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. New York, NY
Cost: $45.00 per person

District: __________________________
Trustee Name (s): ____________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________
Superintendent Name: __________________________

Reservation Deadline - August 31 or until program is full.
Please return completed form with check to:
Rural Schools Association
113 Kennedy Hall, Cornell University,
Ithaca, NY 14853
Email: NAM33@cornell.edu TEL: (607)255-8709 FAX: (607)254-2896
Cancellation refunds cannot be granted after 10/15.