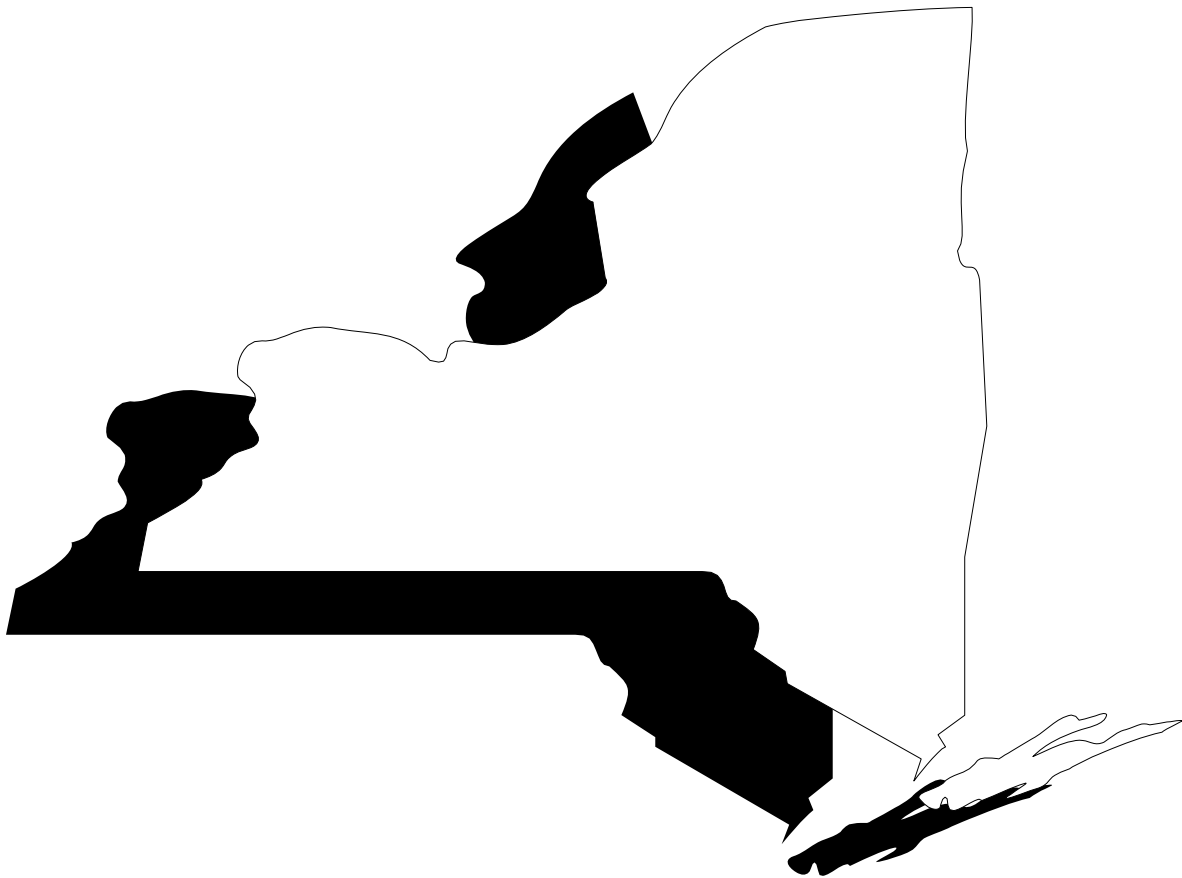


A DOZEN WAYS TO HELP SUSTAIN PROGRAMS AND INCREASE SCHOOL DISTRICT EFFICIENCY



**FEBRUARY 2009 FROM THE CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS
OF THE CLINTON-ESSEX-WARREN-WASHINGTON BOCES REGION**

A DOZEN WAYS TO HELP SUSTAIN PROGRAMS AND INCREASE SCHOOL DISTRICT EFFICIENCY

A FEBRUARY 2009 SET OF SUGGESTIONS TO OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

Honorable Senator Elizabeth O’C. Little, 45th Senate District

Honorable Assemblywoman Janet Duprey, 114th Assembly District

Honorable Assemblywoman Teresa R. Sayward, 113th Assembly District

FROM THIS REGION’S CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS

Served by Champlain Valley Educational Services
Craig King, District Superintendent

AuSable Valley Central School District, Paul D. Savage II, Superintendent
Beekmantown Central School District, Scott Amo, Superintendent
Chazy Central Rural School, Kevin Mulligan, Superintendent
Crown Point Central School District, Shari L. Brannock, Superintendent
Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School District, Gail S. Else, Superintendent
Keene Central School District, Cynthia Johnston, Superintendent
Moriah Central School District, William Larrow, Superintendent
Northeastern Clinton Central School District, Peter J. Turner, Superintendent
Northern Adirondack Central School District, Laura Marlow, Superintendent
Peru Central School District, A. Paul Scott, Superintendent
Plattsburgh City School District, James M. Short, Superintendent
Putnam Central School District, Matthew Boucher, Superintendent
Saranac Central School District, Kenneth Cringle, Superintendent
Schroon Lake Central School District, Michael Bonnewell, Superintendent
Ticonderoga Central School District, John C. McDonald, Superintendent
Westport Central School District, John Gallagher, Interim Superintendent
Willsboro Central School District, Stephen Broadwell, Superintendent

Compiled in close consultation with this region’s chief school officers
By A. Paul Scott, Legislative Committee Liaison with the NYSCOSS

1. Unleash the full potential of BOCES.

This action was featured within the final reports from the New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief and the Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness.

2. Support Creation of a pension ‘Tier V’ for future public sector employees.

This action was proposed by the Governor.

3. Create regional health insurance pools to leverage the buying power of school districts and to standardize benefits and contribution rates.

This would eliminate health insurance as a contentious issue in local contract negotiations.

4. Enable regional collective bargaining through the BOCES.

Currently, each school district statewide negotiates its own collective bargaining agreements with all employee groups. Allow local school districts to ‘opt into’ regional bargaining contracts negotiated via the BOCES.

5. Repeal the Wicks Law.

This action was proposed by the Governor.

6. Streamline New York’s tangle of special education requirements.

Reasonably reduce mandates that exceed federal regulations. If New York State were in line with national averages, \$1.3B in costs could be reduced, annually.

7. Streamline planning and reporting requirements.

With approximately 150 mandatory reports from each school district annually, that averages out to approximately three state-mandated reports each week. Please advocate for a much more streamlined, consolidated approach to reporting.

8. Raise the outdated \$30,000 salary limit on BOCES aid.

BOCES aid is authorized only up to a salary of \$30,000. It’s been eighteen years since that threshold was raised. Thus, the relative value of BOCES aid has decreased substantially during the past eighteen years. This \$30,000 salary limit undermines state incentives to promote regional cooperation to reduce costs and increase school district efficiency.

9. Oppose a new mandate to shift fifteen percent [15%] of pre-school special education costs onto school districts.

Halt any plan to shift the 12.5% state share and 2.5% county share of pre-school special education onto school districts. Given all the statewide talk about mandate relief for schools, this new mandate should be opposed, or the state should fully fund this new state mandate for public schools.

10. Make public school districts full partners in the planning and implementation for school improvement and cost-containment initiatives.

We welcome public accountability – and provide it. Unlike the towns and other government organizations, our budgets are subject to annual voter approval, and detailed performance data is published annually and examined publicly.

We request more realistic timetables and more flexibility in using new funding resources within our local school districts.

11. Revise the contingent school budget cap.

As legislators, you already recognized some items are suitable for exemption from the contingency cap. Please include energy, health care and pension fund contributions from the contingency cap, since local school districts have little or no control over such items.

12. Please pass another on-time budget.

Thank you for delivering on-time budgets for these past four years. We appreciate your efforts with that, and ask you to encourage your legislative colleagues to deliver an on-time budget this year, too.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

February 2009 'Danger & Opportunity' Legislative Position Paper by the
Capital Region BOCES and Questar III BOCES

December 2008 Final Report
from the Commission on Property Tax Relief

April 2008 Final Report
from the Commission on
Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness