

Orange County School Boards Association

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MINUTES: DELEGATES' MEETING January 11, 2023 Virtual via Zoom

In Attendance: Martha Bogart, Bill Boss, Deborah Heppes, Jean Pavek (OU-BOCES), Larry Berger (Cornwall, OU-BOCES), Lori Gorcosos (Florida), Tom Loftus (Goshen), Mike Emsworth (Greenwood Lake), Faith Aprilante (HFFM), JoAnn Reed (Marlboro), Amy Creeden, John Williams (Middletown), Joe Flaherty (Minisink), Bill Harris (Port Jervis), Joe Rickard (Tuxedo), Angela Terralavoro (Valley Central), Bill Fanos (Warwick), Robin White (Washingtonville), Karyn Meier (OCSBA).

Call to Order President Joe Flaherty called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and led all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting Purpose This meeting's purpose was to discuss what legislative and budgetary issues were of the most importance to Orange County public school districts so that they might be considered for inclusion on OCSBA's legislative platform.

Executive Director's Report Executive Director Karyn Meier reviewed general information regarding NYSSBA's efforts during the current NY State budget season. She discussed the purpose of OCSBA's platform, as well as the purpose of NYSSBA's Capital Conference and Lobby Day events. She reviewed a draft of OCSBA's Legislative Platform, after which attendees discussed specific issues.

Delegates Comments/Concerns Attention was called to the priorities mentioned in NYSSBA Executive Director Bob Schneider's open letter to Governor Hochul, as well as comments made recently about legislative priorities by Rural Schools Association Executive Director David Little. These included CTE Salary Aid Caps, Universal Free School Meals, the modernization of the Foundation Aid formula, mental health needs of students, special ed learning loss, staffing issues, safety issues and transportation issues.

Much of the discussion centered on Governor Hochul's statewide requirement that all districts must transport 100 % of students with zero emission school buses by 2035, beginning with only purchasing/leasing zero emission buses by 2027. Many difficulties were noted with this initiative including the prohibitive costs of electric buses, expenses associated with installing charging infrastructure, the cost of electricity, mileage range limitations, possible safety hazards to name a few. Discussions about current funding streams to accommodate this requirement including recognizing the insufficient level of funding currently available, and questions about how future unfunded expenses would impact school district budgets. Reference was made to the MTA's request for rate relief for the electric buses they are currently using due to exorbitant electric rates, and the possibility of obtaining crossover agency support from NYSERDA to explore more creative funding possibilities.

Another large discussion centered on the importance of CTE programs to students, and the need to adjust the aid cap on instructor salaries.

Other topics discussed included:

- Not mandating that the Covid Vaccine be included on the list of mandated vaccines that students must have to attend school
- Universal Free School Meals
- Special Education Parent Advocate Training

The general feeling was to present a platform that would embrace looking forward by doing things now to be ready for the future, and to speak with one voice.

Adjournment President Flaherty thanked everyone for attending. Motion to adjourn was m/s/c at 8:17 PM.