

# CONNECTING THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY

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## THE NEW YORK STATE WOMEN IN ADMINISTRATION (NYSAWA) ENTERS NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL

By Dr. Ann Myers, Founding Member, NYSAWA and Dr. Elizabeth Wood, Assistant Superintendent, Shenendehowa CSD & NYSAWA Chair

### A Partnership Decades in The Making

Some changes come fast and possess an energy that moves the earth and remakes social fabric. Other changes come quietly and slowly, experience growth spurts and then moments when it seems they are struggling for survival. All changes require leadership, but the latter requires leaders who are also advocates, voices for a change so fundamental and so intergenerationally important that the leaders give it a lifetime. Those whose life takes the later route find themselves still growing after decades because of the rightfulness of their purpose, the tenacity and conviction of their leaders and the resilience and commitment of their members. The new partnership between NYSAWA and THE COUNCIL is one such story.

Those who remember the decades before the 20<sup>th</sup> century ended will recall the Board of Regents and Commissioners of Education had standing Advisory Councils on significant and unfolding issues. One of them operating under Commissioners Ambach and Sobol was the Advisory Council on Equal Opportunity for Women. The New York Association for Women in Administration (NYSAWA) was formed by five members of that advisory council. The two men and three women had determined that no other statewide organization held equity for women and girls as their mission and whose membership was defined by role could both serve women and girls and give them opportunities for leadership. So, on that day, the five each took money from their wallets and paid the first membership dues to form a new organization.

NYSAWA was formally created in 1990. From its inception, the NYSAWA Board was determined not to be an organization solely of women, but one that would be inclusive by gender, race and leadership position. The organization held the specific mission of addressing the inequities facing women and girls in education. Creating the forum for women and men to focus on the shortage of women in leadership and the experiences of young women in schools and their career choices was the vision. The intention was change. Aspiring leaders were as welcome as District Superintendents and, in fact, the opportunity for visibility and dialogue among those in varying roles became one of the generative forces for the organization. Networking and professional development were pillars of the program initiatives.



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Superintendents is a professional and advocacy organization with over a century of service to school superintendents in New York State. The Council provides its more than 800 members with numerous professional development opportunities, publications and personal services, while advocating for public education and the superintendency.