2015-2016 Annual letter
Reflecting on Our Past, Securing Our Future
It is important to honor the past while looking forward to shaping the future.
Dear Colleagues,

This is my sixth and final annual letter to you; one word comes to mind – honored. It has been an honor to be a school leader and an honor to have served as executive director of The Council.

As I reflect on my long association with The Council, I feel it is important to remember our history. The Council has a proud history dating back to 1883. At that time, a group of 17 superintendents met in Syracuse, NY to form the first organization known as the New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS). At the time, there were approximately 10,000 public school systems in New York State; most of them lead by supervising principals. The initial 17 members of The Council were primarily district superintendents and the chief school officers of the state’s small city school districts.

The modern period in The Council’s history began in 1967, when NYSCOSS and the NYS School Administrators group voted to merge. In 1968, Edward L. Osborne, Batavia City School District, was selected to become The Council’s Executive Secretary, creating the foundation for The Council we know today. Our current membership of 706 superintendents and 114 Cabinet members would amaze and please our 17-member founding group.

Having been associated with The Council for close to three decades has afforded me the opportunity and privilege to have known and worked with every executive director since John Henry Bennett (1974-1989). When I arrived in New York from New Hampshire, John was welcoming from day one. He remembered my name, respected my superintendent experience prior to coming to New York and was always helpful. In many ways, I have tried to mirror John Henry’s welcoming style during my tenure.

One of John Henry’s significant accomplishments during his tenure was to successfully advocate legislation to eliminate tenure for supervising principals in exchange for changing their titles to superintendents – a “sea change” which allowed The Council to begin building its membership base.

“The modern period in The Council’s history began in 1967, when NYSCOSS and the NYS School Administrators group voted to merge...Our current membership of 706 superintendents and 114 Cabinet members would amaze and please our 17-member founding group.”
In 1989, James O’Connell assumed the executive director position. Jim, a former superintendent, came to The Council from the State University of New York at New Paltz. He introduced many academic initiatives, including the Superintendents Academy, the Summer Institute at Harvard, and many other professional development opportunities for superintendents. Jim also contributed greatly to putting New York and The Council on the national scene. Jim was always ready to provide support and I am pleased to call him a friend.

Robert Loretan was my district superintendent colleague before he became the executive director of The Council in 1996. Bob built on the work of John Henry and Jim by expanding our strategic partner program and membership services. The Council staff grew under Bob’s leadership as member services increased.

Bob also forged a partnership with New York State Association of School Business Officials to purchase the building in which The Council currently resides. Bob was a creative and entrepreneurial leader who was always supportive of me and offered great insight into the challenges faced by superintendents.

When Thomas Rogers became executive director in 2003, he brought a very unique skill set to The Council. Tom was an educational policy aide to the State Senate Majority Leader for six years; a background that proved very valuable to The Council during his tenure. In-house legal services, LEAF, Inc., Cabinet membership, rebranding conferences, a new logo, technology initiatives as well as the Education is a Civil Right advocacy agenda were launched. Tom has been supportive of me since the beginning of my tenure at The Council and I thank him.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Robert Bradley. Bob was interim executive director during a critical period for New York education. The New York State Education Department had new leadership and many new educational initiatives were in their formative stages. He was a valuable partner during my transition period when I arrived at The Council.

During my tenure, I have focused on two primary goals – relevancy and sustainability of The Council.
**Advocacy: A Time of Transition**

With Charles Dedrick assuming leadership, The Council is again in transition. Education policy in New York State is confronting a transition as well, providing a potent opportunity for The Council and our members to assert leadership.

In 2010, when Robert Reidy became Executive Director, state finances were in a deep trough created by the Great Recession, Merryl Tisch had been Chancellor of the Board of Regents for only one year, Andrew Cuomo had yet to be elected Governor, and New York had yet to win *Race to the Top* funding. Then School Aid was cut by a record dollar amount and the property tax cap was enacted. But with the momentum given to the Regents Reform Agenda by *Race to the Top* funding and an aggressive focus on education by the new Governor, policy issues soon surpassed finance concerns in the time and attention they demanded for advocacy.

We have since seen eight Regents replaced and a new Chancellor elected, a new Commissioner appointed, major revisions in teacher evaluation requirements enacted, a surge in students opting out of state assessments, a retreat by the Governor and Legislature from education policymaking, and three state budgets delivering School Aid increases of more than $1.4 billion each year.

Despite the recent strong state aid increases, finance concerns now demand attention. The state has enacted a restrictive tax cap while neglecting significant mandate relief and generous state aid increases cannot be assured going forward.

For the 2016-17 budget, the public school groups comprising the Educational Conference Board projected a $1.7 billion state aid increase would be needed to enable schools to preserve current services. Approximately $700 million of that need was attributable to the prospect that
the near zero property tax cap for the year ahead would provide almost no revenue contribution from local sources. The enacted budget increases regular School Aid by roughly $1.3 billion, with another $200 million targeted for new programmatic initiatives.

Whatever the appraisal of this year’s state budget for education, continuation of state aid increases averaging more than 7 percent is not something schools can count upon. First, the nation will someday face another recession. The Citizens Budget Commission recently projected that a new recession similar in depth to the last three could cause average annual revenue losses of between 7 and 18 percent. Comprising the largest single general fund expenditure in the state budget, School Aid could not be spared from the resulting austerity. Second, while over the last three state budgets School Aid has risen by an average of 7.2 percent and Medicaid has gone up by 3.6 percent per year over that span, everything else in the state budget has been cut by an average of 0.7 percent. Someday, elected officials may insist upon a re-balancing of spending priorities.

So, consideration of what to advocate and how to advocate it has to be a focus on the finance front. The Council has joined with other public school groups to call for changes to the tax cap – making the basic cap a “true 2 percent” no longer fluctuating with inflation, creating a more real carry-over provision, eliminating the supermajority requirement for override attempts, and eliminating the possibility of negative tax caps. But given the Governor’s opposition, no consequential relief from the tax cap can be expected. Nor is action on meaningful mandate relief on the horizon. So a core message of The Council to state leaders has been this: **If you are not going to change your rules, you must fund your rules, to give schools a fair chance to succeed at educating all the state’s children.**

With the demise this year of the Gap Elimination Adjustment, funding that mission now needs to focus on how to restructure and re-start the Foundation Aid formula.

When it was enacted in 2007, the Foundation Aid formula was an under-appreciated achievement in public policy. It generally delivered the greatest aid per pupil to the neediest districts. It promised all districts greater predictability in future aid. It used factors that could be understood and debated, making state funding decisions more transparent. But after two-years of a scheduled four-year phase-in, the formula was frozen for three years and minimally increased in the three years thereafter. The state is now over $3.5 billion behind in phasing in the formula. At the same time, the fully phased-in formula would now drive percentage increases averaging almost three times greater for high wealth/low need school districts than for their high need rural counterparts.

Next year will be the 10th anniversary of the Foundation formula’s enactment and much has changed in the decade since – shifts in enrollment, increases in student poverty, dispersion of English language learners beyond cities, adoption of higher standards, and, not least,
imposition of a restrictive tax cap. Also, 37 percent of all districts are now on save-harmless—receiving more Foundation Aid than the permanent formula would generate. Changing circumstances will require changing the formula.

The revisions enacted in 2015 to the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) statute were woefully misguided. In a joint news release with the New York State School Boards Association, The Council warned that the legislation met the popular definition of insanity – repeating a past course of action and expecting a different result – by again imposing a deadline for approval of new plans with a threat of losing state aid. We explained that the new law also undermined a success of the old: 74 percent of superintendents said that the professional practice (“other 60 percent”) measures were having a positive impact, but the new law repealed some elements of that component and imposed a nonsensical new mandate for observations to be conducted by “independent evaluators.”

That lawmakers recognized their mistake is demonstrated by the radical and helpful reinterpretation of many provisions of the statute that the Regents have been allowed or encouraged to make through regulations. First, the approval deadline was extended through authorization for hardship waivers. Then, small and rural districts were provided an opportunity to be exempted from the independent evaluator mandate – a Council recommendation. Then, a four-year moratorium on the use of the state test-based growth score was approved. Then, application of the independent evaluator mandate was further narrowed.

Still districts were facing a loss of two years of state aid increases if they failed to negotiate and gain state approval for new APPR plans by September 1. The Council advocated allowing districts to evaluate using plans approved under either the new law or the old, aiming to spare them from either losing state aid or making unsound compromises to gain a deal, and from having to implement a defective law. The Legislature instead pushed back the deadline by four months, to December 31. That action at least diminishes the risk of losing aid.

Eventually, state policymakers will reconsider the entire APPR system, presumably before the growth score moratorium runs out. The Council should be prepared with its own recommendations for a system that would truly serve to advance teaching, leadership, and learning.

Finally, under new Commissioner MaryEllen Elia, the State Education Department has moved purposefully to revise state assessments and the Common Core Learning Standards. The grades 3 through 8 assessments have been slightly shortened, with further efforts promised. More questions were released than ever before and released earlier than ever before. Plans to carefully transition to computer-based, adaptive assessment are underway. Revisions of the standards are to be adopted 18 months before the start of the school year when realigned state assessments are to be first administered, consistent with The Council’s request that schools be allowed two summers to carry out essential curriculum and professional development. Generally, the sense prevails that practical concerns identified by superintendents are being considered.
But more will be necessary to win back the trust of parents who are opting their children out of state tests and, in some cases, attempting to opt their children out of local instructional practices.

Through its vision statement, The Council aspires to be “…the preeminent professional organization in New York State influencing the development of education policy…” At our best, we have been preeminent in defining policy issues demanding attention and pointing the way toward effective resolution. This time of transition calls to The Council and our members to exert that leadership once more.

**THE COUNCIL LEGAL SERVICES CONTINUED GROWTH**

The Council’s legal services have expanded considerably in the past 16 years. We first provided legal services through a private attorney who advised The Council on a limited basis. In 2003, The Council hired an attorney who split his time between providing legal services and advocacy work. In 2007, we transitioned to a full-time General Counsel providing comprehensive legal services and in 2010, The Council added Level II services for our members.

It’s important that we play an active role in providing effective legal representation for superintendents. In-house legal services are provided directly from The Council and are considered the “first level.” These services include contract reviews and renewals, contract negotiations, general questions and retirement issues.

We represent new superintendents even before they join The Council as members. We offer a model contract that serves as a base for negotiating new agreements or a way to evaluate a current contract. We also have a model interim contract for superintendents who work on a per diem or short-term basis.

Level II Legal Services provides direct legal representation in legal disputes. In addition, subscribers to Level II Legal Services receive an enhanced retirement benefit including a consultation with a financial planner and quarterly newsletters regarding retirement and financial planning issues.

Beyond representation, our legal service department prepares legal publications and articles to update superintendents on the latest court cases and regulatory changes, including articles prepared for our *Councilgram* newsletter. We hold legal workshops that provide timely and valuable legal information.

Our General Counsel evaluates legal issues for individual superintendents and represents the entire membership when a particular issue has a significant application to the superintendency.

We host legal featured presentations, skill building and Sunrise Café discussions at both our Fall Leadership Summit and Winter Institute.

This year our General Counsel, Jacinda “Jazz” Conboy, has taken on a Women’s Initiative which is directed at supporting and promoting women leaders in education.
LEAF, Inc. to Celebrate 10th Anniversary

The Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation, Inc. (LEAF) was incorporated in December 2006 and it also celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. Established to serve as the 501(c)(3) professional development arm of The Council, it’s greatest accomplishments include:

- Generating just over $2 million in grant revenue to develop and offer professional development that meets the needs of our membership since 2007. We hope to continue to forge relationships with philanthropic foundations and increase the programs and support offered through The Council and LEAF, Inc.

- Starting The Future Superintendents Academy in 2009 with funding provided by the Wallace Foundation. Over 150 fellows have graduated from the program and just over 35% have become superintendents. FSA has become one of our most successful programs, not because of funding, but rather our success with helping those interested in the superintendency secure positions.

- Dissolving Educorps in 2014 and transitioning to LEAF Consulting Services. We have an average of 20 BOCES who join the service each year. In addition, services have expanded to include building/facility studies, retreats, coaching and other services as requested by the membership. LEAF Consulting Services are intended to support superintendents and districts by offering high quality support at a reasonable cost. If a BOCES is a member of LEAF Consulting Services, services are provided at a reduced cost to component districts.
• Offering programs and services to cabinet members beginning in 2008. We began to realize that providing services to assistant superintendents, and their equivalent, was important as many would likely become superintendents in the future. The Council has offered programs for new and aspiring superintendents for over 20 years and through LEAF, we have enriched our offerings which now include a year-long program for new superintendents and three sessions for those in their second and third year.

• Creating The Summer Institute at Harvard, over 20 years ago, to provide one of the most enriching and unique professional development offerings provided by LEAF. Participants are provided with an opportunity to hear from four Harvard Faculty and enjoy Cambridge and the surrounding area.

• Offering the LEAF Subscription Service in 2013. The service was enhanced in 2014 by contracting with Signature Partner WestEd to write and design the subscription. Some of the topics have included formative assessment, aligning resources, family engagement, special education, close reading, transgender, special education, and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

• Developing the LEAF Institute for Blended and On-Line learning to meet one of our goals which states, “Invest in and use technology to expand professional development and services.” Although few superintendents have enrolled in the on-line courses, we have just entered into a partnership with the NYS Learning Trust who will market a series of courses to teachers.

LEAF continues to monitor trends in education and offers pre-conference sessions and occasionally spring workshops on relevant topics. Over the years we have offered workshops on technology, instruction, Common Core, change, leadership, assessments, and professional learning communities.

As we plan for the future, we need understand how far we have come and where we need to go. The education landscape continues to change and we are prepared to meet our mission, “to serve as the premier organization offering comprehensive professional development to ensure the success of educational leaders and the students they serve through opportunities that are excellent in quality, pertinent in focus, and readily accessible to all.”
Statewide Events Changes to Meet Members’ Needs

Every September and March, we also convene thought leaders and experts to share, collaborate and make connections at our annual Fall Leadership Summit and Winter Institute & Lobby Day. Our annual events are designed to offer professional development, emphasize the “Community of Superintendents,” build leadership capacity and convey essential information.

The History of Statewide Events

Historically conferences were focused on networking, keynote speakers, and leisurely pursuits and they typically were held in a resort-like setting. With feedback from Council leadership and input from the membership via surveys and focus groups, Council staff began the process of significantly changing both events over the last 10 years.

Starting in 2006, a committee of superintendents met over two years and concluded that we needed to rebrand the conferences to avoid the “leisure” connotations associated with conferences hence the new names Fall Leadership Summit and Winter Institute along with making structural changes to the program. An ad hoc committee was consequently formed in 2014 to evaluate the changes and continue with final idea implementation. Minor modifications were made introduced then.
Since that time, the overall schedule for both events was changed to provide more structured learning opportunities with colleagues and specific content areas provided by legal experts, state education staff, and government officials. Additional marketing opportunities were introduced for Strategic Partners to justify their significant financial investment in The Council. Sessions were also expanded to provide educational opportunities for member subgroups such as small city school districts, new superintendents, future superintendents and cabinet members. We also provided new content strands responding to key changes in education. For example, sessions on wellness, safety and security, and supporting women educational leaders were key areas of focus. Book discussions and longer ignite sessions for those individuals who wanted to take a deeper dive into a specific content area were also introduced in the last year.

Bundled tuition was developed in 2008 and has continued every year. Members can pay both events simultaneously with their membership dues to avoid repeated requests to their Boards of Education for funding. Attending both events also provided a small discount on each individual registration. We also maintain event registration fees over multiple years and keep them relatively low priced.

The overall goal was to emphasize the “Community of Superintendents” and provide interactive learning opportunities through face-to-face networking, educational sessions, and technology.

Both events now offer keynote addresses by national experts in the fields of leadership, education and related areas; opportunities for members to share best practices with colleagues through smaller skill building educational sessions; an interactive discussion with the Commissioner of Education about New York State issues and initiatives; important interaction with leading state officials; longer ignite sessions; and networking for support and collegiality among members through social interaction, group discussions, meetings and workshops.

Each event focuses on a particular theme over several days and includes an exhibit hall with Strategic Partners. The Winter Institute is considered more of a “legislative/leadership event” since it wraps up with our annual Lobby Day in downtown Albany where educational leaders meet with their legislative representatives.
2015 Fall Leadership Summit

Featuring three keynote sessions, two newly introduced ignite sessions, 36 thematic sessions, 10 meetings, and three pre-event sessions, the 2015 Fall Leadership Summit focused on the theme *Leading with Courage: A Journey into the Hearts and Minds of Educators*. Courage of the superintendents, the collective knowledge of superintendents working together, care and compassion make the superintendency a journey like no other. Coincidentally but chosen purposefully, characters from the Wizard of Oz exemplified key characteristics that enable each and every superintendent to navigate the metaphorical yellow brick road to educational success. Courage, knowledge, and a compassionate heart are the classic and memorable traits illustrated by the characters from the Wizard of Oz and were graphically portrayed throughout the event.

Olympic Gold Medalist Dan O’Brien opened the event with his discussion on overcoming adversity while Jeremy Kingsley, a leadership expert presented ideas on how to inspire teams. The second general session introduced new Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia to our members. The 2015 Fall Leadership Summit hosted record breaking numbers with 481 members attending. The event was sponsored by our Premier Diamond Partner Mosaic Associates Architects.

Make sure to join us for the 2016 Fall Leadership Summit *Cultivating the Spirit within Each Child* hosted at the Saratoga Hilton and the Saratoga Springs City Center from September 25-27, 2016 in Saratoga Springs, NY. Keynote speakers include Marc Brackett, Director of the Center for Emotional Intelligence; 11-year-old Marley Dias, founder of her organization #1000BlackGirlBooks and a discussion with Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia on Tuesday. An ignite session on The Women’s Leadership Initiative will also be presented with consultant Corey Jamison.
2016 Winter Institute

In March 2016, our opening Winter Institute keynote was Gary Marx, President for the Center for Public Outreach. We also invited Ravi Hutheesing, a cultural speaker, writer, singer-songwriter to discuss his approach to millennial superintendents and students. We closed the event with Commissioner MaryEllenElia prior to members attending lobby day. Attendance at the Winter Institute and Lobby Day rose significantly with 413 members in attendance.

The 2017 Winter Institute and Lobby Day is scheduled in Albany from March 5-7, 2017 and will focus on leadership. Keynotes will be provided by leadership trainer Dave Weber and Leonard Forkas, Founder of HopeCam along with the Commissioner of Education.

Strategic Partnerships Play Vital Role in Funding Programs for Members

These annual events also play an important role with the revenue stream that supports The Council’s programs and services. They allow our Strategic Partners to access broader audiences and ensure that the marketing opportunities selected by sponsors justify their substantial investments. These partnerships also provide new opportunities and add value to our members.

History of the Program

In 1997, The Council turned its conference trade show into a formal Corporate Support Program to provide another revenue source separate from those generated by dues to fund professional development programs and legal services that otherwise would not have been available to members. It provided companies with the opportunity to connect with members in a variety of ways, depending upon the level of support. That first year the program brought in $60,000 of additional revenue and offered companies a multi-tiered renewable contract through four levels of support.

The Corporate Support program changed dramatically and transitioned to a Strategic Partnership Program in 2008. The program still provided a yearly, renewable contract but now offers companies the unique opportunity to select options from a Menu of Marketing Benefits to create specific marketing plans that worked for each individual organization. These changes shortened the selling cycle from six months to just two months allowing benefit implementation, customer service, relationship building and created flexibility for The Council to develop a new, higher-priced Signature Partner level.

This past year The Council and LEAF, Inc. engaged with 77 partnerships with companies who participated in the 2015-2016 Strategic Partnership Program. Each company received an individualized, unique marketing plan that included speaking, networking and exhibiting opportunities at both Council and LEAF, Inc. events. Strategic Partner revenue hit an historic high of $570,000 this past year.
In addition, we continued with our innovative partnerships with Forecast 5 and JASON Learning and also developed a new partnership this year with Read to Them. We also received additional support from one of our Signature Partner New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR). They offered a one-time scholarship opportunity to our members to celebrate their 25th year anniversary. NYSIR provided complimentary tuition and housing for five members of The Council to attend the 2015 Fall Leadership Summit.

**FINANCES — TECHNOLOGY AND BUILDING INITIATIVES: AN IMPORTANT PRIORITY**

Over the past 10 years, The Council has invested in our technology infrastructure using reserve funds and used technology to improve business and communication practices. We added a blog to our website in 2009; designed a new website in 2011; developed online registration for programs and membership renewal; worked with a housing company to create online housing for major events; and invested in the development of a marketing email tool powered by Informz in 2014 to replace older listserv technology.

The technology investment also included transitioning to a robust membership database giving members more flexibility and the ability for a secure peer networking through our online communities. Reducing the amount of paper mailings has also been one benefit with using this new technology, saving money overall.

This past year The Council upgraded our website to a responsive design format at www.nyscoss.org making our website mobile-friendly. This will ensure higher searchable rankings within various search engines like Google; who are rewarding websites that are fully-optimized for mobile platforms. This new format also adapts to any device that our website is viewed on.

Based on feedback from our Executive Committee and House of Delegates, our staff focused on implementing additional technology to connect and engage with members including:

- Introducing a Slide Cast app allowing members to engage at annual events by taking “selfies” and to posting them to a private fall digital bulletin board during fall and winter events. We used these images to create a final wrap video at our Winter Institute.
- Upgrading the connection between our database and website, called Single Sign On, allowing for a smoother online registration and renewal process for our members.
- Incorporating Let’s Talk! courtesy of Signature Partner K12 Insight, so members can engage with our staff 24/7 on the topics and issues that are important to them. Let’s Talk! is accessible from www.nyscoss.org.
- Initiating Cisco’s Spark Webex technology with Premier Diamond Partner Core BTS to give staff a simple and secure place to collaborate online. The virtual conference room gives the capability to record information, share documents, and create online meetings.
• Creating and implementing a more robust social media plan. Staff went through training in fall, created an in-house social media team, and started implementing weekly posts to Facebook and on Twitter in order to:
  - Show we are making connections with and for members.
  - Demonstrate value to our members
  - Tell positive stories of superintendents.

In addition, The Council has also used reserve funds to improve our building infrastructure. We made minor renovations to the first floor of the building at 7 Elk Street and were able to host the New Superintendents Program and the Future Superintendents Academy Program in the new space; allowing LEAF, Inc. to save on hotel rental fees. The feedback from participants was positive and they enjoyed the more intimate setting.

The Council and LEAF, Inc. will end with a combined profit, assuming the auditors concur with our actions. This will increase the reserves balances to their highest level to date. A balanced budget was presented for both associations for the 2016-2017 year.
SPECIAL THANKS

I have pursued these important goals with our Council team while respecting and building upon the great work done by my predecessors. Their work and the work of The Council team, members and strategic partners, has allowed The Council to continue to grow and remain “healthy.” I know that Charles “Chuck” Dedrick will build on the foundation he inherits, bring his own ideas and creativity to his new role, and help The Council continue to grow and flourish as the needs of school leaders continue to change and education policy continues to shift.

• To paraphrase from President Maureen Donahue’s metaphorical Wizard of Oz theme at our 2015 Fall Summit – it has been my honor to travel the leadership “yellow brick road” with you these past six years. I thank you for your leadership, courage, compassion, commitment and friendship.

• To President Maureen Donahue and Past Presidents Neil O’Brien, Mary Beth Fiore, Jim Langlois, Bob Christmann, Marilyn Terranova and Oliver Robinson. Thank you for your advice/counsel and for your confidence and support.

• To all of the Executive Committee members who have served and been so supportive these past six years – Thank you for your trust and commitment to The Council.

• To all who have served on the House of Delegates or Council committees – Thank you for your support, and being a voice for your regions.

• To all members – Thank you and never forget you are The Council!

• To all of my colleagues at The Council - I want to offer a very sincere thank you. It is a special team – they are competent, self-motivated and truly enjoy working for and with you.

As I transition to the next phase of my professional life, I hope to continue to contribute toward leadership development in New York State in some small way. I thank you for your commitment to The Council and I wish you all great success and may years of health and happiness.

Thank you for all you do for the children of New York State.

Respectfully,

Robert J. Reidy, Jr.
2015 Distinguished Service Award

The Distinguished Service Award is given in recognition of that one individual who has shown exemplary commitment to public education. Retired Life Member Michael Ford, former superintendent from the Phelps-Clifton Springs CSD received The Council’s highest honor for his exemplary standards of educational service and leadership. The 2015 Distinguished Services Award was sponsored by Signature Partner New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR).

2016 New York Superintendent of the Year Award

The New York State Superintendent of the Year was presented to Susan K. Allen, Superintendent, East Irondequoit CSD at the 2016 Winter Institute. Susan is admired by her colleagues and is a respected local leader in the Rochester area especially due to her work in providing rich and rigorous learning opportunities for a diverse population of students. Mrs. Allen was also eligible to compete for the National Superintendent of the Year, presented by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) at their annual conference in February. The award pays tribute to the talent and vision of the men and women who lead our nation’s public schools.

2016 Friend of the Council Award

Dr. Elaine Zseller, Supervisor in the Strategic Initiatives at Nassau BOCES, was selected to receive the 2016 Friend of The Council for her statistical analysis work on The Council’s Snapshot of the Superintendency publication since 2006. This award is given every year in recognition of a non-member’s contribution to The Council and in the field of education. The 2016 Friend of The Council award was presented at this year’s Winter Institute and was sponsored by Premier Silver Partner BCK-IBI Group.

2016 Appreciation Awards

We recognized Marie Wiles, Superintendent, Guilderland with the 2016 Appreciation Award in recognition of her efforts on behalf of our organization and its initiatives over the past 15 years. Her work included Co-Chairing the Assessment Committee; serving as a member of the House of Delegates and the APPR Task Force; and recently she was appointed to serve on the Executive Committee. The 2016 award was presented at our Winter Institute and sponsored by Premier Diamond Partner Leonard Bus Sales.
2015 Raymond R. Delaney Memorial Scholarship

Congratulations to the 2015 Raymond R. Delaney Memorial scholarship winner Vaughn Denton, Principal, Longwood CSD. Vaughn was selected because he has demonstrated leadership skills and is a child centered advocate who is always putting the utmost consideration of what is best for a child in the forefront of his decisions. The Raymond R. Delaney Memorial Scholarship was inaugurated during the centennial year of The Council in honor of “100 Years of Educational Leadership” and in 1990 re-named the Raymond R. Delaney Annual Memorial Scholarship in memory of a past president of The Council. The Premier Diamond Partner Utica National Insurance Group sponsored this year’s scholarship valued at $2,000.

2016 Dr. Mary Barter Scholarship for Women and Minorities

Tracy M. Adams, Assistant Principal, 5-6 Longwood CSD was selected as the recipient of the 2016 Dr. Mary Barter Scholarship for Women and Minorities at The Council 2016 Winter Institute. Tracy exemplifies determination, compassion, and commitment to professional and personal growth. Not deterred by budget cuts, Tracy finds a way, similar to the way Dr. Barter did to serve children she is responsible for,” her superintendent Dr. Michael Lonergan said.

The scholarship was renamed in 2012 to honor Dr. Mary Barter as the first female president of The Council. A scholarship is awarded in the amount of $2,000 to promote and inspire women and/or minorities interested in the field of leadership each year.
2015 - 2016 Strategic Partners

The New York State Council of School Superintendents recognizes the following organizations for their support of The Council, our mission and our members:

Signature Partners
- C&S Companies
- Ferrara Fiorenza PC
- K12 Insight
- New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR)
- Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA)
- PLS 3rd Learning
- Utica National Insurance Group
- WestEd

Premier Diamond Partners
- Apple Inc.
- Ashley McGraw Architects, D.P.C.
- Campus Construction Management Group, Inc.
- Cisco Systems
- Clark Patterson Lee
- Core BTS, Inc.
- CSArch Architecture/Engineering/Construction Management
- HUNT Engineers, Architects, & Land Surveyors, PC
- Infinite Campus
- Leonard Bus Sales, Inc.
- Mosaic Associates Architects
- SEI Design Group
- Siemens Industry., Building Technologies Division
- Tetra Tech Architects & Engineers
- The Pike Company
- Turner Construction Company

Premier Gold Partners
- AXA Advisors
- The Breakthrough Coach
- ECG Engineering, PC
- Microsoft Corporation
- Pupil Benefits Plan, Inc.
- Renaissance Learning
- Welliver
- VALIC

Premier Silver Partners
- A+ Technology & Security Solutions
- Ameresco Inc.
- BCA Architects & Engineers
- BCK-IBI Group
- Bernard P. Donegan, Inc.
- Bond Schoeneck & King
- Cannon Design
- Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)
- Centris Group (IEP Direct/RTIm Direct)
- ClearTrack 200/RTI Edge
- The College Board
- Compass Learning
- Computer Logic Group
- Day Automation
- EdCaliber
- Edgenuity
- eSpark Learning
- Finger Lakes Technologies Group, Inc.
- Frontline Technologies
- Girvin & Ferlazzo, P.C.
## 2015 - 2016 The Council Leadership

### Officers

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maureen E. Donahue</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
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<td>Patricia Sullivan-Kriss</td>
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<td>NYC Dept of Education</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Plainview-Old Bethpage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neil F. O’Brien</td>
<td>Past President</td>
<td>Port Byron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Executive Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharon L. Contreras</td>
<td></td>
<td>Syracuse (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle DiMango</td>
<td></td>
<td>NYC District #25 (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sherrill City (2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phyllis S. Harrington</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oceanside (2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin C. McGowan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brighton (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randall W. Squier</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coxsackie-Athens (2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael B. Wetherbee</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wayland-Cohocton (2016)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Wiles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Guilderland (2017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LEAF, Inc. Board:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neil F. O’Brien</td>
<td></td>
<td>Port Byron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Alice Price</td>
<td></td>
<td>Retired Superintendent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Feijoo</td>
<td></td>
<td>NYC Department of Education</td>
<td>Past President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Ford</td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Leadership Outreach</td>
<td>University of Rochester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Allen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>PN/W BOCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Dedrick</td>
<td></td>
<td>District Superintendent</td>
<td>Capital Region BOCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry L. Grishman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jericho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin McGowan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert J. Reidy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Executive Director, The Council</td>
<td>Ex Officio Board Member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2015 - 2016 HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Broome-Delaware-Tioga
Alternate: TBD
Jason Andrews, Windsor (2016)

Capital Region
Alternate: TBD
Jonathan Buhner, South Colonie (2016)
Lori Caplan, Watervliet (2016)

Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming
Alternate: TBD
Kimberly Moritz, Randolph (2016)
Kimberly Mueller, Wells ville (2017)

Cayuga-Onondaga
Alternate: James Froio, Jordan-Elbridge
Michelle Brantner, Moravia (2017)

Champlain Valley
Alternate: Paul Savage, II, AuSable Valley
Scott Osborne, Elizabethtown-Lewis (2016)

Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego
Alternate: Robert Mackey, Unadilla Valley
Jonathan Retz, Greene (2016)

Dutchess
Alternate: TBD
Michael Tierney, Dover (2016)

Eastern Suffolk
Alternate: Lars Clemensen, Hampton Bays
Lois Favre, Bridgehampton (2017)
Charles Russo, East Moriches (2016)
Susan A. Schnebel, Islip (2016)

Erie 1
Alternate: Laura (Chabe) Pless, Amherst
Jeffrey Rabey, Depew (2017)

Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus
Alternate: Kaine Kelly, Sherman
Timothy Mains, Jamestown (2017)
Matthew McGarrity, Orchard Park (2017)

Franklin-Essex-Hamilton
Alternate: Jerry Griffin, Malone
Seth McGowan, Tupper Lake (2017)

Genesee Valley
Alternate: Matthew Cole, Livonia
Christopher Dailey, Batavia City (2015)
Kenneth J. Ellison, Pavilion (2016)

Greater Southern Tier
Alternate: Jeremy Palotti, Canisteo-Greenwood
Glenn Niles, Arkport (2016)

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery
Alternate: TBD
Michael Vanyo, Gloversville City (2016)

Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego
Alternate: TBD
F. Daniel Myers, Richfield Springs (2017)

Jefferson-Lewis
Alternate: Frederick Hall, Sackets Harbor
Rex Germer, Town of Webb (2017)

Madison-Oneida
Alternate: MaryLynne Szczterba, Camden
Perry Dewey, Madison (2017)

Monroe 1
Alternate: TBD
Michael Pero, Pittsford (2017)

Monroe 2-Orleans
Alternate: David Dimbleby, Hilton
Lesli Myers, Brockport (2016)

Nassau
Alternate: William Heidenreich, Valley Stream
Joseph Famularo, Bellmore (2016)
David Flatley, Carle Place (2016)
Elaine Kanas, East Williston (2017)
2015 - 2016 House of Delegates / continued

**Oneida-Herkimer-Madison**  
Alternate: TBD  
William Crankshaw, Remsen (2017)

**Onondaga-Cortland-Madison**  
Alternate: Michael Hoose, Cortland City  
Nancy Ruscio, Homer (2016)  
Craig Tice, Marcellus (2017)

**Orange-Ulster**  
Alternate: Brian Monahan, Minisink Valley  
Sean Michel, Chester (2017)

**Orleans-Niagara**  
Alternate: Jason Smith, Lyndonville  
Greg Woytila, North Tonawanda City (2016)

**Oswego**  
Alternate: TBD  
Judith Belfield, Phoenix (2017)

**Otsego-Northern Catskill**  
Alternate: Thomas O’Brien, Roxbury  
Partick Darfler-Sweeney, Hunter-Tannersville (2017)

**Putnam/North Westchester**  
Alternate: Raymond Sanchez, Ossining  
Edward R. Fuhrman, Jr., Croton-on-Hudson (2017)

**Questar III**  
Alternate: James Hoffman, Averill Park  
Cheryl Nuciforo, Chatham (2017)

**Rockland**  
Alternate: TBD  
Ileana Eckert, North Rockland (2016)

**Southern Westchester**  
Alternate: TBD  
Walter Moran, Eastchester (2016)  
Joseph Ricca, Elmsford (2017)

**St. Lawrence-Lewis**  
Alternate: Lynn Roy, Madrid-Waddington  
Darin Saiff, Parishville-Hopkinton (2017)

**Sullivan County**  
Alternate: Thomas Palmer, Tri-Valley  
Deborah Fox, Livingston Manor (2016)

**Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga**  
Alternate: Sandy Sherwood, Dryden  
Cheryl Thomas, Newfield (2016)

**Ulster**  
Alternate: Paul Padalino, Kingston  
Deborah Haab, Highland (2017)

**Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex**  
Alternate: Paul Jenkins, Glens Falls City  
Patrick Dee, Lake George (2017)  
Michael Patton, South Glens Falls (2017)

**Wayne-Finger Lakes**  
Alternate: Denise Dzikowski, Lyons  
David Sholes, Red Creek (2016)

**Western Suffolk BOCES**  
Alternate: TBD  
Donald James, Commack (2016)

**Big 5 School Districts**  
Sharon Contreras, Syracuse City  
Kriner Cash, Buffalo City  
Dolores Esposito, NYC Department of Education  
TBD, Rochester City  
TBD, Yonkers City
I. Western Region
Erie I, Erie2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus, Orleans-Niagara, Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming:
Matthew P. McGarrity, Orchard Park
Alternate: Timothy O. Mains, Jamestown City

II. Central Western Region
Genesee Valley, Monroe 1, Monroe 2-Orleans, Wayne-Finger Lakes:
Dawn A. Santiago-Marullo, Victor
Alternate: David G. Sholes, Red Creek

III. Southern Tier Region
Broome-Delaware-Tioga, Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego, Greater Southern Tier, Otsego-Northern Catskills:
Patrick Darfler-Sweeney, Hunter-Tannersville
Alternate: Thomas J. O’Brien, Roxbury

IV. Central Region
Cayuga-Onondaga, Oswego, Onondaga-Cortland-Madison, Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga:
Cheryl Thomas, Newfield
Alternate: Michelle L. Brantner, Moravia

V. Mohawk Valley Region
Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton, Madison-Oneida, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison:
Kathleen M. Davis, Holland Patent
Alternate: William T. Crankshaw, Remsen

VI. Ontario Region
Jefferson-Lewis-Hamilton, St. Lawrence-Lewis:
Darin P. Saiff, Parishville-Hopkinton
Alternate: Rex A. Germer, Town of Webb

VII. North Country Region
Clinton-Essex, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton:
Scott J. Osborne, Elizabethtown-Lewis
Alternate: Seth McGowan, Tupper Lake

VIII. Capital District Region
Capital Region, Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery, Washington-Warren-Saratoga-Hamilton, Questar III:
Patrick Dee, Lake George
Alternate: Michael N. Patton, South Glens Falls

IX. Mid-Hudson Region
(Dutchess, Orange-Ulster, Sullivan, Ulster):
Deborah L. Fox, Livingston Manor
Alternate: Deborah A. Haab, Highland

X. Lower Hudson Region
(Putnam-Northern Westchester, Rockland, Southern Westchester):
Edward R. Fuhrman, Croton-Harmon
Alternate: Walter Moran, Eastchester

XI. Nassau County Region:
Joseph S. Famularo, Bellmore
Alternate: David J. Flatley, Carle Place

XII. Suffolk County Region:
Lois R. Favre, Bridgehampton
Alternate: Lars Clemensen, Hampton Bays
2015 - 2016 Committee Chairs

Athletics.......................................................................................... Co-Chairs: Maureen Donahue, Southwestern at Jamestown and Jeffrey R. Rabey, Depew

Curriculum and Instruction...................................................................... Co-Chairs: William H. Johnson, Rockville Centre and Lorna R. Lewis, Plainview-Old Bethpage

Assessment Sub-Committee............................................................................... Co-Chairs: Adele A. Bovard, Rochester and Marie Wiles, Guilderland

Special Ed Sub-Committee........................................................................................................... Chair: TBD

Cabinet ................................................................................................................. Chair: Lynn Allen, Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES

Mary Barter Scholarship for Minorities and Women ......................................................... Chair: Colleen M. Taggerty, Olean City

Legislative – Federal............................................................................................ Co-Chairs: Mary Beth R. Fiore, Elmira Heights and Charles S. Dedrick, Capital Region BOCES


Member Service Committee ......................................................................... Chair: William G. Heidenreich, Valley Stream Central

Wellness ...................................................................................................................... Chair: Kishore Kuncham, Freeport UFSD

Committees by Appointment Only

APPR Task Force........................................................................................................... Chair: Colleen M. Taggerty, Olean City

Budget ......................................................................................................................... Chair: Maureen E. Donahue, Southwestern CSD at Jamestown

Constitution and By-Laws/Resolutions................................................................. Chair: Michael Vanyo, Gloversville City

Distinguished Service............................................................................................... Chair: William H. Johnson, Rockville Centre

Ethics ........................................................................................................................... Chair: Douglas W. Huntley, Queensbury

Finance and Investment......................................................................................... Chair: Robert J. Reidy, Jr., Executive Director

Legislative – State........................................................................................................ Co-Chairs: Neil F. O’Brien, Port Byron and Patricia Sullivan-Kriss, President-Elect

Nominating .................................................................................................................. Chair: Lois Favre, Bridgehampton
 EXECUTIVE OFFICE

ROBERT J. REIDY, JR., PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Contact Bob regarding the overall operation of The Council, governance structure and policy questions. Bob is also available for professional advice and counsel, regional presentations, visits to your BOCES region and opportunities for involvement with The Council. (Retired July 1, 2016)

VENERINA T. GRECO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

rina@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4876

Rina provides administrative support and management of the Executive Office and the General Counsel. She is also the liaison to The Council’s Executive Committee and House of Delegates governance groups. Contact Rina if you have questions or need to request a meeting/call with the Executive Director or General Counsel.

ADVOCACY AND LEGAL TEAM

JACINDA H. CONBOY, ESQ.
GENERAL COUNSEL

jacinda@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4873

Jacinda (a/k/a “Jazz”) is primarily responsible for negotiating superintendent’s employment contracts and providing legal advice and assistance to our members. In addition, Jazz regularly designs legal seminars and provides presentations on legal educational issues to members. Contact Jazz if you have contract questions, are interested in Level II Legal Services or need retirement services.

ROBERT N. LOWRY, JR.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ADVOCACY, RESEARCH & COMMUNICATIONS

boblowry@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4879

Bob directs The Council’s advocacy activities and serves as our principal contact with the news media. Working Council leaders, he advocates for superintendent concerns with the Governor’s Office, State Legislature, Board of Regents, and the State Education Department and other state agencies. He is the principal author of many Council policy reports and is recognized as one of the state’s leading experts in school finance. Contact Bob regarding policy decisions, school finance, and general media inquiries.
Membership Team

Melanie M. Seiden
Membership Services Associate

melanie@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4877

Melanie provides direct support to our members by answering membership questions including member online access; assisting with membership purchases, transfers and renewals. Also contact Melanie with registration questions for Council and LEAF, Inc. programs including conference registration. She is also available to answer questions or concerns regarding invoices for membership and event registration.

Kelley Pratt
Administrative Assistant

kpratt@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4878

Kelley provides direct service to our members serving as the primary contact for general inquiries, career center postings, and database updates while answering and directing calls. She also purchases supplies and works as our vendor liaison for all office equipment. She assists all staff members with a variety of administrative projects including mail house coordination, but primarily supports the membership department on a day-to-day basis.

Finance & Communications Team

Dena A. Gauthier
Senior Graphic Designer (Part-time)

dena@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4886

Dena plays a vital role in interpreting and managing our brand identity throughout all Council and LEAF, Inc. printed and online communication materials. She designs and manages the production of all publications, provides design support for The Council and LEAF website, and manages printing and design consultants. Contact Dena with questions regarding the production of our communication materials.

Deidre G. Hungerford
Assistant Director for Business Development

deidre@nyscoss.org / Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4885

Deidre manages our Strategic Partnership Program, coordinates the Legal Briefing Workshops, awards, scholarships and annual golf tournament. Deidre also manages and creates the exhibit hall at our two annual conferences each year. Contact Deidre if you are interested in supporting The Council or exhibiting.
DEBORAH N. ORSINI
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES
deborah@nyscoss.org  /  Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4882
You can contact Deb with questions regarding budget development, financial forecasting, human resources, building management and general Council operations.

THERESA WUTZER MOORE
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
theresa@nyscoss.org  /  Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4884
Contact Theresa regarding the Fall Leadership Summit and Winter Institute planning and implementation. She is also responsible for developing new technology initiatives; advancing our social media presence; and managing our website. Theresa also oversees our communication plan, including writing major publications and articles and serving as the editor of our Councilgram newsletter.

LEAF, INC. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

VRENELI G. BANKS
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
vren@nyscoss.org  /  Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4875
Vren is responsible for various professional development programs through LEAF, Inc. such as the Aspiring Superintendents Workshop, New Superintendents Institute, 2nd & 3rd Year Superintendents Institute, Leadership for Student Achievement, Cabinet Conference and the LEAF, Inc./NYS ASCD Annual Conference. She also maintains the Superintendents and Cabinet Level Resource Bank and provides editorial support for the LEAF, Inc. website and for the monthly Councilgram.

KELLY O. MASLINE
SENIOR ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF LEAF, INC.
kelly@nyscoss.org  /  Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4880
Contact Kelly about professional development initiatives for The Council and LEAF, Inc. She works closely with the LEAF, Inc. Board of Directors to provide professional development to school leaders and district leadership team members by offering opportunities that are relevant and affordable. She also manages grant initiatives.

NANCY E. WENGERT
LEAF, INC. PROGRAM ASSOCIATE (PART-TIME)
nwengert@nyscoss.org  /  Direct Telephone Number: 518.694.4872
Nancy coordinates and promotes LEAF’s Customized Consulting Services for school districts statewide. LEAF, Inc. offers services such as district consulting, regional retreats and customized professional development. Nancy also handles the logistical planning and coordination for the Future Superintendents’ Academy sessions; a year long program.
We need leadership that is tough enough to demand a great deal from everyone, and leadership that is tender enough to encourage the heart.

- Thomas J. Sergiovanni

Many of the images within this letter are photographic details from within The Council’s building on Elk Street. The cover image highlights a historic photograph taken in 1901 of the streetscape in front of the building. The inside back page is that same view in modern times.
The New York State Council of School 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.

New York State Council of School Superintendents & Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation, Inc.
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Phone: 518.449.1063
Fax: 518.426.2229
www.nyscoss.org