2012-2013 Annual Letter
Dear Colleagues,

When you Google the word “stewardship” you will find such words as care, charge, custody, guardianship, leadership, protection, and superintendency. Yes, superintendency! All of these words describe what you do. School superintendents are stewards of the greatest public institution in the world – public education.

The stewardship of our public schools is not only an awesome responsibility, it becomes more demanding and at the same time more critical every day. As guardians of the state’s public schools, your first responsibility is to do everything possible to ensure the health and safety of every student and colleague every day. As one New York superintendent so aptly stated, “Student safety is the first thing you wake up thinking about and your last thought in the evening.” Safety is an ever present responsibility. The Newtown, Connecticut tragedy is a vivid reminder of the weight of the responsibility. We know public schools have become more secure environments over the years, however, we must be ever vigilant in our safety efforts.

I was proud of the statement issued by The Council shortly after learning of the terrible events in Newtown. The statement was written by President James T. Langlois with input from The Council staff and Executive Committee. The statement expressed our heartfelt sadness over the loss of life and recognized the courageous acts of the educators who gave their lives protecting children. We also called for the following actions:

- Our elected leaders – and all of us as voters – must reassess the choices we have made which have drastically reduced the resources available for mental health services and have kept the few remaining services too isolated from our schools. There is far too little capacity to deal with the mental health needs of our children and young people. Few are potentially violent, but some are. We must serve them all.
• We are not experts in criminal justice, but we must urge a newly vigorous state and national conversation about what weapons should be available and to whom – which weapons are appropriate for hunting, other recreational uses, or reasonable self-defense, and which types – like the high capacity assault rifle used in the [Newtown] massacre – that simply have no place in the hands of ordinary citizens.

• We also urge a robust and persistent national conversation about the consequences of an entertainment culture that relentlessly glorifies violence in movies, television, music and video games.

If the broader society can join with those of us who care for and educate its children in pursuing such an agenda, we believe that together we can move closer to making tragedies like Newtown far less likely than they are today.
Leadership

In his presidential remarks presented at The Council’s Annual Banquet on September 23, 2012, James Langlois highlighted the paradox of your leadership responsibilities:

“Our common task is to find our balance through a fearless focus on the well-being of our students, on creating professional environments of support for our teachers and administrators, on fighting for the resources needed to meet their needs. Because we live in a real, political world, we must both constructively and critically engage the federal and state reform agenda...never in passive compliance, but rather always as critical partners who demand equality of place in the cacophony of voices swirling around our work...ours is the essential voice in carving out the actual, practical, effective path to greater excellence in our schools and for our students...It is hard work, sometimes draining, and too many of us have been wounded or even destroyed by its dangers. But in the end, what could be more noble, more satisfying, more profoundly enriching than to engage in this struggle, the daily work of a public school superintendent in the State of New York?”

The work is indeed hard, the responsibility of stewardship demanding, at times daunting and, as Dr. Langlois has pointed out, noble. What is nobler than guiding an institution that is committed to access and equity for every child? Which instills democratic responsibilities, principles and expectations? Which is committed to identifying and responding to each child’s individual needs regardless of zip code?

Michael Fullan states that effective leaders are driven by a moral purpose, “A moral imperative consisting of a deep commitment and corresponding strategies essential for raising the bar and closing the gap for ALL students and subgroups.” This is the work you engage in every day. This is stewardship.

Regents Reform Agenda

Students and communities across New York State once again benefitted from your focused leadership in negotiating and implementing a very complex Regents reform agenda. The time and effort spent on Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) negotiations and the subsequent approval process, which was required on or before January 17, 2013, consumed most of us during the first half of the year.
The lingering threat of losing state aid if negotiations and plan acceptance were not completed by the January deadline added a unique dynamic to an already overly complex and regulated procedure. Although superintendents have expressed concerns regarding tests, the speed of reform implementation and flaws in the process, you continue to lead your school communities in an ambitious Common Core implementation phase. Your leadership throughout the entire process is to be commended. You are literally making these laws and regulations work.

Having the best educators teaching our children and leading in our schools is a goal that never has been in dispute.

**Governor’s New York Education Reform Commission/Systems Change**

This past year the Governor’s Education Reform Commission made a set of recommendations after conducting a series of hearings across the state and listening to many hours of testimony from a wide variety of constituents. We are all familiar with the Commission’s recommendations, many of which were included in the Governor’s 2013-2014 Budget proposal. It is important, however, to note two sections of the report that might otherwise be overlooked.

First, the background section of the report on page 9 notes:

> Our educators and leaders are committed to preparing our students for college and career. It is clear that the challenges facing our public education system are not the result of bad actors at the individual level. Rather the Commission has seen that New York educators and stakeholders have shown remarkable flexibility, creativity, and drive as they work to help our students develop the skills they need to successfully transition to adulthood and careers.

This is a critically important point. You have willingly taken the lead on numerous mandates, laws and requirements over the years and have implemented the new systems faithfully.

Second, page 13 of the report is titled “Action Plan.” In this portion of the report the Commission makes the following commitment:

> Over the coming year, the Commission will address the complex legal, financial and structural issues that impede our system, our educators and our students from achieving their full potential.
We applaud this commitment and stand ready to support the Commission in any way possible as they pursue this goal. All superintendents recognize the significant system impediments they face every day.

The Commission is correct in advocating for systems change. Given the current revenue restrictions placed on school districts, transforming the system is the only answer. Two significant components of this transformation must be mandate and regulatory relief. There can be no “sacred cows” spared from the discussion. We are being asked to transform New York State’s public education system while the same restrictive laws and Regents regulations remain on the books. Many of the current laws and regulations are not aligned and do not enable or facilitate reform efforts.

Our Council survey on the financial condition of school districts reinforces the need for significant mandate relief now. Many high needs, low wealth districts are on the verge of insolvency and are doing everything possible to maintain a basic quality education for their children. The reform initiative seems like the impossible dream for them. The Council and partners in the Let New York Work coalition continue to advance the following major mandate relief agenda:

- Ensure NO new mandates;
- Redefine compulsory arbitration;
- Freeze step increases when contracts expire;
- Reduce the costs of construction on public/private projects;
- Establish minimum health insurance contribution levels for employees and retirees.
“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

— Nelson Mandela
The Council also continues to call on the Regents to align key regulations to their reform initiative in order to provide schools with much needed flexibility. Some of these concepts include but are not limited to: competence vs. seat time, middle level regulations, academic integration and flexibility wherever possible. We have also asked for a review of all charter school regulations to see which may be applicable to provide flexibility for all schools. It is time for our state leaders to face reality and recognize that systems change is the key to bringing about the “sea change” we all want for public schools in New York State. We are encouraged the Governor’s Commission has recognized this fact.

Mandate and regulatory relief are a major part of the equation. However, the equation will not be complete unless more state funding is provided, especially to New York State’s poorer districts. Poor districts cannot wait for mandate or regulatory relief. They are already on the brink of collapse and need more funding now. The 2013-2014 New York State adopted budget provided a 4.7 percent increase in state aid to its public schools. The increased state aid allocation is appreciated but the fact still remains that current state aid levels are below those provided in 2008-2009. Strong schools equal strong communities, property values, businesses, and most importantly, a strong investment in our children. It will take great political courage from our state leaders to address these important and urgent matters. We are prepared to do all we can to assist.
Advocacy

A Different Set of “Three Rs”

The Council’s approach to advocacy can be summed up with three words: Reputation. Relationships. Results.

With approximately 700 superintendents and 80 to 100 cabinet members, The Council is far smaller in size than the teachers’ union, the School Boards Association, or the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). We also lack the budget and staff of some other players in education advocacy. So we are compelled to ask, “What are our advocacy assets? How can we maximize their impact? What are the unique contributions we can make?”

The Council cannot copy the tactics of larger groups. Nor should we try. To explain our strategy we use a sports analogy: It does not matter how talented your players are, if they all try to play the same position, your team will lose every game. The Council and its members have unique strengths and a central role to play in advocacy.

The primary role we have chosen is to present the facts – to explain to policymakers, the media, and the public as clearly and honestly as we can all the challenges our schools are facing now, and how new policies will change their prospects, for good or for ill.
Superintendents bring a critical vantage point to policy debates as professional stewards responsible for the whole school district enterprise. Superintendents must do what policymakers should do – construct budgets that balance what students need with what taxpayers can afford. Superintendents also play the pivotal role in translating policy into practice – taking the laws and rules policymakers enact for the whole state or nation and finding how to sensibly implement them in each of roughly 700 diverse communities.

The Council’s membership encompasses virtually the entire state. This gives us the capacity to speak for districts of all sizes, sorts, and locations. But that diversity is sometimes a constraint. Sometimes we just cannot say that one proposal would serve the best interests of all superintendents and all the communities they serve. But we can always try to explain how any current policy is affecting all schools or how a new proposal might affect schools in every circumstance.

The prominence of superintendents as local education leaders is a source of influence. But that visibility can also become a vulnerability. Superintendents are easy targets for cheap shots designed to distract from the real problems of schools. Serving leaders who are often called upon to present tough choices to the communities they serve, we will never condemn the motivations of other leaders called to do the same. But we will never refrain from telling the truth about how their choices will affect our schools.

The Council has built a reputation with policymakers, news sources, and other advocacy leaders for thoughtful, reliable and constructive analysis and commentary. Our words are trusted and sought. The value of a solid reputation is limited if it is narrowly recognized. So we have worked hard to build more relationships with people in policymaking roles, connecting with more legislators and staff, deepening ties with the Governor’s Office, and re-establishing our advocacy in Washington.

The combination of reputation and relationships gives us capacity to produce results for our members and the schools you serve.

This year’s state budget provided a School Aid increase well above what had been planned under the state’s growth cap in place since 2011 – $1.1 billion, instead of $610 million. No one group can claim credit for this increase.
But The Council’s survey reports and other financial analysis have helped deepen and widen understanding of the budget challenges schools still struggle to manage. Those efforts will continue: even with the School Aid increases of the last two years, 70 percent of districts are still receiving less help from the state than they were in 2008-2009, five years in the past.

The Council took an unprecedented role in supporting districts working with the State Education Department to gain approval of Annual Professional Performance Review plans. The Council facilitated discussions, offered legal advice, and generally assisted more than 100 districts through their approval process. Further, The Council successfully negotiated budget language, removing the link between evaluation plan approval and state aid. Enacted budget language differed by only a few words from The Council’s proposal to the Legislature and Governor’s Office. Now, plan approval is separate and apart from state aid – as it always should have been.

With the assistance of our members and other allies, The Council was successful in pushing back a requirement to recalculate Building Aid interest rates for at least two school years. Working closely with New York State United Teachers, The Council successfully pressed state leaders and retirement system leaders to work out an option to give school districts a stable pension rate to help manage expected increases in the Teachers Retirement System contribution rate.

Last year, The Council launched its Leadership in Education Action Network. This grassroots tool enables educators and the public alike to take action on critical issues being discussed in the legislature. The Action Network was successfully deployed a number of times, and will continue to grow The Council’s policy influence.

At the end of session in 2012, the Action Network was vital in defeating a late introduced bill which would have allowed parents to improperly seek to challenge a student’s recommended educational placement by using home environment, and family, religious and/or cultural background as a factor to determine placement, rather than the best educational and least restrictive environments for the child. Over one thousand email messages were sent to the Legislature and Governor and the bill was successfully vetoed.

The Council’s advocacy continues to expand in Washington as well. The Council confers routinely with AASA staff and communicates frequently with Congress on critical federal issues - how their decisions in D.C. impact New York’s students. As sequestration loomed in December, The Council
again activated its Action Network and sent messages to Congress and The White House stressing the importance of education funding. From meetings in Washington with Senator Gillibrand and Senator Schumer to facilitating district office meetings, The Council and its members bring implementation concerns and solutions to the forefront of Washington politics.

Come to the Capitol for Kids, in its second year of realization, has been a success we hope will continue to grow. More than a dozen school districts have come to Albany, bringing students, administrators, teachers, and board members, to tell their story. The Council facilitates legislative meetings, tours of The Capitol, and legislative floor introductions (a special and memorable event for students). The Council’s advocacy theme – kids first in every decision – is well served by having students here telling how Albany’s policies affect their education.

Two enduring advocacy priorities are to increase positive visibility for The Council and superintendents, and to expand member involvement in advocacy. In the year ahead, The Council’s Envisioning Committee will put forward a positive superintendents’ vision for the future of public education in our state. We will continue our reports on the financial challenges facing schools. To increase participation in our state budget advocacy day, our 2014 Winter Institute will move to downtown Albany, just two blocks from the Capitol.
The Council’s *Schools Helping Schools* program, created in response to the many offers of assistance from our members following the terrible impact of Hurricane Sandy, was a huge success for The Council this past year.

*Schools Helping Schools* has facilitated the adoption of 14 affected school districts with over 24 donating school districts and businesses. And more importantly – the program has allowed students from across the state to interact and support each other.

Featured in Newsday, the goal of the *Schools Helping Schools* program was to sustain activities, to help children in need:

“It is very personal to each district,” said Kyle McCauley Belokopitsky, Assistant Director for Government Relations. “Everyone has come together to support the students. It is a great thing for New York,” she said.

School districts have offered astounding assistance to downstate schools in need. Examples of adoptions and donations included:

- **Hamilton Central School holds Winterfest to benefit East Rockaway School** - Hamilton raised a total of $6,441 for the East Rockaway School District through various fundraisers, including the student-run HCS Winter Festival; a chicken BBQ and volleyball tournament; a scavenger hunt, movie, and a 5K!

- **Ballston Spa Community Supports “Schools Helping Schools” Relief Effort for Massapequa School District** - Malta Avenue and Milton Terrace South Elementary Schools in the Ballston Spa Central School District planned school wide efforts to collect any possible donation that could be easily transported to Massapequa for distribution to affected families. Students from Massapequa also “met their guardian angels” during a 30-minute videoconference aimed at expressing their appreciation for the more than $1,500 in clothes and gift cards Ballston Spa donated to the district’s Sandy victims. “Their generosity was truly above and beyond what we could have imagined,” said Dr. Thomas Fasano of Massapequa School District.
• **Olean, Allegany/Limestone, Portville and Hinsdale school districts support Island Park Schools** - Olean, Allegany/Limestone, Portville and Hinsdale school districts have been working in a collaborative nature over the last several years and as a result, within minutes of the call to help, the districts worked together and held a dress down day for staff and students. A total of $2,804.75 was raised and a check was issued to Island Park Schools. Superintendent Colleen Taggerty offered, “I am very proud to be a member of such a compassionate community and our Connect 4 Regional Consortium.”

• **East Rockaway gives thanks** - The East Rockaway Schools sustained millions of dollars worth of damage from Superstorm Sandy. Students in one of their elementary schools were displaced for six weeks and students in grades 7-12 were displaced for six months and attended classes in two recently closed elementary schools in a neighboring district. “Our district was on the receiving end of many generous donations. With each connection that was made to another school, our students were encouraged and able to stay positive and focus on moving forward. Knowing that others cared and that they were not forgotten made a big difference in our recovery” offered Superintendent Roseanne Melucci. The district has now made an effort to pay it forward, and students have begun fundraising for students in Oklahoma affected by recent tornados. “We will be forever grateful for all the good wishes and assistance” says Superintendent Roseanne Melucci.
Windsor Central School District raises $4,139.59 for Oceanside
- When the call to help came, Windsor quickly contacted their adopted school and learned that Oceanside Elementary had lost their entire school library as a result of the hurricane. Windsor’s students set a yearlong goal to help Oceanside rebuild their library, by holding a bowl-a-thon, sponsoring a 3 on 3 basketball tournament, having money pledged for minutes students read, holding Beach Days and filling up sand buckets with loose change. In addition, Scholastic Books bonus bucks earned from Windsor Book Fair promotions were transferred directly to Oceanside. Oceanside was presented with a check for $4,139.59 and Librarian Mrs. Herman vows to keep Windsor updated on their library restoration efforts. As the assembly concluded one of Windsor’s 5th grade students summed up the experience best by saying “what we did this year was really something that helped both of us - you can learn a lot by helping people!”
• **Ashley McGraw Architects supports Old Bethpage** - Ashley McGraw Architects raised funds for the Old Bethpage School District, enabling a cancelled “Restoration” field trip to continue. “We wish you and the Island Park Schools well in 2013, as you rebuild. It was a pleasure gathering the money to help the District” says Sandra March of Ashley McGraw, a Premier Diamond Partner of The Council.

• **Warwick Valley Central School District adopts Rhame Avenue Elementary School in East Rockaway** – Students from Warwick Valley presented a full elementary library collection of books, 50 boxes in all, to the Rhame Avenue Elementary School in East Rockaway. Delivering the books were students who attended the now closed Pine Island Elementary School. Like the Rockaways, the Pine Island area was also affected by hardship as Hurricane Irene caused major damage in 2011. Being able to lend the collection East Rockaway was gratifying for those who experienced the loss of Pine Island Elementary School. “Knowing the books will be read, appreciated and loved by children who have been through so much is very meaningful to the Warwick community,” says Superintendent Raymond Bryant. In addition, Warwick Valley raised $6,258 that was split between East Rockaway and Memorial School in Union Beach, NJ.

Image by Humans of New York

Thank you!
The Council also plays an active role in providing effective legal representation for superintendent leaders. In-house legal services are provided directly from The Council and are considered the “first level.” These services include, but are not limited to, 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. The model contract was revised and updated last year to reflect the changing economic times and changes in the law. We also have a model interim contract for superintendents who work on a per diem or short-term basis.

We also offer a Level II Legal Services which provides direct legal representation in litigation or legal proceedings. 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 monthly articles prepared for our Councilgram newsletter. We also hold legal briefing workshops that provide timely and valuable legal information to members.

Our General Counsel evaluates legal issues for individual superintendents. In addition, our General Counsel evaluates legal issues and takes appropriate steps when a particular issue also has greater application to the superintendency.

Next year, based on feedback from our members, we plan on offering our Legal Briefings in four locations across the state rather than just two. We will also continue to host legal featured presentations, skill building and Sunrise Café discussions at both our Fall Leadership Summit and Winter Institute.
The Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation, Inc. (LEAF) offers a number of services designed to reflect the needs of New York State school districts in a time of increasing demands at the local, state and national levels. Leadership development is an integral part of ensuring the future of public education, especially at a time when so much in education is changing. Districts around the state face challenges on many fronts, whether it’s shrinking fiscal resources or fast-moving education reforms like APPR and implementation of the Common Core standards.

In an effort to provide even more support for school leaders, LEAF has been working with BOCES across New York State to offer regional training opportunities, has continued to provide training to district teams on issues such as change, Common Core, APPR, the use of data to inform instruction and a number of other timely issues. In addition, LEAF developed the Subscription Service as a vehicle to support superintendents interested in providing opportunities for the ongoing development of their leadership teams.
The LEAF Board of Directors feels that it is equally important to continue to support our early career members and Cabinet members. We have continued to strengthen our program offerings through the Future Superintendents Academy, the Institutes for New Superintendents and those in their second and third year. We also continue to offer pre-conferences and an annual spring conference with our Cabinet members in mind.

LEAF continues to develop partnerships with other organizations so that we can reach a greater audience and provide the necessary support to educators. Over the winter, we co-sponsored a workshop with the New York State Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (NYSASCD) featuring Carol Ann Tomlinson who addressed Differentiation and Common Core. On April 9-10, 2013, there was a full crowd in attendance for the Leadership: Addressing the Monumental Changes & Challenges to Improving Schools conference, jointly presented by LEAF and the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS). Over 175 participants heard from speakers such as Ken Slentz, Deputy Commissioner of Education; Kim Marshall, education consultant; and Dr. Paul Bambrick-Santoyo, Director of North Star Academies.

LEAF will continue to adapt to the changing education environment by providing resources and programs for school leaders to develop the leadership skills necessary to serve New York’s school children.
Statewide Events Bring Leaders Together

Emphasizing Community and Building Leadership Capacity

Conferences have been designed to offer professional development, emphasize the “Community of Superintendents,” build leadership capacity and convey essential information. They 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.

Our conference attendance in fall 2012 remained steady though higher food prices and technology costs impacted overall revenue. The 2013 Winter Institute saw an increase in attendance by almost 22 members continuing the upward trend of improved attendance. Lobby Day participation also grew in its participation and boasted improved legislative meeting coordination by The Council’s advocacy team.

Both fall and winter programs benefited from robust participation from LEAF, Inc. providing focused featured presentations and relevant skill building sessions. In addition, we invited representatives from the State Education Department to present a series of programs updating our members on key education initiatives at our Winter Institute.

As with anything The Council pursues, decisions are guided by extensive feedback from surveys about summit and institute planning.

At our fall 2013 Mission Critical: Saving Education Now event, we invited Dr. Irvin Scott, Deputy Director for Effective Teaching from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to kick-off the three-day conference while technology integrationist Kevin Honeycutt and his presentation Creativity is Essential will close the event. The 2014 Winter Institute continues with the themed approach Mission Critical: Defending Schools and Education to connect both events together.

Based on feedback from members, we are also changing the venue for the 2014 and 2015 Winter Institutes moving the programs to the newly renovated Hilton property in downtown Albany called Hilton Albany. This change was enacted to be closer to legislative meetings for lobby day and to coordinate more easily interactions with key legislative presenters.
We are also providing a new series titled *The 3S’s in Creating Safer Schools: Structure, System, and Student Needs* at fall. This specially designed series will focus on the physical requirements, legal concerns and the emotional needs superintendents should consider in keeping our students safe. The series will start on Sunday from a parent’s perspective with *Ryan’s Story*.

These presentations were recommended and developed by a newly formed Council safety committee composed of school superintendents. They incorporated into the series design feedback from a member survey. This security series, along with special series presented by LEAF, Inc. and the State Education Department, will be key components of both statewide events.

The Council will also be developing a Fall Leadership Summit and Winter Institute “App” to help our members organize their conference schedules easier; provide new marketing opportunities for Strategic Partners; and move towards a paper “lite” event.

**Strategic Partners Providing Revenue to Support Programs Benefiting Superintendents**

Our Strategic Partnership Program provides opportunities for outside organizations and companies to develop strategic and sustainable alliances and connections with K-12 educational leaders and school districts across New York State. Our partners promote and support trends in education while connecting leaders to the most current and effective tools and services in education.

It is vital for superintendents to understand how important it is to support this program. Strategic Partners provide a significant revenue stream, separate from those generated by dues and other Council activities, that funds our legal services, advocacy and professional development programs for superintendents that otherwise would not be available.

Our Strategic Partnership revenue has remained steady due to the merits of our partnership program and the opportunity for Strategic Partners to develop key relationships with our members. Future activity includes exploring new partnerships that incorporate revenue sharing opportunities, professional development initiatives, and student programming.
The Council Continues to Pursue New Initiatives

Using Technology to Support Programs and Provide New Services

We have continued to make aggressive use of and investment in technology this past year by first launching our new website in September and then experimenting with online registration first with our LEAF, Inc. programs and then with our larger conference programs. This included a new online housing service for statewide conferences.

This was also the first year our membership team used our new capabilities to offer membership renewal online --- making it easier, faster and allowing members to sign up and receive discounted programming and access to the host hotel at the Fall Leadership Summit.

Launching a new sophisticated, yet user-friendly online job board system was also important to support members in their job search more effectively. Features include an online resumé database, email notification of new jobs and easy searching options. The system is complimentary to members and is paid for by job advertisement revenue.

With the onset of our new website, the Superintendents Resource Bank is now available to Council members online. All past requests for information can be found under a keyword or category search. Topics include, but are not limited to, requests for information on administrative structure, evaluations, job descriptions, APPR and SED requirements. This is a member only feature of the website.

The Council continues to use our Twitter feed and Facebook pages to connect our members to current topics. Future technology initiatives include CouncilShare, a new online social community where members can strengthen their relationships with peers while accessing a variety of resources and the new Fall Summit and Winter Institute app to coordinate conference planning.
Planning Creatively

Keeping Finances on Track

Like a school district’s budget, The Council’s budget is a plan to carry out its mission. Likewise, there is financial accountability through budget planning. The process for budget approval starts with review by a budget committee of members determined by the House of Delegates. There is further review and required approval by both the Executive Committee and the House of Delegates. The Executive Committee receives and discusses a Treasurer’s Report at each of its meetings. Budget planning has taken the future into consideration by assessing economic conditions, understanding the entrepreneurial and business aspect of an association, and carrying out strategic financial planning.

The Council continues to pursue an aggressive cost containment agenda and be creative in our search for new revenue sources. Based on our current estimates for The Council and LEAF, Inc., and assuming the auditors concur with our actions, we are anticipating a small combined revenue for the 2012-2013 fiscal year.

For the past few years, we have taken money from our reserves to invest in our technological infrastructure. The 2012-2013 anticipated revenue will be used to replace those reserve funds used in prior years. The Council has presented a balanced 2013-2014 budget and we will continue to explore opportunities to serve schools in new ways, occupy vacuums left by other enterprises, and expand current activities.
Your Council Moving Forward

Financial Forecasting Key to Future Success

The preceding pages outline your professional organization. Every colleague at The Council is committed to the highest quality of customer service. We recognize that you, our members, are The Council.

The Council is financially healthy and continues to provide the highest quality advocacy, legal, professional development services, and professional support for all members. Your recent unanimous dues restructuring vote at the 2013 Winter Institute will go a long way toward contributing to The Council’s viability and sustainability for years to come. We truly appreciate your overwhelming vote of confidence.

The commitment of our membership, a loyal strategic partner base, high quality services, strong attendance at professional meetings, and dedicated staff and governance groups have all contributed to a strong organization. We cannot, however, take our current achievements and successes for granted. The landscape around us is rapidly changing and we must be proactive as we look to the future.

To that end, we have convened a small group of members and Council staff to explore what The Council might look like five years into the future, a process we have entitled, Council Forecast 2018. The ultimate goal is to maintain the organizational health we currently enjoy for years to come. The Council will keep you informed of this initiative over the next year.

Thank you for your outstanding leadership, commitment to The Council, and for all you do for the children of New York State.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert J. Reidy, Jr.
STRATEGIC PARTNERS 2012–2013

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**
ECG Engineering PC
Ferrara, Fiorenza, Larrison, Barrett & Reitz, P.C.
K12 Insight
New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (*NYSIR*)
NYLearns/PLS 3rd Learning

**Premier Diamond Partners**
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My Learning Plan Inc.
The Pike Company
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**Premier Platinum Partners**
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**Premier Silver Partners**
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NTS Data Services, LLC
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School Aid Specialists, LLC
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   Mindex Technologies, Inc.
Scientific Learning Corporation
STV Incorporated
Sussman Sales Company, Inc.
SWBR Architects
Synthesis Architects, LLP
Teq
Triton Construction Company LLC
Verizon Wireless
Welliver
William Taylor Architects, PLLC
Young + Wright Architectural
2012 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 Thomas G. Coseo, Clarence received The Council’s highest honor for his exemplary standards of educational service and leadership. The 2012 Distinguished Service Award was sponsored by Signature Partner New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR).

2013 New York Superintendent of the Year Award

The 2013 New York State Superintendent of the Year was presented to L. Oliver Robinson, Superintendent of the Shenendehowa School District at the 2013 Winter Institute. Dr. Robinson 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.

2013 Friend of the Council Award

The Honorable Roger B. Tilles, Board of Regents of the NYS Education Department and Senator Stephen M. Saland were both selected to receive the 2013 Friend of The Council for their unrelenting and conscientious service to the superintendents across the state. This award is given every year in recognition of a non-member’s contribution to The Council and the field of education. Typically the award is presented at our Winter Institute but this year’s award will be presented during our 2013 Fall Leadership Summit. The 2013 Friend of The Council award is sponsored by Premier Diamond Partner C&S Companies.

2013 Appreciation Awards

We recognized John “Jack” E. Bierwirth, Superintendent, Herricks with the 2013 Appreciation Award in recognition of his efforts on behalf of our organization and its initiatives at our Winter Institute. The 2013 Appreciation Award was sponsored by Premier Silver Partner BCK - IBI Group.
2012–2013 OFFICERS

James T. Langlois
President
Putnam-Northern
Westchester BOCES

Mary Beth R. Fiore
President-Elect
Elmira Heights

Neil F. O’Brien
Vice President
Port Byron

Maureen E. Donahue
Treasurer
Southwestern CSD
at Jamestown

Marilyn C. Terranova
Past President
Eastchester

Robert J. Reidy, Jr.
Executive Director

2012–2013 Executive Committee

Sharon L. Contreras .............................................................. Syracuse City
Laura Feijoo ............................................................................. New York City
Douglas W. Huntley ............................................................... Queensbury
Corliss C. Kaiser .................................................... Fayetteville-Manlius
Lorna R. Lewis ............................................................... Plainview-Old Bethpage
Ralph Marino .............................................................. Horseheads
Richard Organisciak .................................................. New Rochelle City
Philip Steinberg ............................................................ Pine Bush
Patricia Sullivan-Kriss ................................................... Hauppauge
The House of Delegates (HOD) is the policy making body of The Council and consists of a 58 active superintendents of school districts. Membership of the House of Delegates consists of members from The Council’s Executive Committee, delegates elected from each of the BOCES geographical units, plus one delegate from each of the big five cities.

The HOD meets three times per Council year and holds its regular meetings at the Fall Leadership Summit, the Winter Institute and in the spring.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>House of Delegates 2012–2013</th>
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<td>Monroe 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin McGowan</td>
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<td>Brighton CSD</td>
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<td>Monroe 2-Orleans</td>
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<td>Mark Davey</td>
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<td>Gates-Chili CSD</td>
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<td>David Dimbleby</td>
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<td>Hilton CSD (Alternate)</td>
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<td>Nassau</td>
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<td>David S. Feller</td>
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<td>North Merrick UFSD</td>
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<td>Maureen Bright</td>
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<td>Hicksville UFSD</td>
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<td>Phyllis Harrington</td>
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<td>Oyster Bay</td>
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<td>E. Norwich UFSD</td>
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<td>Oneida-Herkimer-Madison</td>
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<td>Kathleen M. Davis</td>
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<td>Holland Patent CSD</td>
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<td>Onondaga-Cortland-Madison</td>
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<td>Nancy S. Ruscio</td>
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<td>Craig J. Tice</td>
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<td>Orange-Ulster</td>
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<td>Daniel T. Connor</td>
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<td>Goshen CSD</td>
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<td>Orleans-Niagara</td>
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<td>Roger J. Klatt</td>
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<td>Barker CSD</td>
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<td>Robert Pritchard</td>
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<td>Peter N. Livshin</td>
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<td>Milford CSD</td>
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<td>Karen D. McGraw</td>
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<td>New Lebanon CSD</td>
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<td>Kenneth Mitchell</td>
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<td>South Orangetown</td>
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<td>Brenda W. Myers</td>
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<td>Deborah L. Fox</td>
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<td>Tri-Valley (Alternate)</td>
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<td>Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga</td>
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<td>Maria Rice</td>
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<td>New Paltz CSD</td>
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<td>Deborah Haab</td>
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<td>Highland CSD (Alternate)</td>
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<td>Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex</td>
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<td>Schuylerville CSD</td>
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<td>David Sholes</td>
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<td>Santiago-Marullo</td>
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<td>Victor</td>
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<td>Patricia E. Godek</td>
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<td>North Babylon</td>
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<td>Michael Mensch</td>
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<td>Western Suffolk BOCES (Alternate)</td>
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<td>Big 5 School Districts</td>
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<td>Pamela Brown</td>
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<td>Buffalo City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Contreras</td>
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<td>Syracuse City SD</td>
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<td>Dolores Esposito</td>
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<td>NYC Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernard Pierorazio</td>
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<td>Yonkers City SD</td>
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<td>Bolgen Vargas</td>
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<td>Rochester City SD</td>
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During the Fall Leadership Summit meeting of the House of Delegates, members of the Commissioner’s Advisory Council (CAC) are selected. Membership on the CAC remains within the BOCES geographical region. The BOCES are split into 13 regions, in addition to New York City. It also includes Executive Committee Members, the President of LEAF, Inc., and Council Past Presidents.

The CAC meets three to four times per year to share ideas with the Commissioner of Education. Agendas are developed between the Executive Director of The Council and the Deputy Commissioner of Education and approved by the Commissioner. The purpose of these meetings is for the members of the CAC to share their ideas with the Commissioner and vice versa. Members include:

- Jason Andrews, Windsor
- Frederick Bragan, Canastota
- Maureen Bright, Hicksville
- Christopher Clouet, White Plains City
- Daniel Connor, Goshen
- Sharon Contreras, Syracuse City
- Mark Davey, Gates-Chili
- Maureen Donahue, Southwestern
- Dolores Esposito, NYC Department of Education
- Laura Feijoo, NYC Department of Education
- Mary Beth R. Fiore, Elmira Heights
- Clark J. Godshall, Orleans-Niagara BOCES
- Henry L. Grishman, Jericho
- Douglas Huntley, Queensbury
- William H. Johnson, Rockville Centre
- Corliss Kaiser, Fayetteville-Manlius
- James T. Langlois, Putnam-No. Westchester BOCES
- Lorna R. Lewis, Plainview-Old Bethpage
- Ralph Marino, Jr., Horseheads
- Neil F. O’Brien, Port Byron
- Richard E. Organisciak, New Rochelle
- Douglas Premo, South Lewis
- Mary Alice Price, Pittsford (Retired)
- Randy Richards, Lake Placid
- L. Oliver Robinson, Shenendehowa
- Nancy Ruscio, Homer
- Charles Russo, East Moriches
- Susan Schnebel, Islip
- Randall Squier, Coxsackie-Athens
- Philip G. Steinberg, Pine Bush
- Patricia Sullivan-Kriss, Hauppauge
- Colleen Taggerty, Olean City
- Marilyn C. Terranova, Eastchester
- Susan Todd, Heuvelton
- Bolgen Vargas, Canastota
### COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2012-2013

Athletics: ............ Co-Chairs: Maureen Donohue, Southwestern @ Jamestown  
Jeffrey Rabey, Depew

Cabinet Chair: ................................................................. Angela White, Ossining

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

Assessment Sub-Committee: .....................Co-Chairs: Adele Bovard, Webster  
Jack Bierwirth, Herricks

Special Ed Sub-Committee Chair:.........................Kathryn Wegman, Marion

Mary Barter Scholarship  
for Minorities & Women: .........................Chair: Colleen Taggerty, Olean

Legislative – Federal: ......................................................... Co-Chairs: Eastern Suffolk  
Mary Beth R. Fiore, Elmira Heights  
(Sub-Committee to State Legislative Committee)

Snapshot of the Superintendency: ..... Co-Chairs: Edward Fale, Valley Stream  
Robert Ike, Palmyra-Macedon

Wellness: ..................Chair: Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming BOCES

Budget: ..........................Chair: Mary Beth R. Fiore, Elmira Heights

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

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

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

Finance & Investment: .. Chair: Robert Reidy, Executive Director The Council

Legislative - State: ............................................ Co-Chairs: Neil O’Brien, Port Byron  
Patricia Sullivan-Kriss, Hauppauge

Nominating: ..............................................................Chair: Daniel T. Connor, Goshen

*Committees by Appointment Only*
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.

Venerina T. Greco
Executive Assistant
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 Dr. Robert Reidy, Jr. or Jacinda Conboy, Esq.

Advocacy / Legal Team

Kyle McCauley Belokopitsky, Esq.,
Assistant Director for Government Relations
kyle@nyscoss.org
Direct Telephone Number: (518) 694.4874

Kyle is The Council’s principal day-to-day lobbyist, working alongside Bob Lowry in advocating for critical education issues in Albany and Washington. She also serves as one of The Council’s attorneys, handling matters in relation to Teacher and Principal Evaluations and legislative or regulatory issues.

Jacinda H. Conboy, Esq.
General Counsel
jacinda@nyscoss.org

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 with Kyle Belokopitsky and 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.
Council and LEAF, Inc. Staff

**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, vacancy 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.

**Operations/Finance Team**

**Dena A. Gauthier**  
Senior Graphic Designer  
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 A. Wutzer  
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 responsible for developing new technology initiatives; advancing our social media presence; and managing our website. Also, she 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  
wengert@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.
Leadership for Educational Achievement Foundation, Inc.

2012–2013 LEAF, Inc. Officers

President
Mary Alice Price
Retired Superintendent

Vice President
Neil F. O’Brien
Superintendent
Port Byron CSD

Treasurer
John E. Bierwirth
Superintendent
Herricks UFSD

Past President
Henry L. Grishman
Superintendent
Jericho UFSD

Board Members

Charles S. Dedrick
District Superintendent
Capital Region BOCES

Laura Feijoo
NYC Department of Education

Kevin McGuire
Retired Superintendent

Deborah Shea
Assistant Superintendent
Niskayuna

Director
Kelly O. Masline
Senior Associate Director
NYS Council of School Superintendents

Ex-Officio Board Member
Robert J. Reidy, Jr.
Executive Director
NYS Council of School Superintendents

The mission of LEAF, Inc. is to be 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.
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.