



NEWS FOR NEW YORK STATE'S RURAL SCHOOLS

**SEPTEMBER 2022 EDITION**  
RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE



## CARPE DIEM!

*by Executive Director David Little, Esq.*



What a unique opportunity we have as rural schools begin this school year! Sure, we have significant challenges...it's tough to get staff (boy is it tough!), inflation is cutting into aid increases that have finally come after years of cutting programs. The state comptroller just set an increase of 1.5% for retirement contributions for next year.

Learning recovery (Education Week just wrote about the "historic" declines in reading and math NAEP scores) and student mental health and retarded development concerns pervade every aspect of our work.

Add up all of our issues and then throw on top of all of that the challenge of our communities thinking happy days are here again...that the pandemic is over, districts are swimming in federal and state money and all should be well. School leaders are victims of the public perception that since you worked miracles during the pandemic, you should be able to solve everything. While schools have always been at the center of life in their rural communities, they are now looked to as a panacea. You know the old saying, we've been doing so much with so little for so long that we can now do anything with nothing! Sadly, too many folks expect that now.

All of that said, it's an amazing time for rural public education. The word that comes to mind is "finally!" Finally pandemic restrictions have been lifted and school finally looks like something we recognize and remember. The state and federal governments have finally come to their senses regarding funding and made significant contributions to public education; including (finally!) rural districts (making it easier to address all of our issues.)

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**RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE**

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The pandemic also made regulators much more flexible in their tolerance for innovation. Hard and fast rules for how things are done have given way to a “whatever works...ask for forgiveness, not permission” approach to providing programs and services. As school leaders, you have a brief window in time where you have both resources and the discretion to put good ideas into action with a minimum of bureaucracy. Carpe diem!

Your Rural Schools Association is also seizing the day. We have completed our restructuring and our new staff (Director of Information and Advocacy Heather Zellers and Director of Development and Member Services Scott Bischooping) have been hard at work shoring up everything from our compliment of board of director members to membership recruitment to building a brand new Winter Conference to mimic our Summer Conference for its breadth of information.

Everything has been revamped from our letterhead, our email addresses, our mailing address and soon, a brand new (more functional and professional) website. We have new chairs for many of our committees and they are doing great work on your behalf.

This fall your RSA will be prominent at both the NYSCOSS and NYSSBA conventions. At NYSCOSS we'll be on a legislative and school funding preview panel and presenting sessions with Dr. John Sipple on rural data and issues. At the NYSSBA convention we'll be hosting the “Rural Strand” of programming (our Fall Conference), staffing the RSA booth on the Expo floor (often the most visited booth at convention) and hosting the Rural Schools Breakfast.

Register here at [Rsabreakfast.com](https://Rsabreakfast.com) or directly from the NYSSBA convention registration site. (Hey, you gotta eat breakfast somewhere and Starbucks is going to be a LONG line!) This winter we'll be launching a statewide series of Rural Issues Forums where we'll be coming to you to hear from staff, parents, students, community and higher educational leaders, as well as your community members about your challenges, your needs and your dreams.

And then there's that new and improved Winter Conference. Two days in Saratoga Springs on December 1st and 2d. High level presentations on school funding on the first day, state leaders providing their vision and plans and then on the second day we provide ways of addressing the most pressing challenges we face: The most practical and important gathering of rural district leaders possible. Look for the specifics, which will be to you shortly!

It is indeed a time of great opportunity and both rural districts and their association are poised to maximize it.

Carpe diem my friends....our students and our communities will be the better for it!



## *Upcoming Events*

**NYSCOSS Fall Leadership Summit,  
The Future of Rural Education**  
(John Sipple, Dave Little)  
*September 18-20*  
Saratoga Springs, New York

**Raising Rural Voices National Rural  
Advocacy Coalition**  
*October 19*  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

**National Forum to Advance Rural  
Education**  
*October 20-21*  
Green Bay, Wisconsin

**Rural Strand at the NYSSBA  
Convention**  
*October 27-29*  
Syracuse, New York

**RSA Breakfast**  
*October 28*  
Marriott Syracuse Downtown  
Syracuse, New York

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
*November 4-5*  
Seneca Falls, New York

**RSA Winter Conference**  
*December 1-2*  
Saratoga Springs, New York







## Expanding Rural School Opportunities

According to The Every Student Succeeds Act, every child in New York state is afforded an education and every child in New York MUST be given the same opportunities. Unfortunately, that is not always the case, especially for Rural Schools.



My name is David Brown and I am proud to be the new Membership Chair for the Rural School's Executive Board. I am presently the Superintendent of Schools in DeRuyter Central Schools and today started my fifth year as Superintendent. I come with 34 years of Public School experience and have taught in rural, urban, and suburban schools.

These experiences have given me the opportunity to lead through a lens that understands the limitations a rural school district has compared to others. I became a board member and now hold an executive position because of my passions for rural education AND because I want to make a difference. I am here to impress upon you the importance of your district being a member of this organization. When you are rural, you have to be part of a collective. It is too easy to let others pave the way. WE NEED YOU and your district.

Rural Schools continue to struggle to provide the same opportunities that urban and suburban school districts provide. There are three components that face rural schools and your Rural Schools Association (RSA) is here to help. The three components are: (1) Staffing, (2) Advocacy, and (3) Access.

**Staffing** is a major hurdle. Small rural districts cannot compete with the salaries of larger districts that get far more aid than smaller ones. I know (I taught here years ago) once you teach in a rural school you want to stay. There is something magical, but attracting someone is so difficult. Your RSA works tirelessly to inform those in power the imbalance that is present in Rural Schools.

**Advocacy** is so important to all of us. Your RSA advocates for funding as well as other initiatives with the New York State and National Legislators. We (RSA) spend a large amount of time speaking to our constituents in the government to get the funding we need and deserve, and to get the same opportunities as urban/suburban schools. Your membership is paramount to this succeeding and continuing.

Finally, there is **Access**. When there is limited numbers of staff because our enrollments are small, it creates less access to instructional opportunities. Working together and sharing is paramount to finding ways to provide what our children need. We work as a collective to provide these opportunities. When you are a member of RSA you have networks of similar districts with similar needs.

This is my short introduction to me and the importance of membership and hope you consider being part of this important organization. I want to close by saying you might think RSA will do this anyway, but we need YOU and your District. Please renew your membership or better yet become a new member.

Thank you and if you have any questions, concerns, or needs, do not hesitate to reach out to me to continue the conversation.





## Re-thinking the Poverty Indicators in the Education System: An FRPM Webinar Series

As the exciting momentum builds around free school meals for all and expanding other meal programs, it is important to understand the impact of the loss of Free and Reduced-Price Meal (FRPM) data and school districts' federal funding allocations. AASA, First Focus and Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) are excited to create a working group of education advocates at the federal level for a comprehensive conversation about improving poverty indicators for education.

To kick off this exciting conversation, they are hosting a series of webinars to set foundational knowledge on FRPM data and other existing indicators, their flaws, and possibilities for moving forward. The second webinar will be held on Thursday, September 15 at 10 a.m. EDT.

Click or visit <https://bit.ly/rethinkreg> to register

Click or visit <https://bit.ly/rethinkslides> to view or download slides from the first session

Click or visit <https://bit.ly/rethinkplayback> to listen to the recording

## Have You Registered for the RSA Breakfast Yet?

NYSSBA 2022 ANNUAL CONVENTION | MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN SYRACUSE | OCTOBER 28, 2022 | 7AM-8AM

Everyone has to eat while at the convention so why not do it while hearing the latest on what's facing your district in the coming year with speaker, Dave Little, RSA Executive Director. Each ticket provides that person with delicious choices to help get your day off to a great start!

### ***Your pre-ordered breakfast ticket will include:***

- Assorted Breakfast Pastries
- Sliced Seasonal Fruit
- Seasoned Scrambled Eggs
- Thick-cut Bacon & Sausage Links
- Buttermilk Pancakes
- Breakfast Potatoes with Peppers & Onions
- Yogurt Parfaits with Fresh Berries, Local Honey, & Ancient Grain Granola
- Chilled Juices, Fresh-brewed Hot Coffee, & Assorted Hot Teas

Visit <https://rsabreakfast.com> to grab your tickets today!

WITH THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTING SPONSOR





# The Rural Education Leaders Community is Looking For New York Members!



RSA's partnership with the NREA and our state affiliates offers many unique opportunities. The NREA President-Elect, Dr. Melissa Sadorf of Arizona and Tim Taylor of the California Small School

Districts Association would like to invite RSA members to join the Rural Education Leaders Community.

We are so excited that you have joined us for the upcoming year of collaboration, learning and connecting!

Over the course of the upcoming school year, we will showcase some effective best practices dealing with creating a positive culture and climate within your schools that have an impact on the teaching and learning taking place in classrooms every day.

We have planned four information-packed virtual sessions for our time together, and will be launching an in-person gathering in May, 2023 to provide an opportunity to do a deeper dive with experts from across the country.

Please take a few minutes to watch the introduction video at <https://bit.ly/relcvideo>, which gives some background on who we are and how the RELC came to be, some logistics, and our contact information.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our first virtual session will take place on September 20th. Carol will send out a calendar hold to all of you that will contain the Zoom link – look for that the week of September 12th.

Most Mondays, you will receive a RELC Lightning Bolt with some resources on a wide variety of topics for you to consider, review, read, or incorporate into your daily practice.

If you have things to share that help you operate as a more effective leader, let us know. The power in connecting with each other is the ability to share strengths and successes, and we welcome your ideas and input!

You can find registration at <https://bit.ly/relc-reg>

**We hope to meet you on September 20th!**





## Royalton-Hartland Central School District Announces Search for its Next Superintendent of Schools

The Royalton-Hartland Central School District is a close-knit, family friendly school community of 1200 students in grades K-12 located in a rural setting only an hour from Buffalo and Rochester, with many farms and small family-owned businesses. The District seeks a strong educational leader as its next Superintendent of Schools who recognizes that students are its highest priority.

### The successful candidate will possess:

- A strong articulated vision for an effective, rigorous program of study that prepares students for college and career readiness.
- A child-centered approach to education with an understanding of the supports and services needed to address the challenges affecting student learning.
- Ability to foster a strong, positive organizational culture and climate.
- Experience in developing and implementing best practices designed to create a safe, orderly learning environment.
- Understanding of effective collective bargaining processes and personnel management.
- Experience in developing strong curriculum and engaging instructional programs.
- Ability to lead and implement long-term strategic improvement plans.
- Demonstrated experience in forging meaningful relationships with the school community and local and state leaders.
- Understanding of facilities management and capital improvement projects.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- A leadership style founded upon the ability to develop strong relationships with students, staff, parents, and the community.
- The ability to make difficult decisions and accept responsibility for those decisions.
- An understanding of, and commitment to, developing strong teams.
- Willing to make a commitment to the community and make a difference in the lives of children.

All applicants must possess or be eligible for NYS School District Administrator (SDA) or School District Leader (SDL) certification. A doctoral degree is helpful but not necessary. Candidates should have experience as a teacher, counselor and/ or related service provider and at least three years successful experience as either a building principal or district administrator. While residency is preferred, it is not necessary.

The Board of Education is being assisted in this search by Mr. Anthony Day, the Executive Director of the Western New York Educational Service Council. Applicants are asked not to make direct contact with Board of Education members. All communication and application materials should be directed to:

Anthony Day, Executive Director  
Western New York Educational Service Council  
355 Harlem Rd.  
West Seneca, New York 14224-1892  
(716) 923-6514

Email: [wnyesc.execdir@gmail.com](mailto:wnyesc.execdir@gmail.com)  
Application available at [www.wnyesc.org](http://www.wnyesc.org)

Qualified and interested applicants are invited to submit a letter of interest, current resume, completed and signed application, professional credentials, placement file containing academic transcripts, and at least four (4) letters of recommendation. Completed application packets must be submitted by Friday, October 14, 2022:

The Board of Education anticipates offering a three-year contract with a salary of \$170,000 commensurate with the successful candidate's background, experience, and accomplishments. An appropriate benefits package will also be offered.



# SAVE THE DATE FOR RSA'S 2022 WINTER CONFERENCE!

DECEMBER 1ST & 2ND | SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY



## Preparing Students for Their Future, NOT Our Past: Recap & Slides

As always, Dr. Bill Daggett's presentation at our annual Summer Conference was inspiring, thought provoking and challenging; so much so that many of you asked for a copy of the Power Point slides. So here they are!

It's obvious that the world of public education is changing quickly... almost as quickly as the world around it, but not quite! Bill's presentation prepares us to rethink our approach to make sure our kids are ready for their "real world" and not the one we remember. You can download the PowerPoint slide presentation by visiting <https://bit.ly/daggettslides>.

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