



NEWS FOR NEW YORK STATE'S RURAL SCHOOLS

**JANUARY 2023 EDITION**  
RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE



## JUST CAN'T WAIT TO GET ON THE ROAD AGAIN...

*by Executive Director David Little, Esq.*



The immortal Bill Russell once said that age and experience will beat youth and skill every time and as we continue to battle new viral strains and face the kind of new challenges they never taught you in administrative leadership programs, we hope he's right.

We're fortunate enough to have a state administration that seems willing to not only listen but adjust and collaborate. We have state and federal financial resources that are not yet exhausted. It seems to me that what we really need to succeed is a down to earth discussion of what's needed to address our challenges and shared ideas on how to pull it off.

Public education is adapting and transforming to meet significant new challenges as we enter 2023. From the banning of indigenous mascots and reassessing pathways to graduation to computerized testing and student safety, our State Education Department has an energetic agenda in progress that will play out in the coming year. The state legislature is poised to fulfil its commitment to fully funding Foundation Aid but hasn't yet undertaken the pressing work of planning its long awaited and hopefully more relevant next iteration.

Federal funding has been of significant assistance in addressing both the pandemic's implications and longstanding funding deficiencies; but it has a short shelf life and soon we'll be back on our own. Add to these the need to address a post-holiday spike in student and staff illness from what is now being called a "tridemic" of flu, a new covid strain and the RSV respiratory virus and one quickly realizes it may be better to take things one day at a time.

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**RURAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE**

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The election season has (briefly) taken a hiatus and we've included analysis specific to rural districts. For RSA there's new staff, new connections, and new opportunities...but the same mission of serving rural school districts so that they can provide the best lives for their students. We're glad you're part of the family.

I am personally grateful for your leadership and your unending devotion to the children and school community in your care. It doesn't take a kidney infection; maybe it's the pandemic suspending all that you hold dear, slowing your students' natural educational and social development, maybe it's the loss of economic opportunity or decreased student enrollment but we all have something that makes us fearful for the future. Having gained a new perspective, I would urge us to look past the immediate and toward the important.



As you have in years of underfunding, as you did during the extraordinary demands of the pandemic, you will rise to the challenge of recovering what's been lost and building a better way forward. You are using the chaos to create potential improvements for kids. God bless you for that. Your RSA is focused, resourceful and ready to stand with you every step of the way. We look forward to seeing you in Saratoga!

Determining our best course forward requires a wide-ranging assessment of our circumstances and our challenges. Certainly we don't want post pandemic education to simply be our best attempt at reconstructing pre pandemic education.

Current challenges have expanded beyond pre-pandemic levels and numbers. Our students, our staff and (if we are honest) we ourselves have changed. We are more fearful, more tired and yet also stronger, resilient, collaborative and creative. We have finances and regulatory discretion to address our issues that were unavailable to us in prior eras. The question is how we accurately and effectively apply our resources to those newly presented issues.

Immediately prior to the pandemic, your RSA held a series of Rural Issues Forums across the state. From Montauk to Fredonia and Plattsburgh to Corning (and a dozen places in between) we asked communities to help us understand not just their educational challenges, but those of our schools' host communities. Everyone from SUNY presidents and state leaders and business reps to the military weighed in.

When all of the information was compiled, we produced *The Forgotten Family Member*, a policy brief that highlighted the top rural challenges and offered ways to help. It got tremendous visibility within state and even federal leadership, resulting in a new focus on public policy's impact on rural life in our state. Just as important was the recognition by leaders that policies often ignored their potential impact on a way of life with which most officials have little if any experience.

It's time to do it again. The intervening time between *The Forgotten Family Member* and our current plans for the future of New York State public education has produced circumstances that must be addressed quickly if we are to avoid a generational impact on learning and social development for our students. Failure to do so would have a profound effect on our society.

So, it's time to hit the road. This winter and spring, RSA will once again host its series of rural issues forums throughout the state. As always, we will look to you to not only identify your concerns, but to offer solutions. Please plan to not only attend a forum near you, but to invite community leaders from all walks of life.

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The benefits could be spectacular, with efficient, effective efforts lined up with sound, informed public policy and funding to solve those challenges and provide a better future for our children and our state. So here we go again! It's an important effort that quite frankly needs your help.

Just as an historical example, where would our state be if rural New York hadn't had the economic clout to back New York City in its time of insolvency during the 70s? Now the tables have turned and the City is an economic engine, while our rural areas have experienced never before seen outward migration and economic loss. Before someone declares a recession and the state crams its wallet back in its hip pocket, rural challenges must be at the forefront of our leaders' minds; not out of self-interest, but in the interest of the entire state's future.

Here's how you can help: The NYSCOSS Winter Institute in early March will be the site for RSA's kick-off of its statewide Rural Issues Forums. It's only appropriate that school leaders get first crack at identifying challenges and proposing solutions.

If you're a rural school leader attending the Winter Institute, please plan to make the Rural Issues Forum part of your program plans. You'll find specifics in the conference program. The Winter Institute is always a time to learn the latest information you need, but this time please take an hour to give our state and federal leaders the information that they need and only you have.

For the rest of you, look for a Rural Issues Forum in your neck of the woods. Don't be surprised if you get a call from RSA asking you to help organize or contact needed participants. Not to overdramatize but the future of our state really does hang in the balance and so I will say to you what I say to veterans every time I see one wearing their service ballcap: Thanks for being there for us.

See you on the road!

## **Andrea Durmiaki Returns to RSA as Director of Communications and Planning**



Andrea Durmiaki has accepted a position with RSA as Director of Communications and Planning. Andrea formerly served RSA in several capacities, including conference planning.

Andrea holds a B.B.A from Marywood University and is currently pursuing her Master of Professional Studies Degree in Global Development at Cornell University, with a focus on experiential and community-engaged learning.

Her previous work experience includes facilitating and coordinating global education opportunities, marketing and communications, and program coordination. In her free time, Andrea enjoys traveling, cooking, and spending time at home in the finger lakes.

RSA is thrilled to have this insightful, highly capable and enthusiastic colleague back on staff.



During the summer of 2019 RSA was asked to join the NYSED Office of Student Support Services, Safe Schools Task Force. Stakeholders from multiple disciplines came together to discuss a broad range of issues related to school safety. After multiple meetings, the Task Force focused on the topic of exclusionary discipline and disproportionate disciplinary actions.

From April 2021 to the present the members were divided into working groups in one of four categories: Training and Preparation, Changes in Practice, Code of Conduct Revisions and Data Collection and Analysis. Heather Zellers was a member of the Data Collection and Analysis group. She felt that it was important to make sure rural schools were represented in this group because historically our districts suffered unintended consequences from the data collection around school discipline.

The Task force worked with multiple experts including Kritin Harper, a nationally recognized expert on education policy and Director of Policy and Outreach at Child Trends. She helped guide the Task force work on how our educational system has disproportionately negative impacts on particular groups of students (and families) including: Boys, students of color (particularly Black and Latino students), students of low socio-economic backgrounds, students who identify as LGBTQIA+ and students with disabilities.

**The goals of the Task force's recommendations for policy makers are:**

- To acknowledge that exclusionary discipline, whether classroom removal, short term or long-term suspension, whether in-school or out of school suspension, has long-term, cumulative, and negative effects on students - especially our students of color and with disabilities, and does nothing to solve the underlying issues or root causes that caused the initial misbehavior.
- To reform the disciplinary framework, including the Education Law, by: restricting the use of exclusionary discipline for the youngest students, except under extraordinary circumstances; limiting the use of exclusionary discipline for subjective, minor infractions; limiting the length of time students may be suspended that may only be exceeded in extraordinary circumstances; and reframing existing statutory language to shift from a retributive, punitive structure to one that helps students to learn from their mistakes and receive the supports they need to stay in class.
- To make long-term State and local investments to build the capacity of staff and ensure appropriate supports are available to students to enable them to succeed. Educators must be supported to enact this change beginning with staff preparation programs and continuing through in-service professional development. To finally move toward long-lasting change, permanent directed funding for necessary staff, professional development, and access to supports must be allocated through the State budget process.

The Task force made recommendations to the Board of Regents in four areas: Training and Preparation; Changes in Practice; Codes of Conduct; and Data Collection & Analysis. The recommendations aim to minimize the use of exclusionary discipline that impacts students' access and opportunity and promote alternative tools that can be used at the discretion of local administrators. You can find more information on the recommendations related to these categories at:

<https://bit.ly/reducing-disparities>

# 2023 RSA Annual Summer Conference Approaches

by Scott E. Payne; District Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer; Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming BOCES



The RSA Annual Summer Conference is six months away and yes, we are already planning for another amazing event. A group of leaders from the Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES region is working as a planning committee to help prepare various aspects of the event.

Joining me with planning are Tim Cox, Tim Clarke, and Amy Windus from CA BOCES as well as Taweepon Farrar from West Valley CSD, Danielle Cook from Randolph Academy, Michael Retzlaff from Bolivar-Richburg, and Chris Fee from Cuba-Rushford CSD.

After due consideration, the committee has put forward the conference theme, **"From the Middle of Nowhere to the Heart of Everywhere"**.

You see, technology levels the playing field in our rural schools allowing our students to build background knowledge today that was never possible 10 years ago.

Unique programs such as agriculture, natural resources, and information technology help give rural students the opportunity to be competitive in post-secondary programs natural resources. Remarkable things happen every day in rural education!

I have heard attendees express for years that they have been drawn to the Rural Schools Summer Conference because it is about rural schools, for rural schools, provided by the people from rural schools. It is often noted that the RSA Summer Conference is the most relevant conference folks from our region attend each year. So, as you look forward to the conference this year, please consider submitting a presentation proposal. You can do so online by visiting: <https://rsany.org/2023-proposal/> We look forward to having you join us in Cooperstown!

## CHALLENGE SERIES: Help For Rural Education's Biggest Issues

It's a whole new post-pandemic world and it's brought with it a host of challenges for rural school districts. That said, leave it to our own best and brightest to come up with solid solutions and creative approaches. As they say, we are the people we've been waiting for!

Dr. Terry Dougherty, superintendent of Hancock Central has devoted his coveted "extra" time to creating a series of materials on our most pressing issues. RSA Today will run one of them in each of the next several issues, as a series. The time between issues should give you enough time to digest Terry's information and think of ways to use it to your best advantage.

The first in the series is this piece on Building a Stable Teacher Workforce. Teacher recruitment and retention is on everyone's mind and plate right now. Here Terry provides us with practical insights to tackle this seemingly intractable challenge. Your RSA would like to thank Terry for his dedication in preparing these materials for the benefit of all of New York's rural districts. You can view/download the PDF here: <https://bit.ly/StableTeacherWorkforce>

# The Rural School Challenge: Implementing Quality, Hands-On Electives On A Bare Bones Budget

One of the most effective ways to increase quality programming and solve rural school challenges is by forming relationships with community organizations.

Through the development of these strong partnerships, districts and organizations can work together to solve business and economic development challenges.

The Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center (CTE TAC) is available to provide free services to school districts in New York State. The CTE TAC can help with the implementation of high-quality, hands-on programming for students and assist with developing and sustaining high-quality CTE experiences.

CTE TAC also supports regional collaboration between secondary and post-secondary institutions and business and industry, grounded in labor market needs. The best news is that their services are FREE!

The CTE TAC operates under a state contract to assist the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in carrying out its mission of improving the quality, access, and delivery of Career and Technical Education (CTE) through research-based methods, resulting in broader CTE opportunities for all students.

One way to ensure the quality, access, and delivery of CTE across New York State is through NYSED-Approved CTE Programs. NYSED-Approved programs benefit students in a number of ways, from preparing for industry-based certifications to earning college credit. The CTE TAC's team of Regional Field Associates are readily available to guide and assist schools through the NYSED program approval process.

CTE TAC's website (<https://nycotecenter.org>) contains a large collection of resources that are available free of charge, including a collection of field-generated

resources, where NYS CTE Educators can share work-based learning placement ideas and post-secondary partnerships.

Regular professional development sessions are also provided on every aspect of the program approval process. Offering high-quality professional learning opportunities is one of the highest priorities at the CTE TAC.

In addition to the program approval series, CTE TAC also provides professional development in the following content areas: Leadership; Social-Emotional Learning; Instructional Strategies; Engagement Strategies; Special Populations and ELLs; Career Exploration & Work-Based Learning; the Perkins and Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) process; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; and Mental Health & Wellness.

More than 80 live, virtual, statewide professional development sessions are offered per school year, and sessions can be crafted specifically for local education agencies (LEA), BOCES, or post-secondary institutions in coordination with the CTE TAC - simply reach out to your regional field associate for more information. Professional learning is also provided asynchronously, with expert consultant-designed courses offered via DreamSeeDo.

All of CTE TAC's professional development is offered free of charge, and is NYSED CTLE-Approved. The CTE TAC's team is skilled in professional development, CTE pathway and program development, stakeholder engagement, leadership development, communications, and project management.

Your new CTE program is right around the corner, and the CTE TAC team is here to assist in every step of the process. Reach out to us at [ctetac@spnet.us](mailto:ctetac@spnet.us) or (518) 723-2137 - we are here to help.





# Blueprint for Community Schools



The concept of Community Schools is a proven winner in addressing student need. Not only that, but New York State unwittingly initiated strong support for the concept when it provided Excel Aid to local districts that resulted in expanded and upgraded facilities. Sadly, that effort was immediately followed by the Great Recession and the resulting Gap Elimination Adjustment that decreased school funding.

More than a decade later, districts are rebuilding programs and staff and can once again make full use of the upgraded space. The concept is simple; partner with local agencies, programs and not for profits to expand student programming and services. Work with other schools, hire a coordinator and use whatever partners you can find to provide programs ranging from after school and summer programs to school based health centers and mobile dental clinics.

Within education aid, New York State provides millions each year to support community schools, which began as an urban concept but may in fact be of tremendous help in raising rural student academic achievement and general well being. In the link provided here, The Brookings Institute lays out several significant resources (including a staged planning guide) to creating and maximizing community schools.

Reading these resources is worth the time, as we're challenged to emerge stronger and more creative from the pandemic: [Moving Community Schools Forward with foundational resources \(Brookings Institution\)](#)





# TICONDEROGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

*We invite applications for the position of  
Superintendent of Schools*

## District Profile:

- **Enrollment: 721**
  - Elementary School (UPK-6): 361
  - Jr/Sr High School (7-12): 360
- **Average Class Size**
  - Elementary School: 18
  - Jr/Sr High School: 20
- **Faculty & Staff**
  - Certified Faculty: 105
  - Support Staff: 93
- **The 2022-23 budget is \$21,803,473**
  - The budget is 41.7% State Aid
  - The local share is \$12,703,524

## District Leadership Team:

Nine-member Board of Education, Superintendent, School Business Administrator, Two Building Principals, Director of Special Services and K-12 Assistant Principal.

## Compensation:

A three-year contract with the minimum starting salary of \$140,000 and an attractive benefits package. Consideration given for appropriate experience. While residency in the District is not required, high visibility in the community is an expectation.

## *Our Ticonderoga School Community*



## *History & Community*

Ticonderoga Central School is located in Upstate New York's Essex County on beautiful Lake George and Lake Champlain. A gateway to the Adirondacks and New England, this region is rich in history and played a key role in the early struggles of our nation. The Ticonderoga community offers a high quality, family-oriented rural life-style. There are many opportunities for outdoor recreation such as boating, camping, skiing, fishing and hiking. Breathtaking views, historic Fort Ticonderoga and a small-town environment all contribute to the quality of life offered here.

The Ticonderoga Central School Community includes the towns of Ticonderoga and Hague. Putnam Central School tuitions their students in grades 7-12 to Ticonderoga.

Ticonderoga serves three distinct communities: Ticonderoga, Hague and Putnam. Ticonderoga is the largest community with an approximate population of 5,000 people. The second is Hague with a population of 900 people. Putnam is the smallest town with a population of 650.

## *Our District*

Ticonderoga Jr/Sr High School: The 7-12 building boasts a robust academic program to serve all types of students. State of the art facilities including a full-dome planetarium housed in a building designated on the national historic registry make this school a truly remarkable place to receive an education. The small classes and individualized attention ensure our students excel to their capabilities.

Ticonderoga Elementary School: The Prek-6 building is fortunate to have a caring, professional staff who work each day to support "quality, excellence, and equity" in our programs. Academically, our students are well-prepared to meet State and national standards in math, science, ELA, and social studies. Programs in the arts, technology, health, and physical education round out each child's school day.





# Ticonderoga Central School District

## Applications

Candidate must submit the following:

- ☐ Letter of intent
- ☐ Current resume
- ☐ Completed application
- ☐ Three current letters of recommendation
- ☐ Copy of School District Administrator (SDA) or School District Leader (SDL) Certificate
- ☐ College transcript

Ticonderoga Central School District is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

## Timeline

**Application Deadline**  
**February 3, 2023**



**Interviews**  
**February/March 2023**



**Appointment**  
**April 1, 2023**



**Start Date**  
**July 1, 2023**

**All inquiries should be submitted to:**

Dr. Mark C. Davey  
District Superintendent  
CEWW BOCES  
P.O. Box 455  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
(518) 561-0100 x211  
[jolicoeur\\_julie@cves.org](mailto:jolicoeur_julie@cves.org)

## Candidate Profile

The Ticonderoga Central School's Board of Education is seeking an enthusiastic candidate who has a wide range of skills and competencies working with boards of education, school staff, community members, parents, and students. The Board seeks a collaborative leader who can engage the school community in the continuous improvement of a quality educational program.

The candidate will:

- Have a thorough understanding of educational administration in NY State schools including finance, budgeting, education law, APPR, Common Core, and Special Education requirements.
- Have a strong background in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Have good public relations and interpersonal skills, including excellent writing and speaking skills, plus familiarity with media technology.
- Possess skill in supervision and successfully motivating professional staff and other employees.
- Have proven leadership ability in negotiations and development of school budgets, plans, and employee contracts. Possess problem solving skills and conflict resolution ability.
- Have a clear vision of the importance of preparing students for college and career with 21st Century skills.
- Have experience in developing short and long-range plans while creatively balancing the students' educational needs with the school district's fiscal requirements.
- Have strong analytical and organizational skills, initiative and the ability to work with school staff to achieve improved student results. Demonstrates an ability to effectively lead and work cooperatively with school district personnel and the community.
- Be a person of unquestionable personal and professional integrity.

**Selection Process:** The Ticonderoga CSD is being assisted by Dr. Mark C. Davey, District Superintendent of the Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington (CEWW) BOCES, in the selection process.



Applications can be found at: [www.ticonderogak12.org](http://www.ticonderogak12.org)

# Composting at K-12 Schools in NYS Webinar

Are you interested in learning about starting a food scraps diversion and composting program at your school?

Syracuse University's Center for Sustainable Community Solutions is hosting an hour-long free webinar with speakers:

- **Barb Reese**, Seneca Falls School District
- **Todd Burkner**, Carthage Central School District
- **Mark Warford**, Bethlehem Central Middle School

Join us 4-5pm  
Thursday,  
February 16th,  
2023

Please email  
[srosen06@syr.edu](mailto:srosen06@syr.edu)  
to register

Syracuse University  
Center for Sustainable Community Solutions

The webinar will take place on Thursday, February 16th at 4pm over zoom. If you are interested in joining, please email [srosen06@syr.edu](mailto:srosen06@syr.edu) to register.

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