

A GREAT NEW DAY AT YOUR RSA!

by Executive Director David Little, Esq.



Your Rural Schools Association began life as the Rural Schools Program at Cornell University. For over 40 years the association funded the program, which employed RSA's staff, housed its office and did its bookkeeping, purchasing, etc. As your RSA has grown and developed into a visible and influential advocate at the state and national levels and as our need to be nimble and focused in serving our members has expanded, we began the process of surveying our members about their needs.

We held a retreat of our board of directors to learn their perspective and gain their insights into what RSA should be doing that it's not, what it isn't doing that it should and most important, what you want and need from your RSA.

The dream of RSA's founders was that someday the association would be able to stand on its own, be known for its contributions and work directly to serve rural schools. Working with Cornell, RSA is ready to make that transition to independence. Beginning in October, RSA will continue to work with Cornell to provide you high level research, offer opportunities for its students to interact with your districts for needed programs and services and for RSA to include Cornell information in its conferences and summits. But RSA won't operate within Cornell's structure. The logistical link, the business side of our collaboration will come to its logical conclusion.

For RSA this means we can operate more efficiently, working out of our Latham office in the NYSSBA building and close to SED, the legislature and the governor. We will have a new staffing structure directly linked to what you've told us you need, rather than staffing according to university titles and job descriptions. According to one of RSA's founders "this is what we always hoped for RSA!"

Here are some of the exciting changes resulting from our strategic planning: First, RSA has hired two new staff members. They say that the best indicator of future performance is past performance and if that's so, you're in for tremendous service.



Heather Zellers (formerly an RSA board member chairing the Legislative Committee and serving as National Issues Liaison) has accepted a position as Director of Information and Advocacy. Heather currently serves as Vice-President on the Seneca Falls Board of Education

and has been a board member for nine years. Prior to accepting her current position with RSA she was actively involved as an At-Large Member of the RSA Board of Directors for five years. Further expanding on her federal role, she was elected to the National Rural Education Association Executive Committee in 2019.

In 2021 she was selected to serve as the Vice Chair of the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition, through which she works closely with state directors, higher education research facilities, and national organizations that represent all facets of education. In addition, Heather serves as the Secretary for the National Rural Education Foundation which provides scholarships for students and teachers, while also funding the Rural Teacher of the Year Award. She's received RSA's Anne Z Paulin Award, the NYSSBA Champion for Change Award, and the NYSSBA Board Advocacy Award. Heather resides in Seneca Falls, New York with her husband and three children.

Scott Bischoping jumps from his service as RSA's Finance Committee Chair to his new position as Director of Development and Member Services, where he will work directly with districts on their needs. Scott retired from the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES in July of 2019. He had served as



the District Superintendent since Feb 2013, previously serving in Livonia CSD for 25 years in different capacities, including Superintendent, Business Education Teacher, High School Principal, and Director of Instruction. Scott earned his master's degree and certificate of advanced study in Education Administration from The College at Brockport. He has most recently served as the interim superintendent for several school districts. Scott and his wife Tina live in Canandaigua; they have two grown children: Kevin and Kelly.

Both Heather and Scott bring intense devotion to rural schools and a wealth of practical experience to bear on their behalf. We have also reformed our structure to outsource several vital functions, giving RSA the financial efficiency to keep dues far below those of other statewide associations. Andrea Durmiaki, our former Administrative Assistant has been hired as our conference planner. Andrea will continue to work with RSA on developing and running our annual Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer Conferences, as well as helping with our annual membership drive and developing new professional development opportunities for you, our members. Look forward to bigger and better events with Andrea at the helm! We have also hired FLX Creatives to take on the design and distribution of RSA Today, our Advocacy Alerts and other communications.

I would be remiss in relaying our new structure to you if I didn't mention the help of NYSSBA. Most of you know that NYSSBA, NYSCOSS and NYSPTA are official partners of RSA's. (It's in our by laws!) NYSSBA serves as office landlord and has gone above and beyond in their support of RSA throughout our transition: Everything from helping create our electronic registration system to building us a storage area for things we formerly housed at our Cornell office. NYSSBA Executive Director Bob Schneider recently plopped down in my office and before even saying hello, simply said "Whaddya need?" RSA is blessed to have achieved this new status with the help of so many true friends.

For many of us, ending the business side of our relationship with Cornell is both an exciting and melancholy moment. Our roots are there and thanks to the efforts of so many folks at Cornell (like Dr. John Sipple who has been our liaison for over 20 years) we are now well known and ready to enter this long-awaited phase of our service to you. Our thanks go out to Cornell and to John for their years of dedication and to you, our rural school districts. As Yogi Berra famously said, thanks for making it necessary!



Why Rural Works: Best Kept Secrets Revealed!

The conference begins on Sunday, July 10th and wraps up a little less than 48 hours later. This year's conference is set to surpass all previous efforts and that's saying a lot.

Here's the proof...

There are two internationally-recognized educational futurists and this conference has them both. Drs. Bill Daggett and Jim Mahoney will offer keynote presentations, first in an outstanding pre conference summit (with the help of Cornell researcher and New York State educational leader Dr. John Sipple) and then kicking off regular sessions on Monday morning. The Sunday evening kick off dinner includes presentations by the National Rural Teacher of the Year, the New York State Teacher of the Year (from rural Cuba Rushford!) and First Deputy Commissioner James Baldwin. In addition, NYSCOSS Executive Director Chuck Dedrick will receive the James C. Dawson Lifetime Achievement Award.

In addition To Bill Daggett's staggering insights into the future of public education, Monday will also bring a whole new perspective on our rural challenges and successes.

Lunch will include the FFA Statewide Student Oratorical Contest Winners and Monday dinner will offer thoughts by National Rural Education Association Executive Director Dr. Allen Pratt and honoring RSA Award winners.

Of course, you'll enjoy the popular networking receptions and outstanding breakout sessions that are a staple of the Summer Conference and all within walking distance of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, downtown Cooperstown, a world class golf course and the shore of Otsego Lake. It's a mixture of camaraderie, relaxation and outstanding professional development. (Extra brownie points for every Hall of Famer you see sharing The Otesaga with us!) Leave rejuvenated and ready to make your district the best it can be.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN COOPERSTOWN!

Not staying at The Otesaga? No worries! There are plenty of hotels less than a block away-with lakefront views!





REGISTRATION: https://rsany.regfox.com/rsa-summer-conference-2022

2022 Virtual Youth Development Research Update

June 1 & 2 Via Zoom

THE ECOLOGY OF YOUTH LEARNING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1ST 9:30AM-12PM



Misha Inniss-Thompson Cornell University

Honoring Black Girls' Visions: Lessons from an After-School Program



Joshua Felver Syracuse University

Mindfulness-Based Programs for Stress and Health

THURSDAY, JUNE 2ND 9:30AM-12PM



GripTape

Exploring the Impact of Self-Driven Learning on Youth



PRYDE Cornell University

Training Teens to Ask Research Questions about their World







Register Now!

This event is free for the general public.

Contact Esther Kim at sk2274@cornell.edu to register.

Student Video Contest Reaps Rewards





K-8 Grand Prize Winner, Henry Wilson of Bloomfield Central, receives his \$1000 prize, along with T-shirt and Certificate

Each year, your RSA is proud to offer students the opportunity to show their school and community pride, support their creativity and technical skill and collaborate with other students and community members. Partnering with the New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal (NYSIR), RSA offers sizeable prizes and recognition in both a K-8 and a high school category. Participation is robust (\$1000 Grand Prize Awards can't hurt!) and awards are presented at end of the year Student Award Ceremonies across the state.

This year students were able to work through the fall and winter on their videos and winners were selected earlier this spring. All winning videos will be displayed throughout the conference in the registration area of the RSA Summer Conference. They will also be available for viewing on the RSA website at RSANY.org.

This year's winner were truly amazing and the process of presenting awards has already begun, with the awarding of the K-8 Grand Prize Winner Henry Wilson of Bloomfield Central awarded his \$1000 prize (and RSA/NYSIR Student Video Contest T Shirt and certificate.) Henry is pictured in the photo. The enthusiasm displayed by fellow students and staff for such success in a statewide contest really shows the school pride and community spirit the contest seeks to promote!

Winning entries for 2022 were received from Bloomfield, Cattauragus-Allegany BOCES, Forestville, Genesee Valley, Herkimer BOCES, Indian Lake, Levittown, Long Lake, Madison Oneida BOCES, Rondout Valley, Saugerties, Sackets Harbor and Lyndonville. Once you've had the chance to view these tremendous student creations, you'll understand the role our schools play in community pride and the value of the many ways our students are promoting positive activity both within and outside of their district. Congratulations to all who participated and to NYSIR for providing RSA the ability to offer this great event!

YOU AND YOUR



What a Year!

Great advocacy: State and Federal aid gains

Increased local programming on your most critical issues

Increased media influence on your behalf

Monthly legislative updates and virtual programs

In person conferences and summits

All the research and personal help you've come to expect

Now serving 370 rural school districts

Still the best association value at only \$850 per year

YOU AND YOUR RSA...

DRIVING RURAL SCHOOL SUCCESS!





Child Nutrition Waivers

As the school year comes to a close, we need Congress to understand the urgency behind continuing to provide waivers for the Summer Feeding Programs. The USDA needs the authority from Congress to provide these vital services for our students.

To provide comment and show your support for extending the waivers, visit: https://aasa.org/legislative-action-center

New York has submitted plans to the USDA for several waivers that are available to state agencies. The two Summer Food Service Program and Seamless Summer Option state waivers included are: Non-Congregate - Allows meals to be eaten offsite and Parent Pick-Up - Parents and guardians can pick up meals for their children. These waivers can be used when congregate meal service is limited by the pandemic and expire on September 30, 2022.

New York has also applied for four waivers that were available prior to the pandemic which will be available through April 30, 2023: Offer versus serve, First Week Site Visit, Meal Service Time Restrictions, Area Eligibility for Closed Enrolled Sites.

Two waivers that many communities relied on will not be available this summer: area eligibility, which allowed sites to

operate in any area without meeting the requirement that 50 percent of the children in the area are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals; and meal pattern requirements that provide flexibility in meeting the nutrition standards. For area eligibility, USDA is offering flexibility on how to document that a school meets the area eligibility requirement if a school has not collected school meal applications.

Option 1 is using the percentage of students certified for free or reduced-price school meals during the 2019–2020 school year.

Option 2 is multiplying the percentage of students in the school who are certified for free school meals without an application by 1.6. This approach is similar to the Community Eligibility Provision to qualify a site. Sites also can still use census data and other approved data to demonstrate that the site is in a low-income area.

For more information on the waivers and waiver flexibilities, watch the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) webinar, Summer Meals: Mitigating the Impact of the Loss of the Summer Nutrition Waivers linked to below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTX39qzxkx0

EPA Clean School Bus Program

The EPA has created resources for districts to learn about Clean School Bus funding options and resources for technical assistance. They have committed to helping underserved districts navigate the Rebate Program. Stakeholder feedback is an important part of the EPA program, so if you encounter issues, please make sure you contact the department or RSA for help.

We highly encourage Transportation Directors, Business Officials or other district personnel involved in the transition process for Transportation Departments to utilize the information from the EPA. The EPA will be hosting several webinars for information on the EPA Clean School Bus Program. June 2, 2022 at 3pm EST the National Conference of State Legislatures will be discussing school bus electrification and state policy options.

Follow the link to register for events:

https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/events-related-clean-school-bus-program

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Michael Rebell, Executive Director of the Campaign for Educational Equity and lead attorney in the CFE and NYSER state aid funding lawsuits, call for a permanent cost out commission to inform state leaders about student need in creating a new funding formula.

RSA Funding Summit Kicks Off Reform Effort

After falling behind on their court ordered commitment to fully fund Foundation Aid (by about a generation) by this time next year New York State will have allocated the remaining funds and every district will be fully funded under the existing aid formula; begging the question...what comes next? The state's options are many, but only one would prepare our next generation of students for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

First, the state could simply decide to add (or detract) from the amount a school receives in any given year. Since everyone will have been determined to be fully funded, inflationary increases based on the old formula are certainly a possibility. Recall that former Governor Cuomo attempted to do this in his Executive Budget two years ago; essentially saying that he and the legislature would simply determine what funds were available and how they would be distributed (aid distribution by politics rather than established student need and community capacity to contribute revenue.)

The idea was rejected then and should be rejected again because it has no relationship to factors affecting a student's education. Foundation Aid components are already a generation old and fail to reflect current student poverty, mental health needs, transience, sparcity, regional cost differences and a host of other ways the world has changed in the past 15 years.

While providing the most revenue on average per student of any state, New York has always ranked dead last in the way it distributes that aid. Most states begin with a base amount needed to uphold its constitutional responsibility to provide every child a sound public education. Then, if a community can afford more, it is free to chip in local revenue; but the basics are always covered by the state.

New York flips that idea on its ear by relying far too much on local revenue (creating wide inequity in the education a child receives.) That obviously can't continue if the Empire State is to thrive in the coming years. Someone had to sound the alarm and begin talking about needed revisions. Change in something as complex as the state aid formula takes months, if not years to reform. Enter your RSA.

Partnering with the Nassau Suffolk School Boards Association and the Western Suffolk BOCES, RSA held the first School Funding Summit. It featured Senate Education Committee Chair Shelley Mayer who provided insightful perspective on both needed change and legislative influences. Michael Rebell, the force behind the victorious Campaign for Fiscal Equity and New Yorkers for Student Educational Rights lawsuits spoke about the need to empanel a permanent state commission to regularly assess the cost of vital components to a student's education and to recommend funding levels to the governor and legislature.

Eastern Suffolk BOCES Chief Operating Officer and RSA Board of Directors member Dr. Julie Lutz provided a statistical analysis of demographic changes occurring since the Foundation Aid formula was first enacted, followed by the impact of those changes on schools. SED Assistant Commissioner Christina Coughlin honed in on the effect of using individual factors in the formula before focusing in on the interaction between the department and the Division of the Budget, the legislature and others.



New York State Association of School Business Officials Executive Director (and former Deputy Secretary of Education) Brian Chechnicki joined NYSSBA Governmental Relations Director (and former Questar III State Aid Planning Group staffer) Brian Fessler and RSA's Dave Little for a discussion of political, financial and programmatic effects on efforts to reform the formula in the coming year.

All agreed that the advocacy must be fervent but carefully crafted to avoid schools losing out based on the loss of enrollment. School leaders in attendance were impressed by the high level of information gleaned and appreciated RSA's foresight in recognizing the need to begin this vital work.

Both Sen. Mayer and Michael Rebell stayed long after their own presentations to learn the perspective and needs of other presenters and those in attendance. The question and answer period provided a healthy and informed dialogue that led the group to understand the stakes, the impediments and the value of a timely and sustained effort to bring a timely and relevant formula to public education in New York State.

Your RSA is proud to have begun that effort and pledges to work diligently with state leaders to see it to fruition. Our kids deserve no less of us.

RSA was proud to partner with NYSIR, REFIT, Ambassador Educational Solutions and Western Suffolk BOCES in holding this groundbreaking summit.



RSA Executive Director Dave Little, Nassau Suffolk Schools Board Assn Executive Director Lorraine Deller, Senate Education Committee Chair Shelley Mayer and N-SSBA Deputy Executive Director Bob Vechio pose following a successful kick off to reforming Foundation Aid.

CA BOCES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING Upcoming Classes & Training:

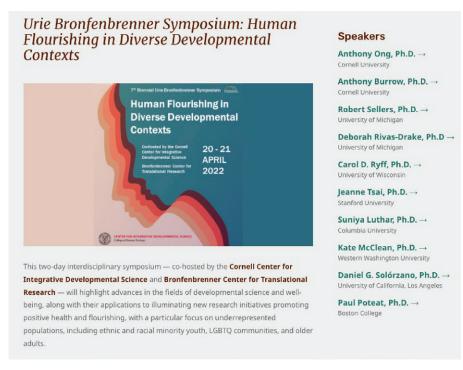
The Workforce Development and Community Learning department from Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES has several upcoming classes and trainings scheduled. As the regional leader in education services, CA BOCES offers state-of-the-art programs for learners of all ages and abilities as well as cost-effective shared services for 22 component school districts. CA BOCES empowers students to achieve their maximum potential by offering a wide variety of innovative programs and support that include special education, career and technical education, adult and continuing education, technology support, and instructional support services. To learn more, visit: www.caboces.org.

Class	Location	Start Month
Point & Insurance	CTE Center at Olean,	Continuous Recruitment
Reduction (a.k.a.	Belmont, Ellicottville	
Defensive Driving)		
CDL B	CTE Center at Olean	Continuous Recruitment
5-Hour Course	CTE Center at Olean,	Monthly classes
	Belmont, Ellicottville	-
Dental Assisting	CTE Center at Olean	September
Heavy Equipment	CTE Center at Ellicottville	September
Operations		
Practical Nursing	CTE Center at Olean	September
Welding	CTE Center at Olean	September
Nurse Aide	CTE Center at Olean	October

Call 716-376-8264 for more class schedules and registration information.

Report from Deputy Director, Gretchen Rymarchyk

On April 20, 2022, Gretchen attended the annual Urie Bronfenbrenner Symposium: Flourishing in Diverse Developmental Contexts. Here is a screen shot of the description & speaker list:



You can read more about the event here:

https://bctr.cornell.edu/event/urie-bronfenbrenner-symposium-human-flourishing-in-diverse-developmental-contexts/

Grant Course News

We have received requests from our members for the next offering of the Grant Writing Course, so we need to let you know that this course will not be offered in Fall 2022.

RSA will no longer offer the course, but Cornell seems very interested in continuing to do so, just not in time for this fall. Stay tuned & we will provide updates as they emerge.

Other Newsworthy Data

In case you're wondering what your middle and high schoolers think about the environment these days, National 4H surveyed 1500 teens and here are their results:

https://4-h.org/about/research/teenenvironmental-impact-survey/

Some good news for all of you working so hard to educate the children of our nation, education gaps are decreasing!

https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/02/briefing/school-education-gaps-funding-math.html

What follows are descriptions of the two most relevant speaker sessions for our members, and the takeaways we thought might be important for rural schools.

The Role of Race in the Psychological Lives of African American Adolescents

Robert Sellers, Ph.D.

Vice provost for equity and inclusion, chief diversity officer, and the Charles D. Moody Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Education University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Session Description

Dr. Sellers' research focuses on the role of race in the psychological lives of African Americans. He and his students have developed a conceptual and empirical model of African American racial identity. The model has been used by a number of researchers in the field to understand the heterogeneity in the significance and meaning that African Americans place on race in defining themselves.

He has also published extensively on the topics of racial socialization and discrimination among African American youth. He has received numerous honors and awards including the Theodore Millon Mid-Career Award in Personality Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation, the American Psychological Association Minority Fellowship Program Research Achievement Award, and the APAGS Kenneth & Mamie Clark Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Professional Development of Ethnic Minority Graduate Students.

Session Takeaways:

Because of the extent to which race & racialization is incorporated into our society, it is really important for African American adolescents to develop a sense of their identity as a Black person in the United States. This understanding will evolve throughout their lives and will be shaped by their contexts – including school.

This understanding influences how African American adolescents interpret events around them, and whether they feel these were race-related or not.

Dr. Sellers' team developed a Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) with four dimensions. In this presentation, he focused on two of those dimensions:

- "First, we are human". This is not part of the model, but something that needs to be said given the historical and current race issues in this country.
- First dimension of the model: Racial centrality the extent to which a person normatively defines self with respect to race.
- Racial regard: a person's affective & evaluative judgements of his/her race. This has two components:

- 1. Private regard how I feel about my racial group and my membership in that group.
- 2. Public regard what I think OTHERS think of my racial group (positive or negative).

How is racial identity related to African American Adolescents' well-being outcomes?

- Contexts (schools, neighborhoods, etc.) that are positive toward their racial group serve to increase adolescents' well-being outcomes.
- If someone has many aspects of identity, private regard does not have much impact on self-esteem;
- However, if race is central to identity, self-esteem is positively correlated to private regard.

How is racial identity related to racial discrimination and its impact on African American Adolescents' well-being outcomes?

 Some racial identity attitudes serve as risk factors for experiencing racial discrimination, yet those same attitudes can be protective against the negative impact of experiencing racial discrimination.

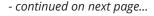
Building Them Up: Racial and Ethnic Socialization and Flourishing Among Racially Minorized Youth Deborah Rivas-Drake, Ph.D.

Professor of psychology, Stephanie Johnson Rowley Collegiate Professor of Education University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Session Description

Dr. Rivas-Drake's work examines how school, peer, family, and communities can help adolescents navigate issues related to race and ethnicity, and how identity, socialization, and experiences of racism inform the academic, socioemotional, and civic development of young people. Her current work seeks to identify practices that disrupt racism and xenophobia and that set diverse young people on trajectories of positive contribution to their schools and communities.

Her research has been funded by NSF, the Spencer Foundation, and the W.T. Grant Foundation. Her co-authored book, "Below the Surface: Talking with Teens about Race, Ethnicity, and Identity" (Princeton University Press), received the Social Policy Book Award from the Society for Research on Adolescence and the Eleanor Maccoby Award in Developmental Psychology from the American Psychological Association.





Session Takeaways:

Dr. Rivas-Drake's research looks specifically at the Latinx experience:

- Racial bias is showing up in preschool.
- Children experience similar levels of racial bias in their communities & among peers – there is little reprieve.
- Incidences of racial bias appear to increase from 14-16 years of age.
 - And they are linking these experiences with what they think they can expect in the future as adults.
 - Adaptive competencies are developed in response.

Ethnic-racial socialization: messages/teachings in a family context to help youth understand the importance of race/ethnicity, and that racism is out there, and to prepare them for this.

Cultural socialization: help youth connect to heritage; history; traditions.

 Cultural socialization is linked to lots of different positive outcomes (identity, belonging, self worth, etc)

Preparation for bias: convey awareness & strategies to cope (sometimes combined with cultural/ethnic/racial socialization.

Sociopolitical socialization: Helping kids process & understand things going on in outside world, for example families with unauthorized status talk about being hyper vigilant; Dr. Rivas-Drake's young children ask her "what's CRT?"

Preparation for bias & sociopolitical socialization may not have the same consistency of positive results for individuals, but it does elevate collective health.

Flourishing = individual health & collective health. Support the development of identities that prepare youth to engage in anti-racism.

- Foster an understanding of interrelatedness in oppressions (eg. How are racial oppression and gender oppression interrelated – how do they compound each other? How do they depend on each other to continue?)
- Promote critical analysis of racism as system.
- Lessons learn from parents
 - Actively work against status quo to:
 - Retain experiences and history
 - Communicate that eople like me are worthy & belong
 - Prepare for engaging in civic life
 - Prepare to recognize & resist interpersonal & institutional racism

Moving from "I" to "we"- we are worthy/belong/have agency!

WEBINAR OPPORTUNITY

Early Efforts | Children Thrive in Equitable Communities: Eleven Simple Rules to Help us Get There

Webinar Description

How adults interact has a deep and lasting influence on the children in their care. And yet, the early learning field spends very little time focusing on these relationships and interactions. To co-create communities in which every child can thrive, all adults in the child's ecosystem need to come together with mutual respect, collaboration, and inclusivity.

The Eleven Simple Rules is a framework that helps adults establish a new, equitable model of working together. This framework helps adults break down silos and dismantle inequitable power structures, and it is replicable across all early learning environments. When the Eleven Simple Rules are integrated as a daily practice, they lead to high quality learning in the classroom and beyond — from parks, playgrounds, homes, buses to every part of a child's ecosystem.

In this webinar, panelists will introduce the framework of the Eleven Simple Rules for thriving communities. Members of the Wyoming Quality Learning Network will describe how they used the Eleven Simple Rules to create an effective statewide collaboration. The results have been a shared vision of quality across all early learning settings and pathways for thriving, equitable communities for children and families in Wyoming.

Jun 7, 2022 02:00 PM in Eastern Time (US and Canada)

REGISTER HERE: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Kjo2fwrsSkyl5cPlYlbaZw

DON'T MISS RSA'S ANNUAL SUMMER CONFERENCE!

https://www.rsany.org/summer-conference-2022



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