

**Massena Central School Board of Education Update  
January 25, 2018**



**Alcoa Foundation Offers Unique Field Experience for Interested Students**

The following is information from Alcoa about a unique science education program to be held this summer for interested students. It involves a field experience at Yosemite National Park in California or Olympic National Park in Washington. We hope our students will apply for this great opportunity.

Alcoa and the Alcoa Foundation hopes you share with your students and their families, this unique opportunity. Since 2013, Alcoa Foundation has partnered with NatureBridge – a trusted nonprofit organization that provides hands-on environmental field science education for teens in national parks – to send 16-18 year-olds from Alcoa communities around the globe to experience Yosemite National Park in California or Olympic National Park in Washington for two weeks this summer. There will be 63 Alcoa Scholars in the class of 2019.

Alcoa Foundation scholarships will be awarded based on a combination of a student's application and recommendation and will cover full program costs, including roundtrip international travel and passport and visa fees, if necessary. For more information about the Alcoa Scholars Program and to fill out an application, visit [www.naturebridge.org/alcoascholars](http://www.naturebridge.org/alcoascholars).

The deadline for applying is March 4; winners will be announced in April. Please note: all participants must be proficient in English.

We are thrilled to bring this opportunity to learn and experience science through nature to high-potential students around the world. Thank you for spreading the word.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please let me know at (315) 705-2320 or contact Katie Draude, the Alcoa Scholars Program Manager at NatureBridge, [alcoascholars@naturebridge.org](mailto:alcoascholars@naturebridge.org).

**The Governor's School-Funding Allocation Requirement**

The following article is from NYSCOSS Deputy Director Bob Lowry about Governor Cuomo's continued assertion that school funding issues are more about how districts allocate funding among school buildings than the overall amount of aid provided by the state. This year, Massena was one of the 76 districts that was required to provide data about how we spend money among our school buildings. Next year, all others districts with four to five schools will be required to

provide the same information followed by all districts in the third year of implementation. If there is more than a 5% variance between the three elementary schools, we may be required to allocate more Foundation Aid to “fix” the issue in 2019-20. To date we have not been given feedback on the data we have submitted.

Governor Cuomo continues to pitch his plan to impose state dictates on how school districts allocate funds among their school buildings.

In [a radio interview](#), the Governor said of school funding, "It was in many ways a scam. You gave money to the poorer district, but they didn't give it to the poorer schools."

Reviewing data for one district in [one of the reports](#) the Governor relies upon reveals a more complicated picture. The report lumps all types of schools together, sorts them into quintiles from poorest to least poor (based on percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, FRPL) and then compares per pupil spending of each group.

But the poorest group contains mostly elementary or K-8 schools and the least poor group contains mostly high schools and junior-senior high schools. We would expect high schools to spend more per pupil. Generally, we might also expect high schools to have lower poverty percentages — high school students are thought to be reluctant to participate in FRPL, that's why aid formulas use K-6 FRPL counts. Also high schools usually serve wider areas than elementary schools and might have less concentrated poverty as a result.

Anyhow, here's how the proposal would work:

The proposal would apply to school districts in year following the year they are first subject to the allocation reporting requirement included in the 2018-19 state budget.

In [2019-20](#) 76 districts would be subject to the requirement. In [2020-21](#), all other school districts with four or more schools would be affected (306 more districts). Finally, all remaining districts would become subject to the requirement by 2021-22.

Districts with an “*underfunded high-need school*” would be required to use a sum equal to 10% of their increase in Foundation Aid times the number of schools identified, up to a maximum of 50% for districts which received at least 50% of their total revenues from state sources in 2015-16, or 75% for all other districts.

Districts would be required to use that sum to

“...increase per pupil expenditures, from all sources, in *underfunded high-need schools* [defined below] ... above the level at which the district would have otherwise funded such schools in the current year in order to maintain a level of current services from the base year, including but not limited to contractual salary increases and other continuations.”

Affected districts would be required to submit their allocation plans to the Education Commissioner by July 1. If a district has not submitted a plan approved the Commissioner by September 1, the Commissioner would develop the plan and direct district officers to implement it.

The State Budget Director would issue a list of *underfunded high-need schools* by May 1 each year. A school would be deemed an *underfunded high-need school* if:

1. it has a *student need index* greater than 5% above the district-wide average *student need index* for that school type (i.e., elementary, middle, or high school); and
2. its per pupil spending (in the state reports) is not at least 5% above the average for schools in that type for its district (per pupil spending would exclude costs for prekindergarten, preschool special education, and central district costs).

The *student need index* would be the *weighted student enrollment* for the school divided by *weighted student enrollment* for the district.

*Weighted student enrollment* would equal enrollment plus pupils eligible for free or reduced-price lunches multiplied by 0.65 plus English language learners plus students with disabilities multiplied by 1.41, all for the preceding school year (the weightings correspond to those used in calculating Foundation Aid).

The Budget Director would exclude from the list specialized schools such as those with grade configurations not matching those of any other school in the district, schools which serve only prekindergarten, or "...any other schools with irregular or outlying activities."

Again, we welcome thoughts on how the proposal would affect your district.

## **ESSA for Parents**

### [ESSA Informational Video](#)

This brief, parent-friendly video about ESSA implementation includes information on ESSA requirements and important changes.

## **NYS Report Cards**

School Report Cards will now reflect ESSA data. Report cards continue to be available at: <http://data.nysed.gov>

### Reminder: Changes to the NYS Report Card:

- The 2017-18 NYS Report card contains only the ESSA required reporting components for accountability

- All other data with the prior NCLB NYS Report Cards have been removed but are still reported in one of the two complimentary reports
- All Staff Data is now located in the NY STATE – STUDENT AND EDUCATOR DATA REPORT
- All enrollment data is now located in the NY STATE – STUDENT ENROLLMENT
- NEW YORK STATE REPORT CARD Annual ESSA Data will include:
  - Staff Qualifications
  - Grades 3-8 English Language Arts
  - Grades 3-8 Mathematics
  - Grades 4 & 8 Science
  - Annual Regents Results
  - Total Cohort Regents Results
  - New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test
  - New York State Alternate Assessment

\*NOTE: These items have been publicly released for the 2017-18 SY. The remaining annual data will be released when the accountability data is released later this year

### **Teacher/Principal Evaluation Bill Passes State Legislature**

The following is information from the NYS School Boards Association about the APPR bill which has passed both houses of the state legislature. While I agree that the system needs reform, I am concerned it is premature to enact a new law while the NYS Education Department has engaged stakeholders in a review of the existing system and that the proposal could result in additional student testing, depending on the outcome of local negotiations.

Legislation to amend the current APPR law to eliminate the mandate to use state exams as the measure of student performance has passed both the Assembly and the Senate. If enacted, districts would instead be required to collectively bargain what assessment is used as the student performance measure in APPR. During the floor debate, NYSSBA's concerns and proposed amendments were referenced by legislators.

NYSSBA is seeking changes to the legislation including:

- Allowing school districts to select the measure or measures of student performance including student portfolios, state assessments and local assessments approved by the State Education Department.
- Removing the threat of state aid loss if a district does not have an annually approved APPR plan.
- Eliminating the requirement to use independent observers in addition to principals and other administrators.
- Restoring the permissive use of currently prohibited evaluation elements, such as lesson plans and other artifacts of teaching, and parent and teacher surveys.
- Allowing districts to differentiate the appropriate number and scope of observations conducted of tenured teachers with a track record of success, and probationary teachers and tenured teachers who require more coaching.

- Allowing districts to be authorized to implement these local options at their discretion, without collectively bargaining these new flexibilities.

This bill has not yet been delivered to the Governor, though it is important to note that virtually identical language was included in the Executive Budget proposal. NYSSBA will continue to seek legislation to more broadly reform APPR and lessen the risk of increased testing. The NYSSBA Governmental Relations team remains hopeful that this will be a first step in APPR reform, not the last.

NYSSBA's memo on this bill can be accessed at the link below:

- [\*\*NYSSBA Amendment Request S.1262/A.783\*\*](#)

## **Massena In The News**

### **Friday, January 18, 2019**

*“Massena Central concerned about losing lunch reimbursements if federal shutdown continues”*  
– North Country Now

The question posed at the Board meeting of January 17 about how the federal government shutdown might affect the District is briefly explored.

Link:

<http://www.northcountrynow.com/news/massena-central-concerned-about-losing-lunch-reimbursements-if-federal-shutdown-continues>

### **Saturday, January 19, 2019**

*“Massena Central bans vaping; board member suggests ‘scaring’ students away from vape products”* – Andy Gardner, North Country Now

The discussion of vaping in schools which took place at the Board of Education meeting of January 17, 2019 is reported.

Link:

<http://www.northcountrynow.com/news/massena-central-bans-vaping-board-member-suggests-scaring-students-away-vape-products-0251381>

### **Wednesday, January 23, 2019**

*Architects tell Massena school board to communicate with public as they seek capital project approval”* – Andy Gardner, North Country Now

The presentation by the IBI Group at the Board meeting of January 17, 2019 is highlighted. The proposed capital project and referendum to the community is explained.

Link:

<http://www.northcountrynow.com/news/architects-tell-massena-school-board-communicate-public-they-seek-capital-project-approval>

### **District Upcoming Events**

1/28—Facilities Committee Meeting—5:00 pm—Junior High Library

2/4—Finance Committee Meeting—5:00 pm—CAB