

6:30 – 8:30 PM --Thursday, September 24, 2020
Erie 1 BOCES-355 Harlem Road, West Seneca
Rm. B2B – DRAFT MINUTES

6:30 pm - Call to Order by Legislative Committee Chair Scott Johnson, Sweet Home

6:31 PM - Pledge to Flag

Attendance: Erik Polkowski (Akron), Mark Smith (Amherst), Ed Schaefer (Cheektowaga), Dennis Priore (Clarence), Michael Montoro (Cleveland Hill), John Spencer (Depew), Ray Carr (Erie 1 BOCES), Linda Hoffman (Erie 2 CC BOCES), David Podkulski (Frontier), David Yovienne (Hamburg), Michele Hovey (Iroquois), Lesley Battaglia (Ken-Ton), Patrick Uhteg (Lancaster), Jason Baier (Maryvale), Jessica Schuster (Springville Griffith), Scott Johnson (Sweet Home), Kristin Schmutzler (Tonawanda City), Janice Dalbo (West Seneca), Dr. Susan McClary (Williamsville). Also: David Lowrey (Executive Director ECASB), Dr. Jill O'Malley (Associate Director ECASB)

1. Approval of Agenda [Action item]

Motion to Approve: J. Spencer; Second: R. Carr; Motion carried Unanimously.

2. Scheduled Goals

- Welcome new members!

Jill welcomed new member to the Legislative team and gave brief introduction of herself and the Legislative Co-Chairs Scott Johnson and Kathleen Chiavetta.

- Legislative team function

Jill explained what the purpose of the Legislative Committee is...who we are, what we do. Jill explained that usually we have a Legislative Breakfast in February. She indicated that this year we chose to have the program in November. The program was scheduled to be held at Erie 1 BOCES to accommodate the North and South in one location (with separate rooms). She indicated that she was not sure what would happen this year because various legislators she has had conversations with really have not been meeting with constituents.

- Roundtable

- Your district
- Previous member of this committee? (If so, how many years)
- Why do you serve on this committee?

Legislative team members introduced themselves and the districts they represent. They provided information on how long they have served on the Legislative Committee. Each member shared whether education in the district was in person/virtual/ or a hybrid model.

3. Website

Jill shared the new website with the group and focused on the Advocacy portion of the website. She also explained that two sites that she will frequently visit include “Legiscan” and “Bill Track 50” to obtain information.

4. Review of Legislative Activities since last meeting

- Federal Advocacy

The Legislative Team discussed that the big push should be in writing letters Federal Legislators to push for the Federal Cares Act to obtain funds. The State’s Pandemic Adjustment could become an issue if the Federal money does not come in to offset it. Tom Reed serves on a Bi-Partisan Committee called the Problem Solvers and is apparently working on this issue.

5. New business

- Digital Divide

Kathleen Chiavetta indicated that she was attending a NYSSBA Round Table with the Interim Commissioner to discuss the Digital Divide. Several Legislative Team Members weighed in on issues they were having in their districts. Area 1 Director Linda Hoffman said that the NYSSBA Board of Directors had met with the Interim Commissioner about the Digital Divide.

OTHER ITEMS/QUESTIONS THAT WERE DISCUSSED:

1. There were questions about whether or not health insurance was paying for COVID Testing for employees to return to work.
2. If the Federal Cares Act is not passed, schools will be looking into programs and staffing similar to when the GAP Elimination took place several years ago.
3. A Legislative team member said that Senator George Borrello was working on a bill that would eliminate or reduce fees and taxes from internet providers to expand coverage to areas in the state where there was little connectivity.
4. There was a question about EDLAW 2 and Student Privacy Issues with so much instruction taking place in the internet and how that was affecting schools.

6. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: J. Schuster; Seconded: J. Dalbo; Motion carried unanimously.