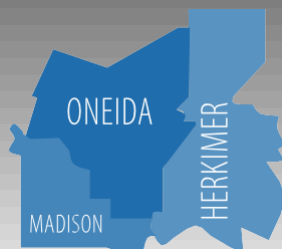


2024-2025 Children FIRST

ONEIDA, MADISON & HERKIMER COUNTIES
SCHOOL BOARDS INSTITUTE



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For questions, please contact James Van Wormer
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NYS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

STATEMENT TO LEGISLATORS

The mission of the Oneida-Madison-Herkimer School Board Institute and the Mohawk Regional Association of School District Administrators, which represent 34 school boards, is to provide the best possible education for our 50,000 students which are in the OMH-SBI Legislative districts. We support the higher academic standards adopted by the Board of Regents and will ensure each student be given the opportunity to achieve these standards at their highest academic level.

To help us accomplish this mission, we need a renewed and continued commitment from you, our New York State Legislator; to provide unfailing and fair financial support to the 50,000 students and the 350,000 member of our school communities in your region.

BOARD MEMBERS

Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES

Brookfield Central
Clinton Central
Holland Patent Central
New Hartford Central
New York Mills Union Free
Oriskany Central
Remsen Central
Sauquoit Valley Central
Utica City Schools
Waterville Central
Westmoreland Central
Whitesboro Central

Madison-Oneida BOCES

Canastota Central
Hamilton Central
Madison Central
Morrisville-Eaton Central
New York State School for the Deaf
Oneida City Schools
Rome City Schools
Stockbridge Valley Central
Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Central

Herkimer BOCES

Central Valley Central
Dolgeville Central
Frankfort-Schuyler Central
Herkimer Central
Little Falls City Schools
Mount Markham Central
Owen D. Young Central
Poland Central
Richfield Springs Central
West Canada Valley Central

AREA LEGISLATORS

United States Senators

Charles E. Schumer (D)
Kirsten Gillibrand (D)

United States Congressional Representatives

Elise Stefanik (R 21)
Brandon Williams (R 22)

New York State Senators

Mark Walczyk (R 49)
Peter Oberacker (R-C-I 51)
Joseph Griffo (R 53)

New York State Assembly Representatives

Brian Maher (R 101)
Chris Tague (R 102)
Ken Blakenbush (R 117)
Robert Smullen (R 118)
Marianne Buttenschon (D 119)
Joe Angelino (R 121)
Brian Miller (R 122)



SCHOOL BOARDS INSTITUTE

We respectfully ask you for continued support for the following fiscal and regulatory issues to ensure a child's access to a high-quality, sound, basic education regardless of their zip code.

1. Foundation Aid

- Provide funds and commit to a study that examines the Foundation Aid formula that is equitable, consistent, and predictable.
- Commit to an updated Foundation and formula that is equitable, consistent, and predictable. Changes to the formula must take into consideration the evolving demographics and fiscal landscape in our region and the increased need for services required by our students.
- Commit to a minimum of a 3% increase for all districts until the formula is updated.

2. Mental Health

- Support proposals establishing additional dedicated funding for student mental health services.
- Support a requirement that districts be fully funded to employ a sufficient number of mental health professionals (i.e. social worker, school psychologist) to properly serve the needs of the students.

3. School Safety

- Support additional state and federal funding which would be dedicated to school safety programs, staff, and equipment.
- Support prevention programs directed toward social-emotional development and mental health programs.

4. Tax Cap

- Revise the Tax Cap Levy Limit and make the starting point for tax cap calculations—the allowable levy growth factor—a true 2%, not the lesser of 2% or inflation.
- Include property under payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements within the “tax base growth factor” step of the property tax cap calculation. Support and sign Legislative Bills S1045/A1567.

5. BOCES

- Increase the “aidable” salary for Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) CTE instructors to \$60,000 over the next three school years—\$40,000 for 2024-25, \$50,000 for 2025-26, and \$60,000 in 2026-27
- Support legislation to eliminate the limit on BOCES District Superintendent compensation.

6. Tort Reform

- Propose and support legislation that will change the burden of proof for CSE litigation from the schools (defendants) to plaintiffs. This will follow a majority of states that have these laws and will prevent unscrupulous attorneys from filing frivolous lawsuits.

7. Broadband Capacity

- Broadband capacity must be available to all school buildings and student homes. Virtual programs during the COVID pandemic identified the critical need and opportunities for this infrastructure in both our rural and city schools. Affordable broadband should be treated as any other public utility.

8. Fund Balance

- Allow schools to maintain an unrestricted fund balance of up to 8%.

9. Local Control

- Superintendents should be allowed to hire certified teachers to teach outside their certification field for up to one year if the superintendent deems that the teacher is highly qualified.

10. Unfunded And Underfunded Mandates

- Provide funding for any new legislative and regulatory mandates.
- Provide funding for the new requirement to provide education for Special Ed students until 22 years of age.

11. Special Education Pre-K Funding

- Do not shift financial responsibility for pre-school special education from counties to school districts.
- Support updating the compensation rates paid to providers for pre-school IEP services to current industry standards.

12. Zero- Emission Vehicles

- Advocate for the State to conduct feasibility studies/reviews regarding utilities/infrastructure, logistical, and fiscal aspects of the zero-emission school vehicle mandate, and to revise the mandate as the reviews/studies deem necessary.

13. CTE

- Support funding to expand New York State industry-approved and certified career and technical education programs.

14. General Municipal Bidding Laws

- Increase the threshold under General Municipal Bidding laws to \$40,000 to require bids for the purchase of items.