



NEW YORK SCHOOLS INSURANCE RECIPROCAL

NYSIR News Extra

MARCH 2021



NYSIR.ORG

SPECIAL ISSUE:

Supporting Education in New York



Name the kind of exam given to students without any prior warning. **Answer:** Pop quiz. Oh, and if you hadn't already guessed, you just took one.

Most educators would agree that the top priority of any pop quiz is to measure operational preparedness. When a problem is dropped in your lap with no notice, how well can you perform? 

With that in mind, to say that the year 2020 tested the New York Schools Insurance Reciprocal and its member schools like no other would be a huge understatement.

Teachers and administrators quickly pivoted to a remote-learning environment to deliver classes and keep schools functioning, and

“I know I can speak for many, many others when I say that I’m hoping the second half of 2021 will closely resemble life pre-COVID-19.”

CHUCK CHAFEE
NYSIR ASSISTANT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NYSIR had to make changes, too, including migrating much of its support for education-related associations to an online platform, as well as making more webinars than ever available for subscribers.

“I know I can speak for many, many others when I say that I’m hoping the



second half of 2021 will closely resemble life pre-COVID-19," says Chuck Chafee, NYSIR Assistant Executive Director, "but looking back at 2020, I'm extremely proud of the reciprocal and its members for being able to adapt and persevere.

"Our commitment to providing employee development and training for subscribers didn't waver, and it was more important than ever for our assistance to be delivered in a virtual

environment, where our educational professionals were operating for the majority of the year."

This special edition of the regular NYSIR News provides plentiful examples of successful partnerships with New York's education-related organizations during the Year of COVID.

This special edition of the regular *NYSIR News* provides plentiful examples of successful partnerships with New York's education-related organizations during the Year of COVID, and, like that pop quiz you just took, demonstrates the reciprocal is always prepared to come up with the right answers for its partners. ■

RSA Executive Director David Little's series of rural issues forums continued into early



of different events over the course of last year, and their continued help really

Particularly during the pandemic, it's been important for us to have NYSIR's financial support to be able to provide those kinds of programs and services to our rural schools.

DAVID LITTLE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RSA

2020, as did NYSIR's sponsorship of them. The success of the forums, according to Little, can be measured by the usefulness of shared information, as well as the value of the partnership between NYSIR and RSA.

"Particularly during the pandemic, it's been important for us to have NYSIR's financial support

to be able to provide those kinds of programs and services to our rural schools," says Little. "NYSIR stepped up to sponsor a couple

has paid dividends for our members and our ability to do the research and advocacy they've come to rely on."

Additionally, NYSIR confirmed its sponsorship for the 2021 RSA Conference, an increase in support for this year's event that represents a 40% jump from just two years ago.



STUDENTS FROM CAMBRIDGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHO TOOK SECOND PLACE IN THE LATEST RSA VIDEO CONTEST, ARE SHOWN WITH RSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID LITTLE.



MADISON-ONEIDA BOCES SOAR ACADEMY STUDENTS, PICTURED WITH BOCES STAFF AND RSA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID LITTLE, EARNED A GRAND PRIZE RUNNER-UP AWARD IN THE MOST RECENT RSA VIDEO CONTEST.

MOVING PICTURES

Over the years, NYSIR also has helped sponsor RSA's annual video contest, a program that was

designed to encourage rural students to showcase their creativity, community and school pride. While the pandemic shut down production last year, this

year presents an opportunity to highlight the association's 2019 award-winners.

The grand prize went to Potsdam Elementary School students Henry Chase, Ally Draper and Anna Rossner, with grand-prize runner-up awards going to Williamson Central School District students Josh Bailey and Irini Konstantinou, along with students in the Madison-Oneida BOCES SOAR Academy. Two first-place prizes also were awarded – the first to Alex Blakely, Lyla Freund and Miah Simpson of Newfield Central School District, and the second to Kai Mannino of Pine Plains Central School District. ■

Speaking of sponsorships, NYSIR continued its relationship with the New York State Council of School Superintendents



Griffith Institute Superintendent Kimberly Mortiz, who headed a panel

(The Council) by supporting a number of its 2020 programs as a Signature Partner.

The reciprocal again was a top sponsor for The Council's Winter Institute and Lobby Day last March, which featured presentations by experts in education, leadership and other fields. NYSIR sponsored two sessions, the first of which was hosted

titled *Difficult Discussions* on behalf of The Council's Women's Initiative. Additionally, NYSIR team members participated in The Council's Winter Institute Marketplace of Ideas.

FUTURE SUPERINTENDENTS ACADEMY

NYSIR also was title sponsor of The Council's Future Superintendents Academy, which helps train upper-level administrators to become superintendents through a series of weekend sessions and a summer institute.



KRISTINE LANCHANTIN

by attorney Kristine Lanchantin, who delivered legal updates to early-career superintendents. The second session was led by Springville-



KIMBERLY MORTIZ



Topics covered during the academy included communications, governance, financial leadership, human

and Ithaca Central School District Superintendent Luvelle Brown. Attendees discussed the intersection of

wellness during the pandemic with longstanding societal equity issues impacted by race, gender and poverty.

NYSIR has been the title sponsor of The Council's Women's Initiative since the program was created in 2015. All the initiative's in-person

events in 2020 were transitioned to the virtual arena, and included five webinars that drew between 65

and 75 participants each. More are scheduled for this spring.

"NYSCOSS has reached participants who otherwise would not have been able to attend in-person events," notes Conboy, head of the organization's Women's Initiative,

"and it will continue to offer virtual events in the future to expand its

reach to more women leaders."

Additionally in 2020, NYSIR

sponsored a page on The Council's website, lent support to daily summary pages during The Council's conference

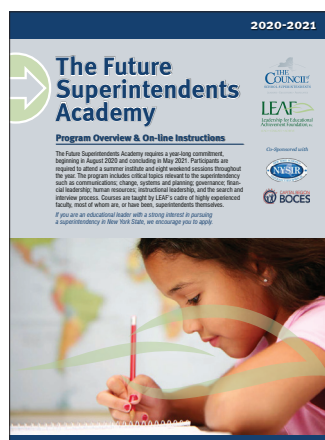


FIVE NYSIR-SPONSORED WEBINARS FOR THE WOMEN'S INITIATIVE WERE PRESENTED LAST YEAR.

resources, instructional leadership and more. The sessions were held remotely in 2020, and will continue through May of this year.

The Council's Fall Leadership Summit was virtual, as well, but NYSIR's sponsorship of two breakout sessions was very real indeed. The first was called *The Good Outweighs the Bad... or Does It?* and was hosted by Mortiz and NYSCOSS General Counsel Jacinda (Jazz) Conboy. The presentation focused on negativity bias and how it can be overcome. The second session, *Coffee and Conversation: Where Wellness Meets Equity*, was

led by Rush-Henrietta Central School District Superintendent Bo Wright





and purchased an ad in *Snapshot*, an informative publication for superintendents. NYSIR Director of Risk Management Brett Carruthers also contributed an article for



the organization's *Councilgram* newsletter in November that recapped the reciprocal's *Destigmatizing Mental Health* summer symposium. ■

ASBO NEW YORK

Carruthers also lent his expertise to the Association of School Business Officials New York during the organization's 2020 Education Summit

NYSIR also continued its sponsorship of ASBO's SBO Leadership

Carruthers also lent his expertise to the Association of School Business Officials New York during the organization's 2020 Education Summit webinar series, held throughout June.

webinar series, held throughout June. During a lunch roundtable he delivered a presentation called *Cyber Tips During Remote Work and Learning with NYSIR*. The reciprocal was a signature sponsor for the webinar series, which signifies the highest level of support. Carruthers also made various presentations to local New York ASBO chapters throughout 2020.

The reciprocal also sustained its support of the George A. Perry Volunteer

Service Award, which recognizes an ASBO member who has demonstrated outstanding volunteer service and commitment to the organization and its chapters.

The 2020 recipient was John Brucato, assistant superintendent of finance and operations for Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District.

Academy, held remotely. Tom Austin, then-assistant executive director of NYSIR, joined Deputy Superintendent of Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES Dr. Jennifer Bolton Avery to deliver a virtual presentation on school management relations. The reciprocal also sponsored the attendance of 14 students.

NYSIR again supported ASBO's annual School Business Management Workshop in November, which transitioned to the virtual environment for 2020.

As part of its role as Presenting Sponsor – the highest tier – the reciprocal hosted a lunch session called *Mental Health in the Workplace* featuring Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc.'s Director of Outreach

and Business Engagement Joelle Monaco and Program Coordinator Graham Healey. The workshop offered programming for professionals who





work in the SBO fiscal, BOCES, district clerk, district treasurer and payroll/personnel areas.

"We're grateful for our relationship with NYSIR and the NYSIR team," says ASBO NY Deputy Executive Director Amanda Grace Wing. "As our association has navigated the pandemic,

NYSIR has stood alongside us by sponsoring our virtual programming and continuing to work with our staff to provide content for our program offerings. We consider the NYSIR team friends, and can always count on them as a resource when questions arise related to risk management and insurance." ■



New York State
School Boards
Association

Though the transition of the New York State School Boards

Association annual convention to a virtual format was new for 2020, NYSIR's support for NYSSBA is anything but; the reciprocal has been an important sponsor of the organization for over 20 years. Last

which was held remotely in

September. Titled A

Vision for Leadership in a Changing World, the session offered information about the roles and responsibilities of board officers, as well as leadership techniques that focus on student success.

year's virtual event was spread across two weeks and featured programming of professional interest, a keynote address, networking opportunities and very 3-D gift bags that were subsequently mailed to participants, courtesy of NYSIR.

NYSIR also sponsored NYSSBA's 2020 Policy Workshop titled *Student Substance Abuse: What Can School Districts Do?*

Held virtually in April, the online session gave attendees the chance to learn about increased vaping and opioid use among students, and how targeted policies can help address the issue. The reciprocal also continued its sponsorship of the association's Board Officers Academy,

SUMMER LAW CONFERENCE

For the first time, NYSIR also sponsored NYSSBA's popular Summer Law Conference. Offered virtually in July, a session titled *Legal Considerations for the Reopening of Schools... Whether it Happens Statewide or Regionally* included information on topics such as safety measures, collective bargaining, special education and legal issues, including new federal Title IX regulations and other rulings.

2020 POLICY WORKSHOP

**STUDENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE:
What Can School Districts Do?**

2020
DATES & LOCATIONS

- APRIL 1 – ROCHESTER
- APRIL 22 – LATHAM
- APRIL 29 – LONG ISLAND

8:00 A.M. – 2:15 P.M.

Register now at
www.nyssba.org/events

Opioid use and vaping is on the rise among students. Learn how policies can help your district address student substance abuse.

New York State School Boards Association

**2020
SUMMER LAW CONFERENCE**
A LIVE virtual two half-day conference

**LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE REOPENING
OF SCHOOLS...**
*Whether it Happens
Statewide or Regionally*

Prepare for the upcoming school year now. Get information critical to the successful reopening of your schools as it relates to:

- **Safety measures** – protecting your students and staff and avoiding potential liability;
- **Collective bargaining** – potential impact on terms and conditions of employment;
- **Special education** – tackling the compensatory education and timeline compliance issues.

Also learn about new legal requirements, including the new federal Title IX regulations as well as recent court decisions and other rulings.

Don't miss this year's live virtual summer law conference presented in two half-days!

**DATES: JULY 21 – DAY 1
JULY 22 – DAY 2**
TIME: 8:30 a.m. – Noon

Register online at
www.nyssba.org/events

New York State School Boards Association



Technology Officer John Flory, III; Whiteman, Osterman & Hanna law partner Chris Meyer, and New York State Education Department Chief

NYSIR also sponsored three NYSSBA webinars. *Leading With Emotional Intelligence in Uncertain Times* was hosted by the Yale Center for Emotional

Information Security Officer Marlowe Cochran. The third was a 90-minute program that delivered guidance and tips to school district administrators on budgeting during the pandemic.



Intelligence. Another, *The State of Cybersecurity in K-12*, was moderated by NYSSBA Chief Information Officer James Page and included remarks from Privacy Cyber Alliance Chief

The reciprocal also was the sole sponsor of the monthly *NYSSBA News Video*, which covered interesting stories from districts around the state.

"We are so appreciative that NYSIR has stuck with us," noted NYSSBA Executive Director Robert Schneider, reflecting on his and other associations' pandemic-driven switch to virtual meetings, and tipping his hat to the reciprocal for its continued support. ■



A jeweler likely would tell you that nothing says commitment like a diamond, but the New York State School Facilities Association might also suggest that a Diamond Sponsorship – a contribution level enthusiastically claimed by NYSIR – speaks to commitment of a different kind. That sponsorship

helped to fund the association's annual conference, which was held

virtually last October.

NYSIR Director of Risk Management

Brett Carruthers delivered a welcome to attendees on the second day of the conference, thanking members and staff for their





efforts in facilities maintenance during the pandemic. The reciprocal also hosted a virtual booth that drew over 300 visitors who interacted with a NYSIR Risk Management team composed of Carruthers, Senior Risk Control Specialist Susan Boyle, Manager

of Risk Services Mike Drance, and Senior Risk Control Specialist Connie Wallis. Additionally, more than 50 attendees viewed videos featuring NYSIR's Online University and Head Injury Protection Program for student athletes. ■

NYSIR also helped the New York State Association of School Personnel Administrators go virtual with its own 2020 conference. The reciprocal served as a Silver-level Sponsor for the event, which was split into a series of online sessions that began in September



and will continue through this spring.

Online or on-site, 2020 was a busy year for education-related associations all around New York, and for NYSIR too. But for now, let's end with another of NYSIR's now-famous pop quizzes.

Question: Do professional education organizations benefit by partnering with NYSIR?

Answer: We think you know the answer.

