



NEW YORK SCHOOLS INSURANCE RECIPROCAL

NYSIR News Extra

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NYSIR.ORG

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION SPECIAL:

Supporting Education in New York



Having served only New York districts and BOCES since its inception in 1989,

NYSIR clearly has been all about schools. And that same conclusion is easy to reach regarding various associations across the state that have schools – and their students, faculty and staff – as their focus. NYSIR partnered with those groups once again in 2025, and the results demonstrate what can be accomplished when organizations with schools at the heart of their missions work together. [CR](#)

High-level sponsorships and support

for scholarships, awards, conferences, workshops and other initiatives constituted much of the backing that NYSIR offered its partners last year. A good deal of that assistance has remained steady over the years, and some of it even increased as the partnerships matured.



“Having supported schools for over 35 years, it’s become easy for NYSIR to identify other education-focused

organizations that have the wellbeing of students and faculty as a top priority,” says Chuck Chafee, NYSIR assistant executive director. “Maintaining productive partnerships with those

groups continues to be an important way to support school faculty and staff and help enhance the learning environment for our students."

This special edition of NYSIR News highlights some of the initiatives that came about in 2025 through the teamwork of NYSIR and its partner organizations.

The Rural Schools Association (RSA) annual summer conference warmed up in July, bringing in over 250

attendees for "The Future of Rural: Our Time to Shine," held in Lake Placid. NYSIR continued its support as a lead sponsor for the event. Additionally, the reciprocal supported the James C. Dawson Lifetime



Elizabeth Lilyea of Penn Yan CSD and Baylee Hoffmeister of Warsaw CSD. Another initiative that put NYSIR's support

into focus was the 2025 RSA Student Photo Contest. Titled "Capturing Our Rural Stories," the competition aimed to celebrate the unique perspectives of rural communities and the agricultural significance that shapes them.



FROM LEFT ARE JOHN BRADY, NYSIR REGIONAL MANAGER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND MARKETING FOR WESTERN NEW YORK; SPEAKING CONTEST WINNER BAYLEE HOFFMEISTER; SPEAKING CONTEST WINNER ELIZABETH LILYEA, AND MICHAEL ANTHONY, NYSIR REGIONAL MANAGER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND MARKETING FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT AND MID-HUDSON REGIONS.

Multiple districts were recognized in each of three categories: agriculture, community connections and student life. The winners were Livingston Manor CS, grades 7-12; Hamilton CS, grades 7-12; Perry CSD, grades K-6; Madison-Oneida BOCES, grades 7-12; Holley CS, grades K-6; Bridgehampton UFSD, grades 7-12; Bridgehampton UFSD, grades K-6; Wheelerville UFS, grades 7-12; Livingston Manor CS, grades 6-12 and Ellenville CSD, grades 7-12.

Achievement Award, which was earned by Cornell University Professor John Supple, who led the Center for Rural Schools and helped build RSA's policy influence and data capacity.

The reciprocal also reprised its role as sponsor of \$1,500 RSA student scholarships that were presented to two winners of the Future Farmers of America speaking contest. The 2025 winners were

Shifting from images to words, NYSIR also continued its sponsorship of the RSA Today newsletter. The RSA Leadership Retreat also benefited from the reciprocal's support, as did the RSA Winter Conference, "Planning the Work: Working the Plan, Finding and Funding Rural's Future." It was held in Saratoga Springs with over 175 in



attendance. In addition, NYSIR sponsored 14 regional rural school issues forums across New York state.

"With the tremendous support of NYSIR, the Rural Schools Association has expanded its reach to rural school districts," says David Little, executive

director of the RSA in New York. "Simply put, RSA has grown in its mission and service through the generous support of NYSIR. It is a partnership that we not only value highly, but one that has become vital to the interests of the small and rural schools of our state."

The reciprocal signed its name on the dotted line again in 2025 by serving as Signature Partner for NYSCOSS, the highest level available.

The Future Superintendents Academy also benefited from NYSIR support. The nine-session initiative serves as preparation



instructional leadership and human resources. There are approximately 40 members of the current cohort,

including Shelita Watkis from Eastport-South Manor CSD, who participated in the program through a NYSIR scholarship.

"Advancing Innovation: Leading and

Learning at the Pace of Change" was the title of the Council's 2025 Fall Leadership Summit, and like prior years, the event received NYSIR support through sponsorship of the organization's Distinguished Service Award. Last year's honor went to Hank Grishman, a retired life member of the Council and former superintendent of Jericho UFSD. The award is presented



FROM LEFT ARE NYSCOSS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHUCK DEDRICK, DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD WINNER HANK GRISHMAN, DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CHAIR AND BRIGHTON CSD SUPERINTENDENT KEVIN MCGOWAN, NYSCOSS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT AND EAST SYRACUSE MINOA CSD SUPERINTENDENT DONNA DESIATO AND NYSIR ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHUCK CHAFFEE.

for high-level administrators who are interested in becoming superintendents. Some of the topics addressed in the sessions included communications, financial leadership, governance,

annually to an individual who has shown exemplary commitment to public education. NYSIR also exhibited at the event, which was held in September in Saratoga Springs.



NYSCOSS WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

NYSIR once again earned a "title sponsor" moniker for its support of the Council's Women's Initiative. Four Women's Leadership Institute sessions also received backing from the reciprocal. They were held in Watkins Glen in April, Saratoga Springs in May, Buffalo in July and Lake Placid in November. The sessions offered information on topics such as confidence, celebrating strengths, amplifying women's voices and developing leadership skills.

Representatives from NYSIR also attended the Council's Winter Institute held in

Albany in March, which drew over 500 attendees. Additionally, the reciprocal sponsored the Commissioner's Advisory Council series "Redefining Ready," and NYSIR's director of risk management contributed an article about multi-factor authentication to the May 2025 edition of the *Councilgram* newsletter.

"NYSIR has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting our members and the communities they serve," says Chuck Dedrick, NYSCOSS executive director. "Their partnership has been instrumental in enabling us to offer high-quality professional development opportunities to school leaders across New York state."

The reciprocal stayed on a well-traveled path in 2025 by once again offering an Ambassador Sponsorship, which funded the attendance of five first-time participants at NYAPT's annual conference, held in July in Saratoga Springs. Recipients were Denise Schradin



of Greenwood Lake UFSD, Diana Adorno Parodi of Katonah-Lewisboro SD, Nathanael Spence of Amityville UFSD, Jacqueline Howe of New Lebanon CSD and Adrian Safar of

Ontario Bus Inc. "The Future is Now ... Are You Ready?" covered topics such

as dealing with difficult people, success strategies for school transportation leaders and special education transportation.



FROM LEFT ARE NYSIR ACCOUNT RISK MANAGER SUSAN BOYLE, NYAPT PRESIDENT AND FARMINGDALE UFSD TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISOR MARC MEDINA, THE FIVE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AND NYSIR ACCOUNT RISK MANAGER CONNIE WALLIS.

Diamond-level sponsor.

It still has a nice ring to it, which is why NYSIR supported ASBO

New York at that highest level again in 2025. The reciprocal also was top tier in its Titanium Sponsorship of ASBO's Education Summit and Expo, which was held last year in June in Saratoga Springs.

ASBO

NEW YORK

Centered around the theme of "Reflect," the event drew hundreds of attendees who heard

a keynote address and participated in professional development sessions and a trade show.

ASBO New York's George A. Perry

Volunteer Service Award also continued to benefit from NYSIR support last year. The latest recipient was Dr. Christopher Abdoo from Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake CSD, who received the award at the summit from NYSIR Assistant Executive Director Chuck Chafee. The honor is bestowed on an individual annually to recognize outstanding volunteer service and commitment to ASBO and its chapters.



FROM LEFT ARE DR. JACK R. MITCHELL, ASBO NEW YORK BOARD PRESIDENT; DR. CHRISTOPHER ABDOO; DR. DAVID PERRY AND NYSIR ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHUCK CHAFEE.

NYSIR likewise continued its tradition of supporting the School

Business Management Workshop (SBMW), serving as BOCES strand sponsor and exhibiting at the event, which was held in Saratoga Springs in November. The initiative provides customized learning sessions to district payroll and personnel employees, clerks, treasurers and other school business officials. Topics covered during the event included electronic payments, fiscal



NYSIR EARNED AN AWARD RECOGNIZING ITS SUPPORT OF ASBO'S SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY. FROM LEFT ARE NYSIR REGIONAL MANAGER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND MARKETING MICHAEL ANTHONY, NYSIR VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SUPPORT AND MARKETING PAUL WEINSTEIN, ASBO NEW YORK DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COO AMANDA GRACE WING, ASBO NEW YORK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BRIAN CECHNICKI, NYSIR ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHUCK CHAFEE AND NYSIR REGIONAL MANAGER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND MARKETING DAVID BARRERAS.



leadership, communications strategies and more.

The reciprocal also kept up its support of ASBO New York by presenting a \$1,000 scholarship to one member from each of 16 ASBO chapters to help facilitate their attendance at the School Business Official Leadership Academy – a sponsorship that prompted ASBO to present NYSIR an award recognizing its consistent support of the initiative.

Additionally, NYSIR sponsored numerous chapter meetings and

fundraising events for ASBO and supported and attended various ASBO NY leadership conferences.

“In the 13 years I’ve been with ASBO New York, NYSIR has been a constant presence, consistently championing our members and attending our events,” says Amanda Grace Wing, deputy executive director and COO of ASBO New York. “NYSIR’s continued support of ASBO members and chapters, the SBO Leadership Academy, and the profession at large is genuinely appreciated by our team.”



The reciprocal earned its place at the head of

the class again in 2025 by continuing as Valedictorian Sponsor for NYSSBA, the uppermost tier. The group’s Annual Convention and Education Expo benefited from that support and drew over 500 to New York City in October. Attendees took in sessions about artificial intelligence

policies, enhancing mental health services and support, managing

cell phone bans in school and many others.

NYSIR support also helped NYSSBA continue to offer its New Board Member Academy. Representatives from the reciprocal attended two Long Island sessions held in August and two Latham

sessions that took place in September. The programs drew over 75 attendees, who learned about fiscal oversight fundamentals and the essentials of school board governance.

SUMMER LAW CONFERENCE

In recognition of an ever-changing legal landscape for schools, NYSIR



NYSIR REPRESENTATIVES WHO ATTENDED NYSSBA’S ANNUAL CONVENTION AND EDUCATION EXPO INCLUDED, FROM LEFT, CHUCK CHAFEE, ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; JOHN BRADY AND DAVID BARRERAS, REGIONAL MANAGERS FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND MARKETING; AND ROBERT LULLEY, JR., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



New York State
School Boards
Association

continued sponsoring NYSSBA
Summer Law Conference

sessions. The reciprocal has now offered that support for six years in a row. The two programs were held in July, the first on Long Island and the second in Albany. New laws and regulations and other issues facing schools were discussed for the benefit of school board members,

administrators, school attorneys and other stakeholders in attendance.

NYSIR also sponsored the Leadership in Education Event, which welcomed almost 250 to Albany in August. Discussion topics included student mental health, building board unity and how to turn learning losses into learning gains.



Diamonds have long been synonymous with engagement, and in 2025, NYSIR and NYSSFA continued their own professional connection when the reciprocal once again acted as Diamond Sponsor for NYSSFA's annual conference in October. Scholarships for first-time conference attendees comprised some of NYSIR's support; awardees included Jared Cross, main-

tenance mechanic for
Oakfield-Alabama CSD;
William Darcy, director

of facilities at Cohoes City SD; Jean-Paul Jaques, buildings and grounds working foreperson for Genesee Valley BOCES; Dennis Lynch, director of facilities at West Canada Valley CSD; Kevin Templin, facilities director at Corinth CSD and Cory Walker, director of facilities for Elmont UFSD.

A Strong Partnership



While books, desks, pencils and other objects found in most classrooms may be the first images that readily come to mind when thinking about schools, a successful education environment requires a lot of work behind the scenes, too.

NYSIR is proud to continue its partnership with organizations – and people – who help make that happen, from school board members to business officials to facilities and transportation professionals.

It's clear that they, along with NYSIR, are all about schools.

Nearly \$45,000 in Student Scholarships Available!



Another way NYSIR is demonstrating that it's all about schools is through its scholarship program.

College-bound high school seniors from NYSIR subscriber districts can now apply for scholarships offered through the New York Schools Insurance Foundation Board of Trustees and the NYSIR Board of Governors.

The Cristin Ann Bambino Scholarship is presented each year to special education students in honor of their determination to overcome challenges, finish high school and move on to a college or university. For the past several years, NYSIR has granted \$3,000 regional scholarships, as well as a \$4,000 award for second place and \$5,000 for first place.

The Paul Jensen Scholarship is given annually to high school students who have demonstrated design and

building skills and plan to refine them in college. Each applicant must submit an essay explaining how they would create a new design or adapt an existing one for an exact purpose, and how it would be useful. Two scholarships, one for \$5,000 and one for \$3,000, are awarded statewide.

The Joseph Goncalves Student Humanitarian Scholarship is presented to two New York-college-bound high school seniors from member districts who have been involved with an organization or cause promoting social justice, equal opportunity, relief of human suffering or another humanitarian issue. A \$5,000 grand prize and a \$3,000 runner-up prize are awarded each year.



Scholarship applications and submission guidelines can be found at nysir.org under the NYSIR Advantage dropdown menu. Application deadline is April 2.

