



Where Futures Begin & Dreams are Achieved!

Winter 2011

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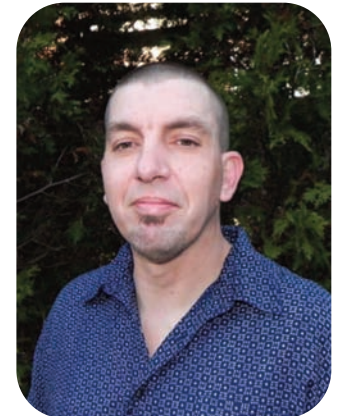
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Meet Frank Conklin, Board Member

Newly elected in July, Sullivan County BOCES welcomed Frank Conklin to its Board of Education. Mr. Conklin represents the Liberty Central School District filling the seat of Joyce Teed who had been on the BOCES Board since 2008.

Mr. Conklin is a strong advocate of education. He joined the BOCES Board because he believes our educational system provides the right tools to create a bright future for our children. Frank also feels being involved is key in helping our children achieve their goals. During his term, he is hopeful that his efforts, along with the other BOCES Board members, will help improve educational opportunities for students and help local districts find cost effective solutions to increase student performance and operational efficiencies.



Frank Conklin

Frank Conklin moved to Eldred during his senior year of high school, where he was involved in a number of sports. Frank is a former local small business owner who spends a lot of his time working with children through the American Youth Soccer Organization, the Liberty United Soccer League, the Liberty boys' varsity soccer program, and the music program at Liberty. He currently serves on the Liberty American Youth Soccer Organization Board and has been a member of the Liberty Rotary Club. His future goals are to run for the Liberty School Board and perhaps the Liberty Town Board.

During the short time Frank has been on the BOCES Board, he has proven to be a valuable member who will be instrumental in driving the education system forward.

The BOCES Board of Education is composed of one representative from each of its component school districts, as well as one member at large. The current at large seat is held by the Fallsburg School District. Together, the nine Board members strive to increase student performance in all component districts and communities through leadership, cooperative services and collaborative efforts in an economic and efficient manner.

Understanding the Tax^{Levy} Cap

Although the new law has been referred to as a “2 percent tax cap,” it does not restrict individual school tax bill increases to 2 percent.

The new law applies to the tax levy, not the tax rates or individual tax bills.

What is the Tax Levy?

The total amount of property taxes a school district must collect to balance its budget, after accounting for all other revenue sources including state aide. The tax levy is the basis for determining the tax rate for each of the towns and villages that make up a school district.

With flat and/or declining state funding, staying within the district’s “Tax Levy Limits” will severely restrict the district’s ability to generate revenues needed to sustain core educational programs.

Q. Does the new tax cap mean school tax levies can’t increase more than 2 percent?

NO, the law does not prohibit tax levy increases greater than 2 percent. Despite how it’s been described by some politicians and the media, the legislation signed into law requires every district to calculate its own “tax levy limit”. Two percent is just one of the eight factors in the calculation.

The law also established a higher threshold of voter approval (60 percent or more,) for a budget to pass if a district’s proposed tax levy increase exceeds its individual “tax levy limit” (before exemptions outlined in the law).



Q. What will the property tax cap law mean for my tax bill?

The new law applies to the tax levy, not the tax rates or individual tax bills. It does not impose a universal 2 percent cap on taxes or any other specific amount. There are several factors that dictate how an individual’s school tax bill is calculated after a school district sets the final tax levy - none of which are within the district’s control.

The law does require a greater number of voters to approve a budget that exceeds a school district’s individual “tax levy limit,” as calculated by a complex formula. This calculation process did not change under the new property tax cap law.

Q. How are tax bills calculated?

Tax bills are calculated by using the property’s assessed value (as determined by the town’s assessor) and the tax rate or the amount paid in taxes per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Tax rates are not solely determined by the tax levy approved by voters; they are often adjusted by the state using equalization rates, designed to equally distribute the tax burden across municipalities within the district. Tax bills can also be affected by STAR or other exemptions for which individual taxpayers may qualify.

Q. How is the tax levy determined for school districts?

The law dictates an eight-step formula that each school district must use to calculate its individual “tax levy limit.” The calculation adjusts a district’s tax levy to reflect growth in the local tax base (if any) and the rate of inflation or 2 percent (whichever is lower).

Tax Cap cont.

Q. If the law doesn't actually cap tax levy increases to 2 percent, how will it provide property tax relief?

The law may result in some measure of tax relief for residents, but the extent to which it does will also result in the loss of educational programs. Most New Yorkers do not want tax relief to come at the expense of their public schools. However, living within the realities of the new law - while mandated costs escalate, reduction in state funding, and the pressure to control taxes continues - schools are faced with difficult decisions.

Q. What can I do?

The property tax cap law poses an enormous challenge for public schools, and school leaders need to hear from their communities to help guide them through the difficult decisions that will need to be made. It is more important than ever to become informed about the complex issues shaping school district budgets and educational programs. Getting involved and remembering to vote on your school budget are the first steps.

Q. What happens if the budget is not approved?

As in the past, districts can put the same or a revised budget up for revote or adopt a contingent budget. If a budget is defeated twice, the district must adopt a contingent budget. Under the new law, a district that adopts a contingent budget may not increase its current tax levy by any amount - which would impose a zero percent cap.

Alternative Education and Career & Tech's Health Occupations/Nursing Programs Relocate

Over the summer, the **Alternative Education Program** formerly in Youngsville, relocated to the Lower Annex Building at the Rubin Pollack Education Center in Liberty.

The move to the Rubin Pollack Education Center has provided our students with a number of benefits including increased accessibility to instructional programs at the Rubin Pollack facility, and increased seat time. Instructional time is extremely important in preparing for the Regents exams and complying with graduation requirements. The instructional day was lengthened by at least a half hour per day due to the reduction in travel time. The move also allows the students to easily access Career and Tech programs while participating in programs and events on the main campus.

Another addition was the rollout of the E2020 Program, which provides students with online options to recover credits in all academic subject areas. Seniors have first priority in accessing the E2020 courses to ensure they are on track for graduation. In addition to providing instructional benefits to students, the move to the new building affords financial benefits to the school districts and taxpayers of the county. The financial benefit comes in the form of a reduction in transportation costs and the overall reduction in operating expenses, which in turn reduces enrollment cost.

The Youngsville building recently completed a renovation project. Now that the project is complete, the BOCES facilities committee will assess how the building will best fit the organization's needs.



"I really like our new building. It feels like a regular school."

Nicole Rossamondo, twelfth grade student from Sullivan West,

In the Career and Technical Education Division, the **Health Occupations / Nursing Programs** also moved to allow for expansion.



Kelly Ketcham, BOCES LPN Instructor shows a visitor how mannequin simulates symptoms

The Program is now located on the third floor of the St. John Street Education Center in Monticello. This move has been extremely beneficial for the students in their respective programs. Not only did it provide a larger space, it created a learning environment that fosters shared resources, and the ability for students to move from their classrooms to the lab with ease.

This new Health Occupations/ Nursing Suite also contains a resource library and a state-of-the-art "Learning Lab Center" where the students practice their skills on life-sized models "or patients" before moving on to real patients. One of the models even displays various symptoms so students have the opportunity to learn how to diagnose and care for the patient based on the symptoms.

The Health Occupations Program acquaints students with a variety of health occupations including geriatrics, emergency services, home healthcare, physical therapy, occupational therapy, pharmacy tech, central supply, veterinary services, dental assisting, radiology, and acute care experiences. Students then continue on to the field of their choice.

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Student Achievements

Act of Honesty Results in Sullivan County Sheriff Dept. Recognition



Joe Bailey and Deputy Peter Ramos

In September, Joseph Bailey, an eleventh grade Monticello student, found \$500 in a bank envelope in the Rubin Pollack Education Center's parking lot. Instead of putting the money in his pocket, he turned it in to his teacher, and the money was returned to the individual who accidentally dropped the envelope. Because of his noble actions, Joseph was recognized for his honesty and integrity. When Joe speaks about what happened, he speaks as if it wasn't a big deal - he was just walking and noticed how thick the envelope was and immediately, without giving it a second thought, turned it into his teacher. "I feel ten times better than if I would have if I had kept it. I would feel guilty having someone else's money." said Bailey.

The news of Joe's act spread quickly. When the School Resource Officer, Deputy Peter Ramos, heard of Joe's act of honesty he immediately took action. On October 20th, a special presentation was held to present Joseph Bailey with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Sullivan County Sheriff's Department and \$50 from the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) for his actions. Among those present to see Joe receive his award were his mother, Lauren Bailey, his Aunt Carol Sadowski and his Uncle Bill Wieninger.



The Culinary Arts students were excited to serve up what is soon to be the "BEST Chili in Sullivan County"

BOCES Culinary Arts Students Win Chili Cookoff

On October 2nd, students from the Career & Tech Culinary Arts Program won hands down the title of "Best Chili" at the Harvest Festival at Bethel Woods Chili Cookoff.

The students earned top marks from hundreds of tasters as they competed against three other teams, SUNY Sullivan's Culinary Program, SPCA/Dutch's Tavern, and WJFF/Brandenburger Bakery.

The BOCES team was comprised of Instructor Bruce Abbott, Markel Grady, David Fernandez, Brian Forrest, Yazmine Gaudulla, Cody Raymond, Mason Solberg, Nicole Warren, Charlotte Clark, Michael Daly, Kyle Davis, George Davis, Emily Decker, Stephanie Deyo, Omar Lopez, Destiny Nickols, and Nina Seehausen.