

"A Call to Action"

Who: Parents, teachers, support staff, students, community members, taxpayers

What: "A Call to Action" 90-minute advocacy workshop

When: 7 p.m., Monday, February 11

Where: Niskayuna High School, 1626 Balltown Road, Niskayuna

"A Call to Action" is a follow-up to the January 31 landmark forum, "Your Public Schools in Fiscal Peril: Running Out of Time & Options," which drew an audience of 1,500 school leaders, teachers, parents, students and community members—as well as more than a dozen state legislators—to Columbia High School. During this event, Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium, described in detail the fiscal crisis our school districts are facing now and will continue to face in the years to come without significant change in the way New York funds its public schools.

Now it's time to ACT! The 90-minute "A Call to Action" workshop builds on the momentum of the January 31 event. Join experts in the field of education advocacy Robert Lowry and Kyle Belokopitsky of the New York State Council of School Superintendents who will share effective "how-to" strategies and techniques that will help regular citizens—like you—reach out to lawmakers and take that important step to personally advocate for changes that will result in a more fair and equitable funding stream for schools.

Think about this ...

Education leaders from the Capital Region's urban, suburban and rural school districts alike are bracing for yet another year of unpopular to untenable budget cuts. There is a genuine concern that the Class of 2012 may have received the best education school districts will be able to offer for the foreseeable future. Add to that predictions by education funding experts that within one or two years, some school districts will actually become financially insolvent and unable to function.

Why should you take the time to advocate? Because your schools ...

- ▶ educate *your* children;
- ▶ employ *your* neighbors; and
 - ▶ are funded by *your* tax dollars.
- ▶ The quality of *your* schools influence property values and
 - ▶ help attract property owners to *your* community.

Without your help, your schools will face more reductions to programs and services for students.

The time for change is now! The voices of school leaders and lobbyists for state-level education groups simply are not enough! Elected officials need to hear from you, their constituents. They need to hear from those who are most directly impacted by their decisions (or indecision) year after year—the students, parents, employees, residents, community groups, business owners and taxpayers.

Becoming an advocate for education is not as hard as you might think. All it takes is a strong desire to stand up for our students and our schools, and be passionate and persistent in advancing the cause.

The most effective advocates are prepared; they know the issues and plan their communications. Join us Monday night and leave prepared to speak up, speak out and effect REAL change for your schools!

Sponsored by the Questar III and Capital Region BOCES Superintendents' Legislative Committees