



## Executive Viewpoint

Kevin S. Casey, Executive Director

### A Look Forward

This is being written as calendar year 2017 is coming to a close.

In the very near future I'll resolve to sleep and exercise more, eat less and lose ten pounds or so. Shortly thereafter I'll give up on my resolutions. I expect I'll have a lot of company.

What else can we look forward to in 2018? First and foremost we can expect a variety of gyrations resulting from an increasingly difficult fiscal environment. Despite

a booming stock market and essentially full employment, the NYS Comptroller recently reported that state revenues for this fiscal year were running about \$4.4 billion below projections, and that state debt is projected to reach \$63.7 billion by the end of the fiscal year. This news hits shortly before the Governor will give his State of the State address and present his budget bill to the legislature.

Further complicating matters are events unfold-

ing (or, in the case of the federal budget, failing to unfold) in Washington, D.C. The recently passed tax bill, which caps deductions for the state and local taxes, is expected to have a particular adverse effect on high tax states such as New York. The logic is that residents, no longer able to deduct all of their state and local taxes (amounts that exceed \$10,000) will have far less tolerance for increased state and local taxes. Some observers predict this will lead to increased instances of proposed school district budgets being defeated despite the existence of the tax cap.

There is also the great unknown of the federal budget. The use of continuing resolutions has the effect of kicking the budgetary can down the road while maintaining

current levels of funding, but at some point a new federal budget will be proposed, and all indications point to draconian cuts in most non-defense expense categories. Now that the tax bill has added approximately \$1.5 trillion to our nation's deficit, the heretofore budget hawks will once again become budget hawks (yes, I am editorializing). This too will in all likelihood adversely impact New York State generally and SED specifically. Considering the fiscal landscape makes me feel very Grinch-like.

The NYS Educational Conference Board (ECB), a coalition of major education stakeholder groups (of which SAANYS is a part) has called for a \$2.0 billion state aid increase for 2018-2019, with \$1.5 billion of that proposed increase being needed just to main-

tain the current level of services. The additional \$500 million is for targeted funding for student needs, achievement, and opportunity. The Board of Regents separately made a proposal calling for a \$1.6 billion increase in education spending.

Proposals from ECB and SED, as well as others, are themselves a form of advocacy and hopefully provide some guideposts for the coming debates. If history is any guide the education funding in the Governor's proposed budget will be low, the Senate will propose increases, the Assembly will propose larger increases, and then the real negotiations will begin. What gives me pause however is that I'm not sure history is any longer a guide. ■

## Transforming the Lives of Students with 3D Interactive Multi-Sensory Technology – A New Approach!

Sponsor Opinion Piece by Scott B. Crowder, CEO, Educational Vistas, Inc.

Answering the question of how we truly reach and engage in meaningful dialogue with students is an even more difficult proposition than ever before.

Children are constantly being bombarded with multiple messages such as peer pressure, parent expectations, social media feedback/validation/shaming, and societal norms that drive their decision-making and positive or negative behavioral choices.

We all know that STEM

is important to make a living, but at the same time providing soft skills is important to make a life. Traditional educational materials show little success in long-term positive developmental changes in students and young adults in risky behavioral areas. There must be a better way to effect change and enlighten these precious citizens and future leaders. The following major topic areas highlight both *negative* behaviors to be corrected and **positive** behaviors to be reinforced and promoted: *bullying,*



*risky driving, alcohol and drugs, being a good person, entrepreneurship, and sustainability.*

Studies have shown that at any one time as many as 40 percent of students are "at risk" for bad decision-making and behavior. A new method (evidence-based) has emerged that brings excitement, deep meaning, and a holistic approach to making sustained progress in these and other important areas of life. This technological and theatrical process uses a multi-media environment filled with state-of-the-art videos (in 3-D) accompanied with

surround-sound audio to inject participants with positive adrenalin by creating a multi-sensory event. It must be experienced to be believed! In addition, students are provided with a "clicker" so that they may anonymously answer questions that are strategically woven into the "show."

Initial questioning and post event questioning allows for baseline and trend(s) analysis in key areas. The ability for students to download an app at the conclusion of the presentation lets them stay engaged for longer periods of time. They continue to answer (still anonymously) additional questions for 30, 60, even 90 days later, and the app offers prizes as an incentive for their participation. And students love it!

Students are moved and positively affected by this new approach to the point of actually modifying their behavior and life

choices. Depending on the subject, between 23 percent and 40+ percent of participants confirm that they have changed their actions for the better and engaged is less risky behavior. This new way of helping young people to help themselves through



the use of multi-media video is extremely exciting and ready for use in your schools. The good news is that this set of state of the art technology and its operators will arrive at your school with just one phone call. This is the 21st century type of education for providing soft skills. Contact us at [info@edvistas.com](mailto:info@edvistas.com) or (888)999-2554 to experience it for yourself! ■

*The statements and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily imply or reflect the opinion or philosophy of the School Administrators Association of New York State.*

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-Vincent van Gogh*