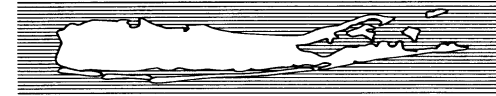


LOCAL AUTHORITY

Boards of education are the level of government most directly accountable to the citizens. The right of a community to determine its educational priorities through its locally elected board of education must be respected. To forestall further erosion of local control via state mandates and regulations, Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association advocates the following:

- **Repeal** State legislation that undermines democracy by enabling the minority to control school budget votes through a **super majority** requirement
- **Remove restrictions** on the **right of a community** to determine the educational opportunities it provides for its students; **repeal** New York State **school tax levy cap**
- **Reverse** the financial punishment of a **zero increase levy cap** the State would mete out to schools as a consequence of a defeated school budget
- **Amend** the **Triborough Amendment** to the Triborough Doctrine of the Taylor Law, ending requirement to grant **automatic step increases** beyond expiration of a contract
- **Enact** legislation that would **limit seniority** in determination process of **teacher layoffs**
- **Maintain** the requirement of a **local referendum** for the **merger of school districts**; provide **incentive aid** and **adequate transition funding** for **school district consolidation**
- **Relieve** communities of the mandate to turn over **local tax dollars** to State-imposed **charter schools** that are not locally accountable
- **Require charter schools** to conform to the same **standards and accountability** as traditional public schools
- **Hold charter schools** to the same Annual Professional Performance Review (**APPR**) **regulations** as traditional public schools
- **Provide school districts** with the **same flexibility** and relief from State regulations as are granted to **charter schools**
- **Stop** holding **education funds hostage** to pressure schools to grant concessions in order to reach agreement with unions on **APPR**
- **Oppose** the requirement that a single **high-stakes test** be the sole measure of student or school achievement; recognize the validity of multiple measures of assessment
- **Advocate** for alternate routes to obtain a **Regents diploma**
- **Restore** to locally accountable BOCES boards the responsibility to determine the **District Superintendent's salary** and benefits
- **Oppose** any and all efforts of **county governments** to intrude into the **governance authority** of elected **boards of education**

Nassau Suffolk School Boards Association, Inc.



YEAR 2013 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association seeks legislative action that would protect and sustain Long Island's highly regarded public schools.

- **Honor promise to provide substantive mandate relief, commensurate with revenue losses attributable to diminished state aid and local school levy cap**
- **Restore all cuts to High Tax Aid; Abolish Gap Elimination Adjustment; Reform the Foundation Formula to correct state aid inequities that short-change Long Island**
- **Provide immediate and long-term relief from volatile increases in pension contributions**
- **Fully fund all costs for implementation of State's APPR requirements beyond the insufficient share of federal Race to the Top funding passed down to schools by the State**
- **Commit New York State to pay its fair share of funding Long Island's public schools**

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Long Island schools are among the best in the country; yet when adjusted for regional cost differences, our costs are on par with schools in other parts of the State. Long Islanders have long understood the real value of high-quality public schools. In order to protect the school systems they built and struggled to sustain, year after year they have supported school budget increases to make up for shortfalls in state funding.

In these most trying of economic times, Nassau and Suffolk boards of education now face their greatest challenge....preserving their communities' investment in high-performing public schools with greatly diminished revenues and increased demands.

Long Island continues to realize far less state aid than it is entitled to receive. Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association calls upon the State to fulfill its obligation to adequately fund its public schools in order than boards of education may fulfill their responsibility to determine the balance between what is necessary and what is affordable to maintain the educational and fiscal integrity of their communities' schools.

SCHOOL FINANCE

It is the joint responsibility of the State and its localities to fund New York's public schools. To maintain the public's confidence and to address impediments to the efficient utilization of taxpayer funds, the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association calls upon the New York State Legislature to:

- **Honor the Legislature's commitment to provide substantive mandate relief, commensurate with revenue losses attributable to diminished state aid and local school levy cap**
 - **Amend the Triborough Amendment** to the Triborough Doctrine of the Taylor Law, ending requirement to grant **automatic step and lane increases** beyond expiration of a contract
 - **Provide immediate and long-term relief** from volatile increases in **pension contributions**; provide options other than speculative pay-back commitments; allow schools to borrow for these extra costs at current low interest rates
 - **Permit school districts to establish reserve funds** for **TRS** and **retiree health insurance**, recognizing the significant long-term fiscal obligations these items impose
 - **Streamline** teacher disciplinary process (**3020-a**) to make it less time-consuming and less expensive
 - **Cap** school district **contributions** to employees' **health insurance**
 - **Exempt public schools** from the costly **Wicks Law**
 - **Mitigate special education costs** by conforming State laws and regulations to those of federal IDEA requirements instead of foisting onto school boards the responsibility to address these State mandates via a waiver process
- **Restore** all cuts to **High Tax Aid**
- **Abolish Gap Elimination Adjustment** and commit to **restoration** of all GEA funds previously confiscated from local school budgets
- **Address** deficiencies in the **Foundation Formula** that deny Long island its **fair share of state aid** and contribute to the inequitable burden placed on local property taxpayers
- **Reform State Aid Cap** by providing same **ten year average** as given to **Medicaid**
- **Impose no mandates** that are **not fully funded** by the state; sunset all existing mandates and reinstate only those that are deemed essential; require that all Bills contain a full disclosure of local cost and tax impact
- **Deny** further attempts to force school districts into **competitions** for what is their **rightful state aid**; **redirect** all undistributed and proposed **competitive grant funds** towards **eliminating Gap Elimination Adjustment**
- **Deny** attempts to **shift costs** of **State assessments** onto local school district budgets; **fully fund costs** of **technological requirements** related to **PARCC assessments**
- **Utilize** more accurate **regional cost and wealth factors** in determining a community's ability to pay when formulating all state aid distributions; **keep CWR current** with **district's actual wealth** in order that **state aid is promptly responsive to real needs** resulting from **substantial loss in tax base**
- **Reject** further attempts to **hold education funds hostage** to pressure school boards to reach agreement with unions on **APPR**; allow **no reductions in state aid** once a State budget is adopted; maintain January deadline for APPR agreements
- **Adequately fund** all costs attributable to New York's **SAFE ACT** and all measures deemed advisable to ensure **safe and secure schools**
- **Distribute** state aid **equitably** to eliminate the disparity between high and low wealth districts by leveling up
- **Establish** that **public funds** should **support core public education** and not be diverted for **private school vouchers, education or tuition tax credits, parent trigger initiatives** or towards the expansion of services and financial assistance to private, parochial and charter schools
- **Increase** local **districts' share** of federal **Race to the Top** funds in order to more adequately **cover the costs** of implementing the State's **APPR** and **PARCC** mandates
- **Commit** greater state **funding** to **special education** costs in order to mitigate the explosive growth of these costs within limited school budgets
- **Maintain** BOCES, transportation and private excess cost as separate, **expense-driven aids**
- **Enable** school districts to access **EBALR funds**
- **Relieve** schools of legislative, statutory and regulatory **impediments to cost saving strategies and initiatives**; **maximize** utilization of **BOCES** for increasing shared services opportunities
- **Deny** any and all attempts to **revoke "payments in lieu of taxes"** commitments
- **Maintain** New York State's requirement that **Nassau County schools** be **held harmless** for the **County's responsibility** to fund **back payments for long-unresolved property assessment challenges**
- **Permit** County and Town **school tax collection schedules** to be adjusted to **minimize** need for **school district borrowing**
- **Enforce** Chapter 287, Laws of 2004, to facilitate **Long Island schools' access to NYPA** power; **permit** schools to **"bundle" buildings** in order to take advantage of declining rate structure for **electric costs**; **reject** extension of Temporary Energy and Utility Service Assessment (**18-a Assessment**)