The Suffolk County School Superintendents Association and the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents recommend that the reauthorization of ESEA include the following:

- States should be allowed to choose an alternative testing regimen for students in grades 3-8 in English language arts (ELA) and math. Currently, students are tested every year in both areas.
- Districts that have a proven record of success based on state assessments in ELA or math should be allowed greater flexibility in the testing regimen.
- Assessment requirements for limited English proficient students should allow flexibility for testing content area in their native language. For one calendar year after a student enters the U.S. system, test results on these mandated tests should not be included in accountability measures.

The Suffolk County School Superintendents Association and the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents support the reauthorization of the ESEA. The nation’s most sweeping education law, the ESEA Act of 1965, is outmoded and broken. At the heart of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a promise: to set a high bar for all students and to protect the most vulnerable.

NCLB has given the country transparency about the progress of at-risk students. But its inflexible accountability provisions have become an obstacle to progress, and have focused schools too much on a single test score. It drives the requirement for almost all state testing in New York State and removes much flexibility from the state and local school districts.

NCLB is many years overdue for an update. It should be replaced by a law that gives states, systems, and educators greater freedom while continuing to fulfill the law’s original promise.
The Suffolk County School Superintendents Association and the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents support the complete elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) during the 2015-2016 school year. The GEA was initially introduced in the 2009-2010 school year as a way to help reduce the state’s $10 billion budget deficit. The GEA is a formula in the state budget that reduces the amount of aid each school district is entitled to receive. Because of this, districts that are dependent on state aid for their funding are more negatively impacted by the GEA formula.

Over the past four years, Long Island’s school districts have lost a total of $1.2 billion in state aid due to the GEA. Over one-half ($673 million) of the loss was incurred by the low-wealth school districts (CWR < 1.0), which enroll nearly 45% (200,400) of the students in the region. In the last several years, there has been a partial restoration of the GEA in the state budget. The GEA and its partial restoration have proven to be a tremendous burden on school budgets. At the same time, schools are bound by cost drivers that are beyond their control, such as the Taylor Law, the Triborough Amendment and Wick’s Law. These costs, in the midst of continued use of school funding to cover a budget deficit in New York State that no longer exists, not only are no longer necessary, but create a perfect storm for school district finance.

We are in support of full elimination of the GEA in 2015-2016 by providing school districts the full amount of aid generated by all of the existing funding formulas without the GEA deduction. Due to the challenges districts face with federal regulations, financial funding formulas, unfunded and underfunded mandates and the property tax levy cap, it has become increasingly more difficult for educational leaders to deliver the quality instructional programs all children need to be college and career ready. The issues outlined below represent the core issues which have the potential to most negatively impact the future of quality education on Long Island and throughout New York State.