

Region PTAs: February 2022 NSSBA report

- President, Michael Kelly opened with a discussion The Feb. 8th call meeting with Governor Hochul.
 - Michael and several NSSBA members as well as other education association leaders and agencies participated on the call; the focus: status and future of the Covid mandates for schools.
 - The governor provided no firm date for relief of the mask mandate
 - The main highlight for NSSBA members was hearing from other state agencies and education leaders who gave cogent, straight forward remarks to the governor.
 - The main impression was that there was refreshing two-way communication in that the governor was really listening to the groups comments and responding.
 - Superintendents commented that the governor continues to make herself and her team accessible to school leaders; Deputy Secretary of Education, Dan Fuller has reached out to districts. However, it is troubling that the state does not have a plan in place for mitigation strategies. In a meeting with Assemblyman Benedetto and Senator Shelley Mayer the legislators both expressed frustration that the NYS DOH has not provided any metrics to assist the schools with developing guidelines for Covid mandate relief.
- Executive Director, Lorraine Deller and Deputy Executive Director, Bob Vecchio reviewed meetings attended since the January NSSBA exec meeting. Some highlights:
 - During the LIA “State of the Region” Executive Breakfast the governor expressed her belief that the foundation formula needs review and spend a good deal of time discussing LI infrastructure
 - At the National School Board Assn. meeting: all meetings with congressional members were canceled; while there has been a disruption and reorganization of NSBA every effort was made to offer an excellent conference; it will take a year or two bring NSBA back to a cohesive association and will continue to serve its members.
 - On Feb. 1st, child education and welfare organizations had the opportunity for an excellent exchange with NYS Lt. Governor, Brian Benjamin about the needs of LI’s children during a zoom call hosted by the Health and Welfare Council of LI.
 - In a virtual meeting hosted by LI Metro Business Assn.. Assemblyman Thiele gave a presentation about whether LIPA should become a municipal power company? LI Sens. Gaughren and Thiele introduced a senate bill (S7576A) to establish a commission to study the future of LIPA. NSSBA will be monitoring progress of commission’s recommendations for the impact on tax payments and the possible effect on school districts.

- Dr. Julie Lutz gave an excellent presentation on LI demographics at the Longwood-Eastern Suffolk BOCES-Suffolk Region PTA Legislative Workshop. Hopefully, the presentation will be made available for those interested.
- In a meeting of the Education Advisory Committee, Rep. Lee Zeldin Bob Vecchio and Suffolk superintendents drove home the importance of NYSBBA's federal priorities and full funding of IDEA.
- Lorraine Deller and Bob Vecchio attended a meeting with Nassau County Council of Superintendents, President Dr. Dominick Palm and was a great opportunity to reconnect with the Nassau superintendents and establish a full commitment to work together.
- Legislation Chair, Matt Claren
 - Attended the state school boards Capitol Conference.
 - A meaningful conversation with Governor Hochul; NYSED's priorities are: DEI (some revising of program) initiatives; UPK an extending early learning opportunities; recruitment of teachers and staff
 - Meeting with Senators Mayer and Liu – Topics discussed: DEI initiatives; support of full funding of foundation aid; possible task force to amend formula
 - Lorraine Deller reminded NSSBA committee members that there will be many new faces in the legislature; 3 open congressional seats (change in district lines); and that it is critical for school board members to introduce themselves and arrange to meet to establish a relationship. (Rice, Zeldin,
- Superintendents
 - On call with governor, discussed conditions that would be needed to lift Covid mandates and requested data to help establish guidelines.
 - Nassau sups are preparing for changing mandates and hoping they will be in alignment with the DOH
 - Recognizing a difference in the ELL population and level of educational achievement; must consider how the varying levels impact program, staffing and finding.
 - 14 Nassau and 10 Suffolk superintendents will be retiring – many new, young will need supports
 - Increase in disciplinary problems among 1st; 2nd grade and high school students. Younger kids have not been in organized classroom for two years – adjustment.
 - Continuing efforts to get allowable undesignated reserves increased from 4% to 8%.
- Area Directors
 - RE: Capitol Conference and Virtual Lobby Day; resources are available in NYSSBA website (Advocacy Action Day)

- Encourages board members to invest time in writing resolutions for next state conference in October which will be held in Syracuse.
- LIEC Mary Jo O'Hagan
 - Follow up discussion to January meeting with Regent Tilles re: charter school applications and legislative proposal to remove SUNY from the approval process, although not likely; the Regents DEI proposal to reframe the initiative
 - Met with LIA President, Matt Cohen to discuss the Cost and Outcomes study which is a LIEC/LIA collaboration and move that effort forward to set up presentations with LIA members.
- In response to PTA question if there is a NSSBA strategy that would counter efforts of politically motivated groups hosting workshops in districts with the intention of recruiting people to run for school board positions:
 - Any person has the right to "self campaign". NSSBA is keeping track of presentations to ascertain how influential they are; NSSBA has requested district board members to let NSSBA leaders know what is happening in their district and if they know the agenda. NSSBA is paying close attention to meetings being held and the groups orchestrating them; in some areas board members are attending and sharing their impression.
 - Some boards looking to offer retreats for board members
- Round table discussion.
 - Many reported disrupted board meetings, sometimes needing to adjourn; attendance by non-resident groups; grandstanding and "gotcha" moments; groups seeking candidates to unseat incumbents; mask mandate "shaming"; letters of intent to file a claim against bond surety; board member as social media target.
 - Issues of student misbehavior is high, primarily among young children – some first/second graders are in structured classes for first in two years which perhaps poses challenges.
- Next meeting: March 17, 2022.