

Suffolk Region PTA Report – November 15, 2022

Catherine Romano, LIEC and REFIT assignee

Long Island Education Coalition held two meetings since our last Board of Managers meeting.

October 12 Meeting

Health and Welfare Council

October 12th the Guest Speaker was Rebecca Sanin, President and CEO of the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island, <https://hwcli.com/> spoke about the post-pandemic mental health and well-being crisis through awareness of their connecting services and advocacy work. She also discussed the labor market openings across the Island since the pandemic, which will ultimately hurt our economy. Some shortages due to wages, others to an unprepared workforce, or the need for supports like transportation and childcare. SCOPE which offers before and after care services for school districts is in dire need of staff. They may curb or discontinue district programs if the cost to run programs and safety is impacted by staffing shortages. Many bus companies are seeking staff along with districts looking for aides, monitors, and support staff. There are lots of job openings and the Suffolk County cyber attack is slowing the return to work for Civil Service jobs. With the COVID shift to remote or hybrid work, Rebecca predicts the 2030 Census will show a move out of state.

Rebecca discussed the dynamics of poverty on LI and the disparate impact of COVID on communities and individuals. Suburban poverty is a huge issue before the pandemic and larger now. An often a misunderstood demographic and equity shift, has occurred, where “Li doesn’t have pockets of poverty, we have pockets of wealth”. This shift in the story of our middle- and working-class families can be seen at [Understanding Long Island – Public -Health and Welfare Council of Long Island \(HWCLI\)](#). For more localized information, she suggested reading the United Way ALICE Report [New York | UnitedForALICE](#) with county [Legislative District Tool | UnitedForALICE](#) to illustrate what it really costs to raise a family here. Using the ALICE data in Nassau 139,000 households and 172,000 Suffolk households struggle with basic survival with the average household expenses \$86,000/year. 51% of all NY jobs pay less than \$50,000. The [Community Response Collaborative – Public -Health and Welfare Council of Long Island \(HWCLI\)](#) provides a one stop network for immigrant, family support, housing and essentials, pandemic support, legal assistance, health insurance access, and physical and mental health services.

Mental health issues before the pandemic were challenging but now the stress on the family welfare, health and wellness systems which are mainly not for profit have exploded. Unemployment, economic distress, health and childcare are factors. And the lack of strong mental health supports within communities exacerbates the problem, especially where families need to travel to access care. Be selective in using telehealth for issues beyond anxiety, if your child needs wraparound service in-person care is essential. The Coalition is working on holding Managed Care (with great power) to provide service not limited treatment in crisis. We need a pipeline for mental health work to be attractive to K-12 students, with some exciting pre-service training. Advocacy for a statement that values the mental health of students AND educators to raise up safe conversations around wellness and identification of issues. Mental Health Association of NY (Mahnys) offers [Mental Health First Aid – Mental Health Association in NYS, Inc. \(mhanys.org\)](#) where adults, students, parents and community members can be trained to identify and refer based on criteria just like we do with physical first aid training. Schools can

address the training too. Nebraska has a project based camp for students to learn about jobs in mental health.

School leaders and counselors can connect with the Council to enhance their own list of supports for students and families, as the Council has a wide network. If you need more information for advocacy work, the Council will be happy to support Suffolk Region PTA. Rebecca is a down to earth speaker with a wealth of information and connections to access, and would be a willing speaker for the region.

2022 Costs and Outcomes Report – also mailed to Region Director can be accessed at [LIECCostsOutcomes2022.pdf \(esboces.org\)](#) With lots of advocacy and information bullet points, many demographic charts, etc., this document shared with legislators provides demographics, academic and extra-curricular success markers, graduation rates, and funding disparities across LI districts and compared to our state. Bottom line – Long Island remains a higher-achieving region of our state where regional cost factors are considered, at a moderate sometimes lower than average cost. The document serves as the data points used at the Longwood Advocacy event in February and is quite useful to compare equity across the state.

Offshore Wind Energy Expo – November 9th at Cradle of Aviation sponsored by the Nassau Suffolk Schools Boards Association was quite a success. Covered by Newsday [Schools see wind energy as new jobs-training frontier - Newsday](#) – Vendors of the emerging industry of off-shore wind turbines, and new manufacturing industries shared the need for students who can problem-solve, creatively think and reimagine, and have a deep understanding of mathematics. Leaders from Farmingdale and Stony Brook universities have programs already connected to manufacturing, research, and emerging industries. So this was a great opportunity for school leaders to re-think education.

November 9 Meeting

Much of the meeting was a discussion of the election results and potential impact on school elections in the spring.

Regent Roger Tilles is scheduled to attend the January meeting and the team is following up on future guest suggestions.

REFIT (Reform Educational Funding Inequities Today)

Held an annual meeting at the Milleridge Inn on October 6th. Guest speaker Angelique Johnson Dingle, P-12 Support Deputy Commissioner, and Jason Harmon, P-12 Operations Deputy Commissioner, discussed the Regents and NYSED agenda for DEI and equitable access and outcomes, state assessments, and standards revisions. They filled in for Commissioner Rosa, who had a conflicting event, but their message was fully hers. NYSED is focused students and what serves them best, not negative labelling or punitive school accountability. NYSED is shifting to a customer support and networked support agency to assist schools and school leaders to innovate and provide what's best for students. Graduation Measures Task Force is a hopeful initiative to address the Graduation Pathways, Exit criteria, and Employability issues from students for years to come. NYSED has listened over the past 3 years to a large number of voices from the field, compiled into the recently released [Graduation Requirements and Measures: A review conducted for the New York State Board of Regents and the New York State Education Department](#)

nysed.gov report at Nov 14 Regents Meeting. The Task Force will use this information in their discussions leading to recommendations. More information can be found at [Graduation Measures | New York State Education Department \(nysed.gov\)](#) and video of the Regents meeting presentation is at [November 2022 Meeting | Board of Regents \(nysed.gov\)](#) with slides at [November 2022 Meeting of the Board of Regents - Graduation Measures and Requirements Presentation \(nysed.gov\)](#)

At the meeting, the board and REFIT officers were elected.

November 15 meeting