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Report as of February 10, 2021

- Suffolk Legislative Breakfast was virtual this year and was held on February 6, 2021. The event ran very smoothly, and a tremendous amount of information was provided. It was recorded and should be available soon for people to watch. Fiscally, it will be a rough year for school budget preparation. The tax cap is 1.23%. Foundation Aid has been frozen and there will be a cut in Service Aid. 35% of Long Island schools will see a decrease of Expense Aid. The federal money received with regards to Covid can be used over a three-year period, however NYS will be using it over a one-year period. The additional fiscal impact for schools on LI due to Covid was \$105.5 million. This was from staffing additions, PPE purchases, transportation, building modifications, cleaning supplies, technology upgrades and purchases and Covid Paid leave as well as other Covid expenses occurred by districts.
- When NYC is included, the share of state aid coming to Long Island is 12% which is less than the 16% of the state's children being educated here.
- There is a decrease in enrollment however there is an increase in student poverty. 63.9% of students that are being educated on Long Island are in School Districts with below average wealth. According to federal guidelines, over 35% of Long Island students enrolled in our school districts qualify as Economically Disadvantaged.
- Lori Fontana asked a question on behalf of Suffolk Region with regards to the legalization and taxation of marijuana that NYS is looking at. Not one person up there supported it. Some even went as far as to state that if it is wrapped up into the budget that they will vote the budget down.
- School Districts want a modification to the tax levy cap and a solid 2% established. They want to exclude expenses related to school safety, security and

Covid-19 from this cap. They would also like to have the new government mandates excluded and exempt the ever-growing cost of health insurance. Additionally, they would like to eliminate the possibility of a negative tax levy cap and want to include properties that are covered by PILOTS in the tax base.

- The districts are also looking for what they called Covid-19 flexibility. They want transportation aid to be supplied when busses are used to provide students with access to school services. They want to address the underlying drivers that are pushing up the cost of Special Education Services. They want modifications under Part 154 with regards to English Language Learners, including the grade span requirements for teaching English Language Learners to be consistent with those of Special Education. And they want to establish an Education Mandate Relief Redesign Team to review ways to reduce the costs of unfunded mandates for school districts.

- NYS PTA Legislation and Lobby Day is February 27, 2021 and it will have a virtual format. There will be a follow up opportunity in March to meet with legislators.