

Suffolk Region



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Legislative Advocacy Report - March 16, 2020

Updates & developments of interest to report on the New York State level:

- **Banning the Sale of Flavored Vaping Products** – while the Governor has stated that this was one of the items that he wanted addressed during this legislative session, there is still little progress to report at this time. To help push things along NYS PTA participated in the NO VAPE NY event held on March 3rd in the State Capital, along with partner organizations and State Policymakers calling for an end to flavored e-cigarettes & flavored e-liquids.
- **Bail Reform Law**- There has been a lot of talk of making major modifications (or possibly outright repeal) of the current Bail reform Law and Governor Cuomo has stated that he will not sign off on the 2020-21 State Budget without the State Legislature agreeing to do so. Whether this will be incorporated as part of the upcoming budget or addressed in standalone legislation remains to be seen.
- **NYS Budget**- The State Legislators have only two weeks left to agree to an “on-time” (April 1st) budget. At the current time, legalization of recreational cannabis is still included as part of the State Budget. As always, negotiations are expected to go down to the last minute.
- **Legislative Summit Talking Points** – Copies of the “talking points” which were distributed at last month’s Legislative Summit were forwarded to all PTA Council Presidents for distribution to their respective Councils & Units to provide details of PTA positions when talking with our State Senators & Assembly members. These ‘talking points’ were also emailed directly to our State Legislators and Governor Cuomo’s representative here in Suffolk County.
- **Smart Schools Review Committee**- met on February 26th for the first time in several months and many of our Suffolk County School Districts had considerable sums of money released for expenditure. Leading the way was Brentwood with \$11.8 million dollars. Central Islip (\$983K), Connetquot (\$1.2M), Half Hollow Hills (\$2.7M), Huntington (\$419K), Middle Country (\$6.1M), Shoreham-Wading River ((\$805K), South Country (\$867K), Three Village (\$1.5M) & West Babylon (\$768K) also had spending plans approved. There are still millions of dollars in Smart Schools monies, yet to be released, but this was probably the most money approved for Suffolk School Districts in the fourteen meetings held by the Smart Schools Review Board. District Council Presidents were all emailed a copy of the Meeting #14 Summary.

Census 2020- The 2020 census is starting in earnest this month and it is extremely important that everyone in Suffolk County is counted, as census numbers are used in the allocation of federal funds in various categories, including education. It also affects the number of Congressional delegates that each state is allotted. As a result of the 2010 census, New York lost a couple of seats and appears to be in danger of losing one or two more in 2020, if we don’t get an accurate count of our population.

On the Federal Level:

- National PTA is asking us to support our Children with Healthy Nutrition, as there is a deep concern about recent rollbacks on nutrition standards that threaten children's health, especially when 11 million children live in food insecure households. Congress is currently considering the next reauthorization of our nation's child nutrition laws. PTA members are being asked to contact their Congressmen regarding this issue. Talking Points were sent out by NYS-PTA via email last week.

We also had a couple of items on the Suffolk County level:

- **CPS Procedures & Staffing** – the Suffolk County Legislature will consider six bills, introduced on March 3rd, as a result of an investigation into the death of a young boy who was failed by the Child Protective Services. The proposed legislation calls for far greater oversight of child welfare workers and the ways of handling cases involving autistic and developmentally disabled children. The number of cases that a CPS worker handles will also be more closely monitored, so that no one caseworker is overburdened.
- **Special Election** – a special election was held on March 10th to fill the seat in the 15th Legislative District vacated by DuWayne Gregory. Democrat Jason Richberg, who had served as Clerk of the County Legislature since 2015 (And prior to that served as Assistant Clerk and as Mr. Gregory's Chief of Staff), easily won election and a smooth transition is anticipated.

As always, should anyone wish to get in contact with me regarding any Federal, State or County legislative issues, please know the best way to get in touch is via email. My email address is **gerardbringmann@gmail.com**

Respectfully submitted ... Gerry Bringmann