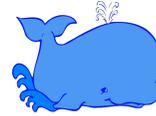


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Report of September 23, 2019

While the NYS Legislature has relatively quiet, as our State Senators & Assemblymen won't be back in Albany for a few months (until the next legislative session) and our County Legislators are spending a majority of their time campaigning for re-election, there are still some developments that are of interest to our schools and our children:

- Banning the Sale of Flavored Vaping Products – since our last meeting, there have been several deaths and numerous hospitalizations throughout the United States caused by vaping products. I spoke with a member of the Suffolk County Legislature's Health Committee about sending their proposed bill banning the sale of flavored vaping products to the full legislature for a vote. I was told that would probably happen if NY State failed to act. Shortly after that conversation, Gov Cuomo issued an Executive Order banning the sale of these products. NY State will start enforcing this ban on Oct. 4th. Congressmen Tom Suozzi & Peter King are co-sponsoring similar legislation on a Federal level, while the Food & Drug Administration is also looking to act. It's estimated that up to 40% of High School Seniors currently vape.
- Elimination of the Religious Exemption for Vaccinations – signed into law earlier this year, with the “grace period” for non-vaccinated students expiring at the end of next week. Non vaccinated students will no longer be allowed to attend school until such time that they are “up to date” on their vaccinations. There are hundreds of parents who are protesting this new State Law and anti-vaxxers have held protest rallies at several locations (including in front of some of our local school buildings). It appears that there is an excellent chance that this law will be challenged in the courts. It was estimated that about 4,000 children in Nassau & Suffolk were covered by the Religious Exemption prior to this school year (26,000 statewide).
- “Red Flag” Law – this law which allows for the court ordered removal of guns from people who are considered to be dangerous took effect here in New York State on August 24th.
- Gov. Cuomo signed a bill into law last month that prevents sexual predators from having unsupervised visits with their victims and bars courts from placing a child in the care of an adult that sexual abused them.
- Decriminalization of Marijuana – While marijuana was not made legal this past legislative session, the State has removed the criminal penalties for possession of any amount of marijuana less than 2 ounces. Fines will range from \$50 for less than an ounce up to \$200 for one to two ounces.
- Erin's Law – On August 29th this legislation was signed into law, a measure requiring educators to dedicate time each school year to teach children in kindergarten through 8th grade about child sexual abuse and personal body safety. It is hoped that this instruction will help children recognize and prevent sexual abuse. Children will receive age appropriate lessons on how to speak up about anything that makes them uncomfortable and tell the difference between good & bad touches.
- Smart Schools Funding – There was one meeting held by the Smart Schools Review Board over the summer with only one school in the entire state (& it wasn't a Suffolk school) having funds released. With the 5th anniversary of the Smart Schools Bond Act coming up in November, I feel we should make fighting for the release of the remaining funds. We have more than a few school districts here in Suffolk with balances in excess of a million dollars yet to be released. You can go to the Smart Schools Bond Act link on the State Education Department website to see exactly how your school district stands.

- Banning the Release of Balloons – while this may seem like a frivolous law, balloons have been found to have a very adverse effect on marine life. There should be no worries about a parent getting fined if a child mistakenly loses a balloon, the law is aimed at the mass release of balloons into the atmosphere (at a rally, football games, etc.).

I would like to encourage any of you, whose School District has a Legislative Committee (such as Sachem) to become an active part of that committee and report back to me what issues your District views as their Legislative Priorities. I personally have applied to serve on this committee in Patchogue-Medford.

As always, should anyone wish to get in contact 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