

## LOCAL AUTHORITY

Restore the right of a community to determine its educational and spending priorities through its locally elected and accountable board of education

Reject attempts to further restrict local control of the public's schools

Relieve schools of legislative, statutory and regulatory impediments to cost-saving strategies and initiatives

### ➤ Reform New York's Tax Levy Cap Law

- **Set the** allowable growth factor at a minimum of 2%
- **Repeal** the financial punishment of a **zero-increase tax levy cap** the state would mete out to schools as a consequence of a defeated school budget
- **Eliminate possibility of a negative tax cap**
- **Restore** democratic principle of "**one person, one vote**", **repeal super-majority** requirement for school budget votes
- Include **properties covered by PILOTs** in the **tax base growth factor**
- **Provide** that cost increases attributable to **citizen referenda** do not force a **super-majority** requirement upon **tax cap-compliant** school budgets
- **Revoke the** denial of rebates to taxpayers in tax cap-compliant school districts **due to non-compliance** of other local governments

➤ Revoke **state-mandated building level aid distribution** mechanism as **unwarranted state interference** into the efficient management and local governance of Long Island school districts

➤ Grant **Board of Regents sole authority** to process and approve **charter school applications**

➤ Establish greater accountability and transparency requirements for charter schools that are in line with those of traditional public schools

➤ Establish new charter school funding stream to mitigate the losses inflicted on students in districts impacted by a charter school

➤ Maintain ability of school boards to present **capital bond referenda** for a vote at a date they determine to be most fiscally responsible and advantageous to taxpayers

➤ Require official **notification** to affected **school districts at least 60 days** in advance of **Industrial Development Agency (IDA)** action on planned projects and changes to existing IDA projects

➤ **Maintain** requirement of a **local referendum** for the **merger of school districts**; provide sufficient **incentive aid** and **adequate transition funding** to cover the local tax impact incurred by **school district consolidation**

➤ **Restore** to locally accountable BOCES boards of education the responsibility to determine the **District Superintendent's salary** and benefits

## Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association, Inc.



### YEAR 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association seeks legislative action that protects and sustains Long Island's highly regarded public schools.

➤ **Address deficiencies in Foundation Aid Formula in order to assure a fair share of state aid for the Long Island region**

➤ **To allow school budgets to weather inflation, set allowable growth rate factor at a minimum of 2%**

➤ **Provide sufficient state funding to cover established current year costs, new state mandates and the costs attributable to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic**

➤ **Properly fund the state's share of escalating costs for the demonstrable increases in special education services, safety, security and students' mental health needs**

➤ **Reject proposals to consolidate and cap expense-driven aids; maintain and fully fund BOCES, transportation and private excess cost as separate, expense-based aids**

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Long Island school districts face mounting challenges in addressing the unprecedented escalation in needs of today's student population, intensified by the need to address the upheaval presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association calls upon the state to fulfill its obligation to adequately fund public education enabling boards of education to better fulfill their responsibility to secure the educational and fiscal integrity of their community's schools.

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## SCHOOL FINANCE

It is the joint responsibility of the State and its localities to fund New York's public schools. To maintain the public's confidence and to address impediments to the efficient utilization of taxpayer funds, the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association calls upon the State to:

- Provide **sufficient state funding** to cover established current year costs, new state initiatives and costs of incurred during the challenges posed by **COVID-19 pandemic**
- Reject proposals to **consolidate and cap expense-driven aids**; maintain and fully fund BOCES, transportation and private excess cost as separate, expense-based aids
- Actively challenge the Federal limit on **State and Local Tax Deductibility (SALT-D)** that has a disproportionate negative impact on Long Island **taxpayers**
- Address **deficiencies in the Foundation Aid Formula** that deny Long Island an equitable share of state aid; eliminate disparity between high and low wealth districts by leveling up
- Utilize **regional cost and wealth** factors that more **accurately balance** state aid distributions with a community's **ability to pay**
- Reject cuts to funding for **prior year adjustments** to school aid and the attempt to **expunge all unpaid prior year claims**
- Provide targeted **funding** to assist schools' compliance with increased requirements under **PL 154** for delivery of bilingual education, services to **English Language Learners (ELL)**, **Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)** and **family engagement services**
- Provide **current year funding** for costs related to increases in enrollment of English Language Learners (ELL), **Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)** and students with special needs
- **Establish** that **public funds** should **support core public education** and not be diverted for **private school vouchers, education or tuition tax credits** or towards the **expansion of services and financial assistance** to **private, parochial and charter schools**
- Rectify the state's underfunding of **Long Island's Pre-K needs**; expand sustainable Pre-K funding to all interested school districts; provide maximum flexibility to districts to determine their Pre-K options; **aid Pre-K transportation at same level as K-12**
- Provide **targeted funding for technology** to bridge the **digital divide**

## SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Increase state funding for **school safety and security measures** and **provide schools with funding for investments in cybersecurity infrastructure**
- Increase state's share of costs to address **escalating costs** for **demonstrable increases in student and staff mental health needs**
- **Require consent** of school districts for use of **school buildings** as **polling places**
- Sustain funding for Long Island's **Recovery High School** administered by BOCES

## MANDATE RELIEF

- **Honor the state's promise** to accompany its local tax levy cap with **substantive relief** from **costly mandates**
- **Require** that all Bills contain a **full disclosure of local cost and tax impact** of as determined by the Office of the State Comptroller
- Delay **implementation date of new mandates** until year following next school budget vote in order that costs not be taken from current school program
- Mitigate **special education costs** by conforming state laws and regulations with those of the federal **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
- Amend the **Triborough Amendment** to the Taylor Law's Triborough Doctrine, ending **automatic step and lane** increases beyond expiration of a contract
- **Repeal** the wasteful, arcane **Wicks Law** that continues to drive up construction costs; allow schools to utilize Dormitory Authority or Design-Build funding options

## ENABLE GREATER EFFICIENCIES

- Authorize schools to **maintain an unrestricted fund balance of up to 15%**
- Cease practice of adding new **regulations and mandates** in an **Omnibus State Budget Bill**
- Provide funding for increased staffing at NYSED; facilitate **NYSED approvals of capital project plans**; provide **NYSED** with **exclusive authority** to review **school construction projects**
- **Permit** school districts to create **tax stabilization reserve funds**; provide greater flexibility in utilization of reserve funds; permit **Special Act school districts** to establish reserve funds similar to those granted to school districts and BOCES
- Grant districts **greater flexibility** in determining **school calendars** and students' **instructional days**; allow schools to **begin academic year earlier than September 1**
- Promptly process and release monies due to school districts for **Smart Schools Bond Act projects** and other approved grants