

NSSBA Notes: January 20, 2022

Lana Ajemian, PTA Liaison

- NSSBA Annual YE Financial report was presented by auditors
 - NSSBA received a clean report and maintains a strong financial standing.
 - Auditor also noted that, for school districts, maintaining secure cyber security systems (priorities being information technology and district websites) is a primary focus of the NY state comptroller.
- Executive Director, Lorraine Deller
 - Discussion re: NSSBA letter sent to Nassau County Executive, Blakeman re: his executive order demanding that school boards take specific positions. NSSBA's letter was a strongly worded statement reminding Blakeman that boards of education are a creation of the state, not of Nassau County, and of the county's lack of authority to direct school board matters. The letter also requested Blakeman withdraw the executive order. As if this meeting he had not.
 - Discussed the Governor's 2022-2023 state budget and the impact on Long Island
 - State aid to education will be 31.3 B, an increase of 7.1%; allows school districts to direct aid where it is needed. In her budget address the governor acknowledged that LI has been the most underfunded region in the state. LI's overall share of education aid will increase to 13.1% and includes a significant increase of 17.5% in foundation aid.
 - The governor's budget also allows for a 3% increase for districts already at full funding of foundation aid.
 - The governor's interest in rebuilding the state's rainy day fund may be a positive indicator that districts will also be able to increase their fund balance above the woefully low 4% limit – a position NSSBA has been advocating for a long time.
 - The current formula for expense-based aids (transportation, building, BOCES) will remain (paid one year; reimbursed in the next)
- Legislation Committee Chair, Matt Claren

- Reiterated points regarding the state budget, adding that funding will also target building NYSED staff; expansion of broadband access in rural and urban areas; support for after school and mental health programs, and waiving the cap of \$35,000 on outside earnings for state retirees – this is not only critical in addressing needed teaching staff, but also to address shortages of bus drivers and security personnel. It does expand charter school per pupil funding.
- The governor's requirement that new school buses must be electric with zero emissions by 2027; and that all buses will have zero emissions by 2035 raises the question of how they will be paid for – perhaps a combination of transportation aid and green initiative funds.
- Changes to NSSBA state and federal priorities were reviewed
- Watching NYS Senate bill S7595 re: Universal Child Care to create new funding streams for childcare to assure that funding is not drawn away from UPK funds.
- Superintendents
 - Generally focused on state aid runs and starting to analyze what districts are receiving and where to direct.
 - Continue to deal with pandemic issues, especially with repeated updates every few days which are challenging to keep up with, but so far, they are managing. All received test kit distributions and multiples
- Area Directors
 - Some attending NSBA conference but many attending virtually
 - NYSSBA moved its Capitol conference to Feb 2, 2022; Lobby day Feb. 10, 2022
 - ECB released its Budget proposal before the state budget came out. ECB is also calling on lawmakers to launch a statewide universal school meals program. Statement: "Students need proper nourishment to be successful. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has granted school districts broad flexibility throughout the pandemic to provide all students free meals. These allowances expire on June 30, 2022. Without continuance of a free school meals program for all, school districts will no longer be able to ensure that every

student has access to healthy nutritious meals. Proposed federal investments in the Build Back Better Act could lower the cost of a universal school meals program in New York. As written, the bill would increase federal reimbursements by over \$64 million. While changes at the federal level could make a universal school meals program more cost-effective for our state, New York must act now regardless of federal action.”

https://www.nyssba.org/clientuploads/nyssba_pdf/Press-Release/ecb-meals-program-rev2-01112022.pdf

- Much on the horizon. Directors recommend each district school have an advocacy liaison or government relations liaison.
- Round table discussion among committee members about what is happening at their district level. All are in the local budget development process; concerns were expressed by several members about workshops being offered in communities about running for a school board position by groups not associated with education agencies or entities and that may have more of a political agenda.
- Next (zoom) meeting: Thursday, February 17, 2022