

Nassau Suffolk School Boards Executive Meeting – September 17, 2020 PTA Liaison Notes

The meeting was called to order by N-SSBA President, John Verdone

- Welcomed and Introduced members
- Brief initial discussion of school openings
 - most were fairly smooth with a few issues, with diverse plans from distance to hybrid to full in classroom instruction
 - some have buildings needed to be closed (day or two) due to Covid19 infections, but generally limited; a few short on Chrome Books (TMobile Business has a \$10M. program to assist homes needing remote access and to obtain Chrome books; based on Frre/reduced lunch data)
 - BOCES reported a few complaints based on busing issues.
 - current hot issue is the future of athletics; some boards being hit hard by parents to open programs. Interesting point raise by one member, an official in Nassau County athletics -- stated there has been no guidance provided re: opening sports which suggests that opening is not imminent. He also stated – for concerned parents – that college recruiters are well aware of the current circumstances and believes that no students prospective recruitment will be based on this season.
- Mr. Verdone shared that, according to Congressman Lee Zeldin, there is PPE equipment available from the federal government for schools and school districts should contact their local legislator if in need of masks, etc.
- NSSBA is enhancing its effort to engage members in a virtual world. Officers are soliciting suggestions from local board members and hope to conduct training for new school board members. Area directors noted that the state association is ready to help facilitate discussions.

Executive Director, Lorraine Deller - welcomed all explaining for new members that there are 23 voting board members and additional ex-officio members and liaisons.

- As ED Loraine had a busy spring/summer – a list of 36 meetings between late April and September was provided.
- NSSBA's concern throughout the summer was the looming 20% reduction in school aid to districts. Pressure from NYSUT, school boards and parents and specifically NYSUT's filing a law suit, resulted in the release of those dollars for September. However, these dollars will primarily be directed to TRS, not really into school district pockets to offset the cumulative affect of cuts over the years and expenses to address Covid protections. If future cuts are pending, they will not likely be announced until after the November elections; mid-year cuts??
 - NSSBA's message: 1. \$\$ need to go to localities; 2. \$\$ need to go directly to schools for Covid issues (FEMA is not sending)
- Other concerns included sports in schools and school openings which, again, most seemed smooth. NSSBA was encouraged by the number of positive votes from the delayed school voting.

Legislation Finance: Chair, Robert Vecchio

- The executive committee reviewed NSSBA's 2020 proposed resolutions that will be voted on during NSSBA's 2020 virtual convention.
 - A virtual convention will be held over two weekends in October: October 20-22; October 27-29, 2020.
 - NSSBA positions are aligned with the state positions; nothing controversial. Twenty-seven resolutions will be presented of which 19 positions are recommended for adoption; 8 are not recommended.

Area directors reported opportunities to speak with state and national education leaders:

- NSBA reminded Boards that they should be addressing issues that affect ALL districts and that NSBA offers an enrichment series.
- NYS interim Commissioner Rosa emphasized the need to focus in on diversity, equity and inclusivity in education, especially in the area of technology; opportunities through acquiring business connections (like T-mobile)
- Suffolk "Champions for Change" banners are being delivered to recognized districts (William Floyd, Three Village, Smithtown, Wyandanch)

Superintendents:

- Expressed disappointment in lack of communication from the governor's office regarding how schools can manage Covid issues; and expressed difficulties with testing and reporting and new mandate that tests results be reported by 5:00pm.
- Nassau County Council of superintendents is trying to establish guidelines for what to do with a Covid case; all are trying to provide consistent guidance to parents ahead of time but quite challenging.
- Both Nassau and Suffolk County sups groups are seeking clarification from the CDC re: PPE reimbursement, the need for some flexibility (Thiele had initiated legislation); Senator Brooks is trying to assist with financing help – possible allowable use of reserves; a 10-year payback?
- Suffolk County's significant budget cuts raise concerns about the impact on school safety and security; there is a significant need for advocacy for federal assistance.
- Nassau and Suffolk superintendents have shared focus:
 - diversity equity and inclusivity (Suffolk has two meetings scheduled)
 - exacerbation of mental health issues for children and staff under changing learning and social environments
 - emphasize the importance of leading with positivity
 - Suffolk is working with the DOH to create preliminary document with guidelines for pre-election events
- While overall rates are low, more than 25 Nassau and Suffolk school districts have been impacted and have had to do messaging re: Covid infections – there need to be a consistent response.

- Athletics is at the forefront of the thinking in Suffolk; there is pushback on the idea of close down (like Nassau) until January. Message to districts: the superintendents do not make decisions in a vacuum as a decision in one district can and will impact all districts in the county.

LIEC: Lorraine Deller reported for Co-chair MaryJo O'Hagan:

- Julie Lutz reviewed the 10th Annual LIEC Survey of School Budgeting
- Districts reported on school openings
- Discussed concerns with withholding school funding and NYSUT lawsuit

REFIT: Steve Geller:

- Held a virtual meeting to set annual goals
- NYSSBA executive Director, Robert Schneider will be the guest speaker for Annual meeting
- Concerns expressed re: withholding state aid and lack of communication from state and FEMA re: PPE support.

WLIW: Susan Bergtram

- Acquired a radio station FM 88.3
- The All Arts section of programming is looking at home learning opportunities
- The Family education site has increased viewership 600%
- Looking into expanded special education resources

New Business: District members reviewed school openings

Next meeting: October 15, 2020.