LOCAL AUTHORITY

Boards of education are the level of government most directly accountable to the citizens. The right of a community to determine its educational priorities through its locally elected board of education must be respected. To forestall further erosion of local control via state mandates and regulations, Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association advocates the following:

- **Repeal** State legislation that undermines democracy by enabling the minority to control school budget votes through a super majority requirement
- **Remove restrictions** on the right of a community to determine the educational opportunities it provides for its students; **repeal** New York State school tax levy cap
- **Reverse** the financial punishment of a zero increase levy cap the State would mete out to schools as a consequence of a defeated school budget
- **Amend** the Triborough Amendment to the Triborough Doctrine of the Taylor Law, ending requirement to grant automatic step increases beyond expiration of a contract
- **Enact** legislation that would limit seniority in determination process of teacher layoffs
- **Maintain** the requirement of a local referendum for the merger of school districts; provide incentive aid and adequate transition funding for school district consolidation
- **Relieve** communities of the mandate to turn over local tax dollars to State-imposed charter schools that are not locally accountable
- **Require** charter schools to conform to the same standards and accountability as traditional public schools
- **Hold charter schools** to the same Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) regulations as traditional public schools
- **Provide school districts with the same flexibility** and relief from State regulations as are granted to charter schools
- **Stop** holding education funds hostage to pressure schools to grant concessions in order to reach agreement with unions on APPR
- **Oppose** the requirement that a single high-stakes test be the sole measure of student or school achievement; recognize the validity of multiple measures of assessment
- **Advocate** for alternate routes to obtain a Regents diploma
- **Restore** to locally accountable BOCES boards the responsibility to determine the District Superintendent’s salary and benefits
- **Oppose** any and all efforts of county governments to intrude into the governance authority of elected boards of education

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**Nassau Suffolk School Boards Association, Inc.**

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- **Nassau Vice President**
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- **Suffolk Vice President**
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**YEAR 2013 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

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

- **Honor promise to provide substantive mandate relief, commensurate with revenue losses attributable to diminished state aid and local school levy cap**
- **Restore all cuts to High Tax Aid; Abolish Gap Elimination Adjustment; Reform the Foundation Formula to correct state aid inequities that short-change Long Island**
- **Provide immediate and long-term relief from volatile increases in pension contributions**
- **Fully fund all costs for implementation of State’s APPR requirements beyond the insufficient share of federal Race to the Top funding passed down to schools by the State**
- **Commit New York State to pay its fair share of funding Long Island’s public schools**
Long Island schools are among the best in the country; yet when adjusted for regional cost differences, our costs are on par with schools in other parts of the State. Long Islanders have long understood the real value of high-quality public schools. In order to protect the school systems they built and struggled to sustain, year after year they have supported school budget increases to make up for shortfalls in state funding.

In these most trying of economic times, Nassau and Suffolk boards of education now face their greatest challenge… preserving their communities’ investment in high-performing public schools with greatly diminished revenues and increased demands.

Long Island continues to realize far less state aid than it is entitled to receive. Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association calls upon the State to fulfill its obligation to adequately fund its public schools in order than boards of education may fulfill their responsibility to determine the balance between what is necessary and what is affordable to maintain the educational and fiscal integrity of their communities’ schools.

**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 New York State Legislature to:

> Honor the Legislature’s commitment to provide substantive mandate relief, commensurate with revenue losses attributable to diminished state aid and local school levy cap

- Amend the Triborough Amendment to the Triborough Doctrine of the Taylor Law, ending requirement to grant automatic step and lane increases beyond expiration of a contract
- Provide immediate and long-term relief from volatile increases in pension contributions; provide options other than speculative pay-back commitments; allow schools to borrow for these extra costs at current low interest rates
- Permit school districts to establish reserve funds for TRS and retiree health insurance, recognizing the significant long-term fiscal obligations these items impose
- Streamline teacher disciplinary process (3020-a) to make it less time-consuming and less expensive
- Cap school district contributions to employees’ health insurance
- Exempt public schools from the costly Wicks Law
- Mitigate special education costs by conforming State laws and regulations to those of federal IDEA requirements instead of foisting onto school boards the responsibility to address these State mandates via a waiver process

> Restore all cuts to High Tax Aid

> Abolish Gap Elimination Adjustment and commit to restoration of all GEA funds previously confiscated from local school budgets

> Address deficiencies in the Foundation Formula that deny Long island its fair share of state aid and contribute to the inequitable burden placed on local property taxpayers

> Reform State Aid Cap by providing same ten year average as given to Medicaid

> Impose no mandates that are not fully funded by the state; sunset all existing mandates and reinstate only those that are deemed essential; require that all Bills contain a full disclosure of local cost and tax impact

> Deny further attempts to force school districts into competitions for what is their rightful state aid; redirect all undistributed and proposed competitive grant funds towards eliminating Gap Elimination Adjustment

> Deny attempts to shift costs of State assessments onto local school district budgets; fully fund costs of technological requirements related to PARCC assessments

> Utilize more accurate regional cost and wealth factors in determining a community’s ability to pay when formulating all state aid distributions; keep CWR current with district’s actual wealth in order that state aid is promptly responsive to real needs resulting from substantial loss in tax base

> Reject further attempts to hold education funds hostage to pressure school boards to reach agreement with unions on APPR; allow no reductions in state aid once a State budget is adopted; maintain January deadline for APPR agreements

> Adequately fund all costs attributable to New York’s SAFE ACT and all measures deemed advisable to ensure safe and secure schools

> Distribute state aid equitably to eliminate the disparity between high and low wealth districts by leveling up

> Establish that public funds should support core public education and not be diverted for private school vouchers, education or tuition tax credits, parent trigger initiatives or towards the expansion of services and financial assistance to private, parochial and charter schools

> Increase local districts’ share of federal Race to the Top funds in order to more adequately cover the costs of implementing the State’s APPR and PARCC mandates

> Commit greater state funding to special education costs in order to mitigate the explosive growth of these costs within limited school budgets

> Maintain BOCES, transportation and private excess cost as separate, expense-driven aids

> Enable school districts to access EBALR funds

> Relieve schools of legislative, statutory and regulatory impediments to cost saving strategies and initiatives; maximize utilization of BOCES for increasing shared services opportunities

> Deny any and all attempts to revoke “payments in lieu of taxes” commitments

> Maintain New York State’s requirement that Nassau County schools be held harmless for the County’s responsibility to fund back payments for long-unresolved property assessment challenges

> Permit County and Town school tax collection schedules to be adjusted to minimize need for school district borrowing

> Enforce Chapter 287, Laws of 2004, to facilitate Long Island schools’ access to NYPA power; permit schools to “bundle” buildings in order to take advantage of declining rate structure for electric costs; reject extension of Temporary Energy and Utility Service Assessment (18-a Assessment)