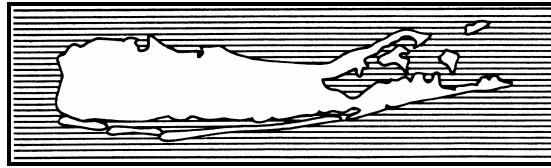


**NASSAU-SUFFOLK  
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.**



*Serving Long Island School Boards since 1959*

# Annual Report

## **The Activities and Advocacy Efforts of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association 2007-2008**

September 2008

## **Annual Report of the Activities and Advocacy Efforts of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association 2007-2008**

Throughout the past year, the Executive Committee of the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association (N-SSBA) has pressed the interests of the Association in a wide variety of public forums, both local and state-wide. Whether it was providing testimony before state and county commissions, providing professional development and workshops for new and veteran school board members, working collaboratively with other education and business organizations, making research available to elected officials, addressing school leaders and legislators, promoting position papers on key issues, or being available for comments to the media, we have ensured that N-SSBA's agenda is at the forefront.

We believe that those efforts continue to make a difference. As times become increasingly challenging, the quality of our schools will become ever more dependent on our ability to be united and to speak as one voice.

Please take the opportunity to review the following pages to familiarize yourself with the workings of your Association and let us know how we might better serve you.

### **The Association**

The Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association represents 112 Long Island boards of education. Its goals and activities are set and carried out by the officers and an Executive Committee. N-SSBA serves as a voice to address the issues of Long Island school boards.

While N-SSBA represents the distinct needs of Long Island boards of education, the Association works in cooperation and collaboration with the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA), as well as with local and statewide education organizations on issues of mutual interest.

The Association serves as a resource to local school boards, provides workshops on key issues and in support of the professional development of its members, formulates and promotes an annual legislative agenda, presents position papers on critical issues, and distributes publications to keep members apprised of the Association's activities on behalf of its member school boards.

The N-SSBA's website ([www.nssba.org](http://www.nssba.org)) is updated regularly with upcoming events, legislative issues and publications, research documents, testimonies, position papers, *Legislative Priorities* and a brief newsletter, *Newsline*. Publications and communications are mailed to district clerks for distribution to school board members.

## Sponsoring Conferences/Workshops for N-SSBA Members

N-SSBA's Executive Committee strongly believes in the importance of providing professional development to its members. The Board In-Service Committee annually establishes workshops/programs for school boards. The Association also teams up with the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents and the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association to offer timely programs to the region's school leaders.

- A N-SSBA Conference, sponsored in cooperation with the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents and the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, featured Alfie Kohn, a nationally acclaimed author/lecturer of human behavior, education and parenting. He addressed, "*The Deadly Effects of Tougher Standards: Challenging High-Stakes Testing and Other Impediments to Learning*." He has been described in *Time Magazine* as "perhaps the country's most outspoken critic of education's fixation on grades [and] test scores."
- N-SSBA sponsored a joint workshop, "Informational Forum on School Finance," with Nassau County Council of School Superintendents and the Nassau Region PTA.
- In June, N-SSBA annually hosts a dinner for newly elected school board members at no cost to their districts. The dinner provides participants with a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities they are about to assume. This year's event featured an interactive presentation with renowned presenter Jeff Olefson, entitled, "Strategies for Effectively Beginning Your Term as a Board Trustee."

## Providing Opportunities at N-SSBA Dinners

N-SSBA dinners/meetings provide an opportunity for our members to address issues from a local perspective and network with other Long Island board members.

- The Resolutions Dinner is held annually prior to the New York State School Boards Annual Convention and Business Meeting. An analysis by the Legislation and Finance Committees of proposed resolutions and changes in by-laws on the NYSSBA agenda provide a forum for a discussion. The program facilitates school board members in determining how the proposals would impact their districts and prepares them in directing their delegate's vote at the NYSSBA Business Meeting. Last year, a speaker from NYSSBA provided an orientation for the convention.
- N-SSBA's Annual Dinner is the forum for the election of the Executive Committee and the officers, as well as the approval of the Association's annual budget. The organization also honors the extraordinary service of select board members, and provides a speaker on a timely subject. This year, B.A. Schoen, a member of the Baldwin Board of Education, was the recipient of a Distinguished Service Award, presented to an individual whose outstanding leadership has had a positive impact upon the scene of public education. Steven Foster, a member of the Island Park Board of Education for 27 years, was presented with the "Silver Bullet Award," which recognizes longevity of school board service.

This year's keynote speaker was David Little, Director of Governmental Relations of NYSSBA. His address, *Money and Tenure and Wicks - Oh MY!*, provided a hard-hitting perspective of the challenges facing New York State school board members, while highlighting some of the successes achieved on behalf of public schools over this past year.

## Serving as a Liaison/Resource to Media

N-SSBA serves as a media resource, promoting school boards' perspective on education, legislative and financial issues impacting Long Island schools. The Association works actively to cultivate relationships with the media, including editorial boards, and is cooperative in providing timely requests for comments and information. Media outlets include Newsday, New York Times, and local papers; New York City and Long Island television stations, including News 12 Long Island, WLNY Channel 55, WNBC, WABC, WCBS, WLIW; and radio stations, including WHPC. Radio and television producers regularly call upon N-SSBA to provide representatives to be interviewed or provide editorial commentary on school issues, serve as panelists or be available for live school budget vote commentary. N-SSBA is a member of the Fair Media Council.

In addition, N-SSBA President Jim Kaden, Executive Director Lorraine Deller, along with Gary Bixhorn, Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, met with members of

*Newsday's* Editorial Board last spring to provide them with the report, "Long Island Education: Cost and Outcomes." They discussed errors in editorial content and reporting. The conversation centered around school spending, the feasibility of school district consolidations, teacher salaries and state aid.

## **Collaboration with the Long Island Business and Educational Communities**

A representative of N-SSBA's Executive Committee serves as the co-chairperson of the Long Island Education Coalition (LIEC). The LIEC is a coalition of educational organizations that work together throughout the year on issues of mutual concern.

In 1995, the Long Island Association (LIA) and the LIEC joined together to complete research that would verify the true cost and outcomes associated with Long Island schools. The LIEC and LIA annually update and expand the report, "Long Island Education: Costs and Outcomes." The data was included in the LIA's comprehensive report, "Innovate Long Island: A New Plan for the Economic Development of the Long Island Region." The LIA has joined the LIEC in advocating for the inclusion of an appropriate regional cost factor in the formulas that distribute state aid, an adjustment to drive more state aid to Long Island schools.

This past year, the LIEC sponsored a breakfast for Long Island's New York State Senate delegation to show appreciation for their efforts to ensure that High Property Tax Aid flowed to school districts. The aid was critical in that more Long Island school districts received greater increases in High Tax Aid than in Foundation Aid.

N-SSBA participates in LIA Executive Breakfasts as appropriate and representatives sit on the LIA Education Committee and the Not-for-Profit Committee. This past year, representatives were present for programs featuring the County Executives, Long Island New York State Legislators, and the Long Island Congressional delegation.

An Association representative through the LIEC was invited by the LIA to join LIA President Matthew Crosson in speaking at a LIA joint press conference with members the Long Island New York State Senate Majority delegation, decrying the Regents State Aid proposal, which cut state aid to Long Island.

## **Participating in Regional, State and National Conferences/Workshops/Activities; Representing School Boards**

N-SSBA encourages participation in NYSSBA and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) programs and coordinates opportunities for N-SSBA members to network with fellow Long Island school board members for regionalized discussions on issues. At out-of-town venues, N-SSBA traditionally brings members together to caucus at an informal reception or dinner. N-SSBA also collaborates with other organizations on issues of mutual interest.

N-SSBA collaborates with organizations that comprise the Long Island educational community. As an advocate for public education, and more specifically, for the needs of Long Island school boards, N-SSBA is represented in numerous state-wide and regional coalitions, participates in programs and serves as a resource.

N-SSBA's interests were represented in a broad spectrum of organizations and through participation in a wide range of activities during the 2007–2008 school year:

### **Nationally**

- National School Boards Association (NSBA) (Orlando, FL):  
Annual Conference and Exposition  
Federal Relations Network (Washington, DC)
- Congressman Timothy Bishop's (1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District) Educational Advisory Committee

### **New York State**

- New York State School Boards Association  
Annual Convention and Business Meeting (New York City)  
NYSSBA's New School Board Member and Veteran School Board Members (Albany)  
Area 12 Leadership Conference (Long Island)  
NYSSBA Legal Conference: "The School Budget – Everything You Wanted to Know"  
NYSSBA Law Conference: "New Developments in Special Education Law" (Long Island)  
NYSSBA Law Conference – "Education Students with Disabilities." (Long Island)

NYSSBA Workshop “The Internal and External Audit Process” (Long Island)

- New York State Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS) Fall Conference (Saratoga Springs)
- Education Conference Board annual conference, “Delivering on the Promise” (Albany)
- State Aid Data Analysis coalition (Albany)
- Regent Chancellor Bennett’s Advisory Council of School Board members
- Education Commissioner Richard Mills’ Advisory Council of School Board Members (meeting with Commissioner Mills, members of the State Education Department and representatives of nine school boards and the New York State School Boards Association). (Albany)
- The Council of Local School Boards Associations (C.O.L.S.B.A.) (Albany)
- Hudson-Long Island Coalition for Responsible State Funding of Education (Nine-County Coalition), addressing school funding issues for downstate. (Albany)  
Meeting with Senior Legislative staff  
Meeting with Steering Committee
- Greater New York Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (L.E.C.E.T.) Conference: “Public School Construction – What You Need to Know” (Long Island)
- Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association  
Annual Meeting

## Long Island

- Long Island Association’s (LIA) Executive Breakfasts and Meetings  
Executive Breakfast meeting with County Executives of both Nassau and Suffolk Counties  
Executive Breakfast with the Long Island Congressional Delegation  
LIA Annual Opening Day Reception – 2008 NYS Legislative Session and Governor Spitzer’s State of the State Address  
Not-for-Profit Committee Meeting  
Education Committee Meeting

Joint Press Conference with NYS Senate Majority delegation, decrying the Regents State Aid proposal which cut state aid to Long Island.

- Long Island Education Coalition (LIEC)  
Appreciation Breakfast for the Long Island New York State Senate delegation for their successful effort in securing increased state aid.  
Monthly advocacy meetings  
Press conference with LIA
- Long Island Index 2008, focusing on data intended to drive government and civic action. This year’s spotlight was on housing.
- Long Island School Leadership Center.
- Long Island’s New York State Senate Delegation’s Rally in Opposition of Long Island State Aid Cuts
- Launch of Suburban Schools Association, an association of “Flat Grant School Districts.” (Long Island)
- Long Island Works Coalition
- Public Television – Channel 21 – WLIW/ITV Board
- R.E.F.I.T. (Reform Educational Financing Inequities Today)
- Nassau BOCES  
In cooperation with Nassau County BOCES, annually distributes the *Salary Workbook and Fringe Benefit Study* to school boards.  
Education Partner Awards Gala at which former N-SSBA Executive Director Alice Willett and the late N-SSBA Executive Committee member Robert Lupinskie were honored.
- Nassau County Council of School Superintendents  
Legislation Committee Meetings and Advocacy Workshop (N-SSBA/NCCSS/Nassau Region PTA)  
Informational Forum on School Finance N-SSBA/NCCSS/Nassau Region PTA  
Nassau County Council of School Superintendents/Adelphi University  
High Stakes Testing Conference
- Nassau Region PTA

- Legislation Brunch  
Spring Conference and Programs/Ways and Means Expo
- SCOPE  
Annual Dinner for New Superintendents and New School Board Members  
Annual School District Awards Dinner
- Suffolk County Task Force on Shared Services (Office of Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy, Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, and Suffolk Association of School Business Officials)
- Suffolk County School Superintendents Association  
“Advocacy Training Workshop”
- Suffolk Region PTA  
Presidents and Principals Dinner
- Eastern Suffolk BOCES  
Summer Symposium on NCLB
- Islip Town School Boards Association meetings.
- The Multi-District Committee, a grass-roots advocacy effort by local school boards in central Suffolk County.  
Multi-District Board Legislation Committee  
Multi-District ad hoc Committee on the School Property Tax Cap  
Multi-District teleconference with NYS Office of Budget  
Multi-District press conference for equitable state aid
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Longwood Regional Legislative Breakfast (Middle Island). N-SSBA President Jim Kaden provided the keynote address.

## Testifying on N-SSBA’s Behalf

N-SSBA provides input and research in the interest of Nassau and Suffolk County school districts at a wide array of forums.

N-SSBA representatives testify before state and regional commissions, participate in conferences and contribute research on behalf of member districts. This past year, those activities included:

- The New York State Commission on Property Tax.
- New York State Division of Budget “Town Hall Meeting on State Aid”
- The New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness
- The Assembly Republican Task Force on Real Property Tax Reform
- Suffolk County Task Force on Shared Services (Suffolk County/Suffolk County School Superintendents Association/Suffolk Association of School Business Officials/Office of the Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy)
- Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi’s School Working Group (Opportunities for School District Savings)
- State Education Department Education Finance Advisory Group (Recommendations for state aid proposal)

## N-SSBA Committees at Work

The Executive Committee is comprised of 23 members, including a president, two vice-presidents (one from each county), and a secretary/treasurer (from the county other than that of the president), 18 members of different school boards (nine members each from Nassau and Suffolk Counties), and the Association’s immediate past-president. The office of president alternates between the two counties. The term of an Executive Committee member is three years, with six seats expiring each year, divided equally between the counties. Any school board member from Nassau or Suffolk County whose district is a member of N-SSBA is eligible to serve on the Executive Committee, with no more than one member from any school board.

Ex-officio members of the Executive Committee serve without a vote. They include past-presidents of the Association, current and previous Nassau and Suffolk Area Directors of NYSSBA, and any other NYSSBA officers residing in Nassau or Suffolk County, former members of the Executive Committee who served for fifteen (15) or more years, and past officers of this Association who served as officers for at least four consecutive years.

The Executive Committee meets monthly throughout the school year.

The Board In-Service Committee determines topics of interest to school board members and proposes programs to the Executive Committee. The committee implements the approved workshops and seminars. (See conferences/workshops).

The Finance Committee provides the Executive Committee with an analysis, evaluation and recommendations on school financial proposals suggested by any agency. The committee develops position papers for the Association. It keeps track of school finance legislation and works with the Legislation Committee to coordinate a legislative program. The committee reports to the Executive Committee for possible action by the Association.

The Legislation Committee keeps abreast of current state and federal legislation and makes recommendations of legislative priorities to the Executive Committee for action. Working closely with the Finance Committee, the Legislation Committee develops the Association's annual Legislative Priorities, a legislative agenda for N-SSBA members. The committee coordinates its program to the positions of NYSSBA and NSBA, as appropriate.

The committee develops position papers on key issues, which are distributed to appropriately promote the Association's legislative agenda.

The Legislation Committee also reviews and makes recommendations about the resolutions proposed for the New York State School Boards Associations Annual Convention and Business Meeting.

The Budget Committee prepares and presents a budget to the Executive Committee that will meet the operational goals of the Association. It is presented to the membership for approval at the annual dinner.

The Membership Committee attempts to obtain 100 percent membership of the school boards of Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The two vice presidents of the Association co-chair the committee.

The Distinguished Service Award Committee is comprised of three members appointed by the president who solicit nominations for the Association's Distinguished Service Award. The committee reviews the nominations to determine a recipient. The recipient is honored at the Association's annual meeting.

### *In closing...*

N-SSBA's advocacy efforts and active participation in cooperation with educational coalitions and organizations are vital to successfully meeting the objectives of the Association.

The extensive activities and involvement of the Association are dependent on the school board members who volunteer their time to serve on the Executive Committee and at least one additional committee of the Association. Their service is "above and beyond" their duties as an elected trustee.

The vast advocacy efforts and the work of your Association are supported by the annual dues assessed to member boards, underwriting the operation of the organization.



**NASSAU-SUFFOLK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**OFFICERS**

Jim Kaden, President - South Huntington  
Jay L.T. Breakstone, Vice President - Bellmore  
Fran Greenspan, Vice President - Half Hollow Hills  
Mary Jo O'Hagan, Secretary Treasurer - Baldwin

**NASSAU COUNTY MEMBERS**

Lana Ajemian - Syosset  
Shari Bardash-Eivers - Farmingdale  
Ronald Ellerbe - Freeport  
Martin Kaye - West Hempstead  
Patricia Kopystianskyj - Uniondale  
Maryanne Lehrer - Oceanside  
Patricia Rudd - New Hyde Park/Garden City Park  
Ronald Walsh - Locust Valley  
Susan Bergtraum - Nassau BOCES (Immediate Past President)

**SUFFOLK COUNTY MEMBERS**

James Brennan - Harborfields  
Elizabeth Dragone, Northport - East Northport  
Juliet Jordon-Thompson - Amityville  
Karen Lessler - Middle Country  
James March - Bayport-Blue Point  
Edward Murphy - Lindenhurst  
Gregory Nardone - Bay Shore  
Brian Sales - Copiague  
Sandra Townsend - Eastern Suffolk BOCES

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