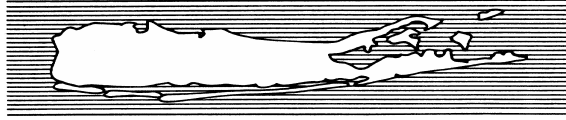


**Nassau Suffolk  
School Boards Association, Inc.**



**YEAR 2007  
LEGISLATIVE  
PROGRAM FOR  
PUBLIC EDUCATION**



On behalf of 108 Long Island school districts,  
2.8 million residents and 500,000 students,  
the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association  
seeks to reform state education funding formulas by:

- ***Enlarging state share to reduce local property tax burdens***
- ***Utilizing regional cost factors in aid distribution***
- ***Providing full funding of state mandates***



**A highly qualified educational community that serves a supportive and demanding public, a pro-active business association that recognizes the economic vitality of this region is dependent on high performing schools, and a delegation of state legislators that understands the priorities of its constituents, all contribute to Long Island's well-earned reputation for placing quality public schools as a top priority.**

**For more than 15 years of trying economic times, these forces have rallied to protect Long Island's investment in its public schools. They now face what may be their greatest challenge....addressing the school funding inequities that force Long Island taxpayers to bear an unfair local tax burden in order to protect their commitment to sustaining high performing public schools.**

**The Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association has long advocated for the reform of New York's education funding formula. Our positions with regard to school funding are well-established. We support the New York State School Boards Association's call for a formula that is flexible, simple, transparent, predictable, equitable and adequate. Additionally N-SSBA calls for adequate state and federal funding and the restoration of local authority to determine how to best direct funds to meet the needs of the community's children.**



## 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 in public education and to address impediments to the efficient utilization of taxpayer funds, the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association recommends the following:

- Increase the state's share of funding education in order to alleviate the burden placed on the local property tax
- Utilize regional cost and wealth factors in formulating all state aid distributions and in determining a community's ability to pay
- Impose no mandates that are not fully funded by the state; sunset all existing mandates and reinstate only those that are deemed essential
- Provide relief from the burden caused by uncontrolled increases in pension costs
- Exclude increases for health insurance rates, pension contributions, tuition and energy costs from contingency budget cap calculations
- Utilize regional cost and wealth factors in formulating all state aid distributions and in determining a community's ability to pay
- Eliminate costly and duplicative paperwork by streamlining the state's reporting requirements
- Establish that public funds should support core public education and not be diverted for private school vouchers, tuition tax credits or towards the expansion of services and financial assistance to private, parochial and charter schools
- Distribute state aid equitably to eliminate the disparity between high and low wealth districts by leveling up
- Maintain BOCES, transportation and excess cost as separate, expense-driven aids
- Remove all caps on the amount of state aid receivable under various formulas, including enrollment growth aid and transportation aid
- Repeal the costly Wicks Law
- Oppose any reductions in building aid
- Restore the allowable fund balance to 5% in order to cushion the impact on the local property tax of revenue shortfalls and/or unexpected emergency expenditures

## 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 federal and state mandates and regulations that assume decision-making authority but not accountability, the Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association advocates the following:

- Amend the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law, ending requirement to grant automatic step increases beyond expiration of a contract
- Resist attempts to weaken the Taylor Law; oppose elimination of strike penalties; oppose legislatively mandated or imposed binding arbitration in any form
- Restrict negotiations to mandatory items such as salary, hours, fringe benefits and other conditions that are not in conflict with board or administrative prerogatives
- Restore one-year probationary period for employees who strike
- Replace lifetime tenure with five-year renewable tenure
- Impose no caps either on the number of students who are entitled to receive special education services or the funding thereof
- Allow districts forced to operate under a contingency budget cap the flexibility to determine how to best allocate the available funds to preserve the fiscal and educational stability of their schools
- Advocate for alternate routes to obtain a Regents diploma
- Oppose the requirement that a single high-stakes test be the sole measurement of achievement of the state standards; recognize the validity of multiple measures of assessment and value-added assessment
- Relieve communities of the mandate to turn over local tax dollars to state-imposed, for-profit charter schools that are not locally accountable
- Impose a moratorium on the establishment of new charter schools
- Hold charter schools to the same standards and accountability as traditional locally supported public schools and evaluate these schools annually
- Impose no caps that limit the right of a community to determine the educational opportunities it provides for its students
- Restore to boards the right to determine the number of times a budget may need to be re-aligned and re-submitted to the public for approval
- Maintain the requirement of a local referendum for the merger of school districts

- **Cease to undermine the ability of BOCES to provide for component district needs; continue to fund BOCES and other expense-driven aid categories**
- **Restore to locally accountable BOCES boards the responsibility to determine the District Superintendent's salary and benefits**

## **FEDERAL ISSUES**

- **Address concerns regarding NCLB requirements for assessment and public reporting and the evaluation of assessment tools particularly as they relate to students with disabilities or those not proficient in English**
- **Relieve New York State and local school districts from the costs incurred by the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act by fully funding all NCLB programs as authorized**
- **Raise pre-existing Title I program appropriations to the level initially envisioned in NCLB; find alternative to use of "free-and-reduced lunch" to determine qualification**
- **Restrict NCLB school choice options to locally accountable public schools**
- **Honor Congress' commitment to fully fund its Individual with Disabilities Education Act**
- **Defeat all attempts to establish private school vouchers, tuition tax credits and the expansion of services and financial assistance to private, parochial and charter schools**
- **Maintain support for the Federal E-rate program**
- **Reform the Alternative Minimum Tax to index for inflation and recognize regional wealth differences**
- **Oppose any changes to the Internal Revenue Code that would eliminate the deductibility of state and local taxes and mortgage interest**

---

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

**OFFICERS**

Susan Bergtraum, President  
Jim Kaden, Vice President  
Jay L.T. Breakstone, Vice President  
Fran Greenspan, Secretary/Treasurer

**LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

Martin Kaye, Chairperson  
Joseph LoShiavo, Vice Chairperson

Susan Bergtraum	Maryanne Lehrer
Jay L.T. Breakstone	Karen Lessler
Alicemarie Bresnihan	Robert Lupinski
Judith Chen	James March
Tina Diamond	Edward Murphy
Harris Dinkoff	Gregory Nardone
Ronald Ellerbe	Aubrey Phillips
Juliet Jordan-Thompson	Brian Sales
Jim Kaden	Jeannette Santos
Meg Koch	Sandra Townsend
Patricia Kopystianskyj	Stephen Witt
Fred Langstaff	Iris Wolfson

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Fran Greenspan, Chairperson  
Mary Jo O'Hagan, Vice Chairperson

Susan Bergtraum  
Ronald Ellerbe  
Stephen Witt

**STAFF**

Lorraine Deller, Executive Director  
Vivian Molitor, Office Manager  
Julia Brennan, Communications

**OFFICE**

219 Bedford Avenue  
P.O. Box 385  
Bellmore, New York 11710  
516-781-2053  
Fax: 516-679-0401  
E-Mail: [info@nssba.org](mailto:info@nssba.org)

---