



VOLUME NO. 85 – NOVEMBER 2008

*PRESIDENT'S CORNER*

"It's the economy, stupid."

Where have we heard that before?

The economy will no doubt be at the forefront of our decision making as we attempt to weather weakening New York State finances.

With Election Day behind us, the conversation in Albany is likely to change.

Will we be faced with mid-year cuts? Will tax caps still be an issue? Will the Regents step up to the plate to deliver an educationally sound budget? Will the Long Island Senate delegation have the votes to retain High Tax Aid next year?

The answers to these questions will be critical as we move forward in preparing our 2009-2010 budgets.

But one thing is abundantly clear: we must continue to stand united with one voice in seeking adequate state support for our schools. This is not the time for the state to renege on its obligation to public education.

We share a commonality on Long Island of local taxpayers carrying an unequal share of the costs necessary to retain this region's well-deserved reputation of having the "best of the best" public schools in the nation.

In the face of a troubling economy and the weakening of our nation's position in the world, we are reminded that it will be an educated populace and high performing schools that provide Long Island with the highly skilled workforce needed to lead the nation forward.

Please join us in advocating for the future of Long Island by reaching out to Governor David Paterson, the Board of Regents and your representatives in the Senate and Assembly to seek a responsible education budget that reflects fair and adequate state aid for Long Island's schools.

It is no less than our moral imperative to do so.

P.S. To support you in preparing for this grim financial climate, we are planning two programs. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, David Little will present a critical assessment of what's happening in Albany. The January 27<sup>th</sup> joint conference with the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents and the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, "Survivor: Long Island – *Confronting and Managing Financial Challenges*," will provide insight into what to expect in the coming years and the tools to make sound decisions. Don't miss either opportunity!



***INSIDE ALBANY:  
David Little to Address N-SSBA at December Dinner***

The elections are over. Two weeks after our Semi-Annual Dinner, Governor David Paterson is expected to release his state budget, one that is expected to have dire consequences for Long Island.

What better time for David Little, Director of Governmental Relations for the New York State School Boards Association, to be sharing the inside news on the happenings in Albany with Long Island's education leaders?

Please join us on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Semi-Annual Dinner for, *“Albany: The Year That Was – The Year to Come - Crises, Caps and Cuts.”*

***N-SSBA ON THE MOVE***

Your interests were represented at the following meetings during the past month:

- Long Island Education Coalition (LIEC), discussing the proposed school property tax cap and the impact of New York State budget reductions.
- Congressman Timothy Bishop's Educational Advisory Board, where he shared an update from Washington
- R.E.F.I.T. Annual Dinner for the election of officers and keynote address by LIA President Matthew Crosson
- Council of Local School Boards Association Meeting, addressing the current fiscal crisis and its impact
- Assembly Republican *Regional Education Forum on State Education Funding and Its Impact on Our Schools*, with Assemblymen Fred Thiele (chair), Andrew Raia and David McDonough, seeking ways to provide quality education in a cost effective manner
- Nassau County Council of School Superintendents Legislation Committee with Nassau Region PTA, working to ensure that all three organizations are kept current and prepared to speak “with one voice” on issues of mutual concern and discussing plans for an upcoming joint conference

- The Long Island Association's breakfast where Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton was the keynote speaker. While her main focus was on the serious economic challenges we face as a state and a nation, she cited Long Island's first-rate education system as one of the region's strengths. In attendance were: Executive Committee members **Jim Kaden, Susan Bergtraum, Jay Breakstone, Lana Ajemian** and **Maryanne Lehrer**; N-SSBA's **Lorraine Deller** and **Myra Vaughn**, along with NYSSBE Area Director **Fred Langstaff**.
- Multi-District Property Tax Committee, reviewing the status of the tax cap and developing strategies to deal with pending legislation

***N-SSBA IS WELL-REPRESENTED AT  
NYSSBA ANNUAL CONVENTION***

400 Long Island school board members and superintendents were among the 3,000 participants at the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) Convention held in New York City, October 16-19<sup>th</sup>. Seminars, workshops, regional meetings, School Law Conference, Annual Business Meeting, Fiscal Training Sessions and School Business Institutes filled a packed agenda.

**Maryanne Lehrer** (Oceanside) and **Jeff Smith** (Mattituck-Cutchogue) served on NYSSBA's Resolutions Committee and were prepared to defend the Committee's positions on resolutions brought before the Business Meeting. Nassau BOCES and the Franklin Square Boards submitted resolutions for consideration by the delegates.

Workshop presiders and presenters included N-SSBA Executive Committee members **Susan Bergtraum** (Nassau BOCES), **Stephen Witt** (Hewlett-Woodmere and Nassau BOCES), **Alicemarie Bresnihan** (Lynbrook), and Executive Director **Lorraine Deller**; along with board members **Fred Langstaff** (Eastern Suffolk BOCES), **Kathleen Berezny** (Riverhead), **Anthony Iadevaio** (Valley Stream 24), **Pamela Bethel** (Eastern Suffolk BOCES), **Jeff Smith** (Mattituck-Cutchogue), **Catherine Romano** (Islip), **Joann Kaplan** (East Williston), **Linda Eklund** (Shelter Island), and former N-SSBA Executive Committee member **Susan Lipman** (Eastern Suffolk BOCES), who is the Presidential Nominee for the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association  
Nassau County Council of School Superintendents  
Suffolk County School Superintendents Association

Invite

School Board Members, Superintendents,  
and Business Officials

To Attend a Three-Part Conference

SURVIVOR: Long Island -  
Confronting and Managing Financial Challenges

1. Public Schools & the LI Economy
2. A Crisis Is a Terrible Thing to Waste -  
Strategies for Surviving the Tough Times Ahead
3. Lessons Learned: Why the Early 90's Are so  
Important (or Deja Vu All Over Again)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2009

Hilton Huntington, Melville

Registration & Buffet Dinner: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Program: 7:30 – 10:00 p.m.

Further Details to Follow

## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS CONFRONT SUOZZI

Months after his Commission's push for a cap on school property taxes, County Executive Suozzi had his first meeting with those who are elected to safeguard the fiscal and educational integrity of their community's schools – school board trustees.

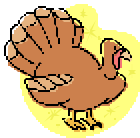
A special session at the NYSSBA Convention provided the sole opportunity for board members to directly question Mr. Suozzi's understanding of the grassroots consequences of his tax cap campaign. In short order, he acknowledged to NYSSBA moderator Marc Humbert that the state is unable to fund any revenue shortfalls created by the cap or take over the cost of mandates. The resulting school budget chaos would, Mr. Suozzi asserted, "prompt board members, administrators and parents to force state legislators to relieve districts of some costly mandates (Wicks Law and Triborough) that tie your hands." This remained the sole defense of his school tax cap plan throughout the session.

The Commission may be unable to meet its December 1<sup>st</sup> reporting deadline on curtailing special education costs and could seek an extension. Mr. Suozzi said he wanted to learn more about the impact of payments to private and parochial schools on a per pupil costs.

Newsday's total coverage of the event? "Suozzi: I'd consider lieutenant gov run"!!!



## THE N-SSBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & STAFF WISH YOU A HAPPY THANKSGIVING



### DATES TO REMEMBER



DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
Nov. 13	N-SSBA Joint Finance/Legislation Committee Meeting	Western Suffolk BOCES, Dix Hills
Nov. 15	NYSSBA Fiscal Oversight Workshop	Long Island
Nov. 20	NYSSBA Policy Workshop	Long Island
Nov. 20	N-SSBA Executive Committee Meeting	Western Suffolk BOCES, Dix Hills
Nov. 24	Nassau Region PTA President/Principal Dinner	Crest Hollow, Woodbury
Dec. 2	N-SSBA Semi-Annual Dinner Meeting	Watermill, Smithtown

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