



VOLUME NO. 83 – SEPTEMBER 2008

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Association has devoted extensive time and energy to combat the imposition of a school property tax cap. While Albany's effort has stalled, the movement remains a priority for the Senate Republican majority and the Governor. The Assembly Democratic majority is seeking property tax relief through a circuit breaker approach based on income. The sides remain far apart, but the issue is alive and there are calls for the Legislature to return to Albany before the fall elections. Stay tuned...

Why are we fighting a school property tax cap?

The school property tax cap proposal is but the latest in a seemingly endless stream of regulations and mandates imposed by the state and federal governments on school districts. Districts are challenged by insufficient funding that accompanies the multitude of mandates that ultimately drain districts' limited resources.

We are acutely aware that Long Island's high property taxes are the result of a shift in funding responsibility from the state to the local tax base, not excessive school spending. A cap on revenues imposed by the state severely compromises the ability of the board to fulfill its primary fiscal and educational responsibilities while leaving it with the accountability.

The tax cap poses a substantial threat to school districts that goes far beyond the limitations it places on our ability to finance the operation of our schools.

The school property tax cap is an attack on the governance authority of the locally-elected school board.

At every turn, state lawmakers draft legislation that limits the board's authority. This summer alone, we have seen Gov. Paterson sign two bills that compromise school boards' authority. (See www.nssba.org, click Legislation) While these are seemingly innocuous pieces of legislation, they are indicative of Albany's attitude toward school boards.

It is critical to defend the governance authority of locally elected school boards if we are to fulfill the responsibilities of our elected office.

The easy way out for boards of education would be to cede responsibility to those who are pushing to limit education funding. Board members would no longer bear the burden of defending budget decisions to their neighbors, parents, students, staff, community groups and taxpayers. However, it is a long way from the classroom and homes in the community, to Albany, the county seat, or the editorial room of Newsday.

Where will the governor, legislators, and tax cap advocates be when the piper must be paid?

SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX CAP TO BE ADDRESSED FROM NATIONAL & LOCAL PERSPECTIVES

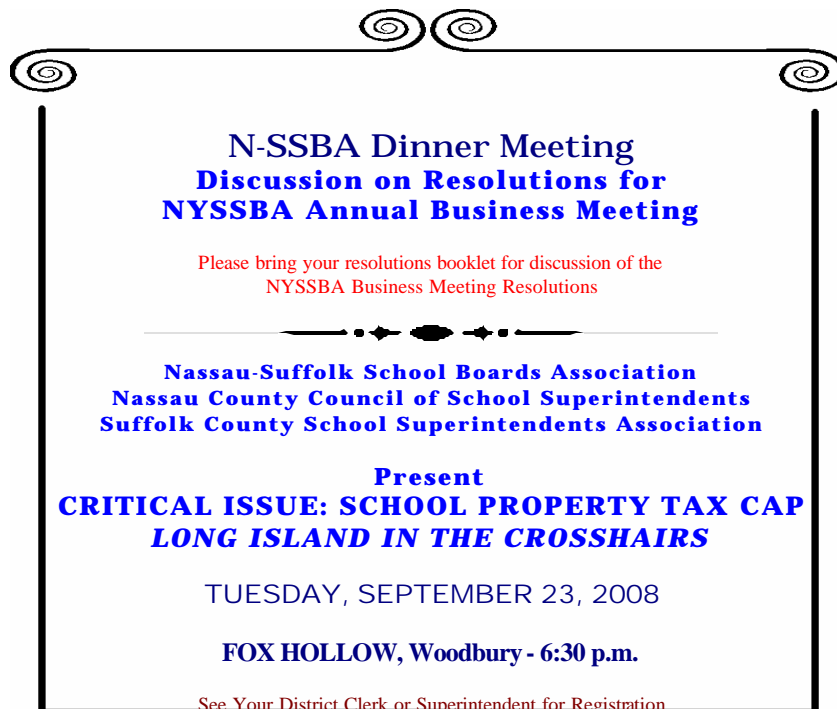
N-SSBA is joining with the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents (NCCSS) and the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association (SCSSA) to provide a timely program: *Critical Issue: School Property Tax Cap – Long Island in the Crosshairs*.

While Gov. David Paterson, the New York State Senate and Assembly have not come to consensus on the issue of property tax relief, the school property tax cap continues to linger as a threat to districts' fiscal integrity and school boards' governance authority.

On **September 23**, Iris J. Lav, Deputy Director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Washington, D.C., will provide a national perspective of a cap's impact on schools in states where it has been enacted. She is the founder of the Center's State Fiscal Project and was a major force in the creation of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, a network of state organizations working on state budget issues.

Ms. Lav's work on federal and state budget and tax issues is frequently cited in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. She has been interviewed on radio and television programs, including CNN, NBC's *Nightly News*, CBS *Sunday Morning*, ABC *World News Tonight*, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, and National Public Radio.

Gary Bixhorn, Chief Operating Officer of Eastern Suffolk BOCES and the Legislative Chairperson of SCSSA, and Herb R. Brown, Ed.D., Superintendent of Oceanside School District and the Treasurer and Legislation Chairperson of NCCSS, will follow Ms. Lav's presentation with data projecting the property tax cap impact on Long Island's schools under a variety of scenarios. Their presentation will provide a realistic perspective on the local impact to our schools. A 4% cap on the levy could translate into as little as a 1% cap on spending increases.



N-SSBA Dinner Meeting
Discussion on Resolutions for
NYSSBA Annual Business Meeting

Please bring your resolutions booklet for discussion of the
NYSSBA Business Meeting Resolutions

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

Present
CRITICAL ISSUE: SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX CAP
LONG ISLAND IN THE CROSSHAIRS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

FOX HOLLOW, Woodbury - 6:30 p.m.

See Your District Clerk or Superintendent for Registration

N-SSBA ON THE MOVE

As N-SSBA has expanded its involvement in Long Island's global interests...business, workforce, housing... the Association has become increasingly mindful of the important role quality public education plays in the economic vitality of the region. N-SSBA remains active in keeping school boards' interest at the forefront through participation in a wide variety of venues, including the sampling below.

N-SSBA ATTENDS LIA BREAKFAST WITH SENATE DEAN SKELOS

Executive Committee members **Jim Kaden, Jay Breakstone, Mary Jo O'Hagan, Maryanne Lehrer, Marty Kaye** and **Susan Bergtraum** attended the Long Island Association's breakfast at which Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos was the keynote speaker. LIA Executive Director Matt Crosson honored a large cross section of Long Island leaders who contributed to the creation of successful legislation for workforce housing. In his address, "Issues Facing Long Island," the senator cited key legislation that will impact the region, including workforce housing and school property tax caps.

Sen. Skelos said that property taxes have been the top issue as he traveled throughout the state. "We have to find a way to control local property taxes. We passed the Governor's property tax cap legislation which we know is controversial. We know that this is not enough. We passed mandate relief, which is a big burden on our school systems...a cap on the amount of increases school districts would have to pay to the pension system. It is my hope that this will open up a serious dialogue on how to address high property taxes," Sen. Skelos said.

The senator acknowledged Long Island's great schools and credited the NYS Senate's Long Island delegation with ensuring that Long Island will get its fair share of aid.

"Spitzer proposed a 40 percent cut in school aid and the Senate Republican delegation shot that down and managed a small increase. We know that our share should have been a bit higher. When we had a rally a few months ago, many of our friends from education, business and labor joined us in calling for our fair share. We must continue to join together to advocate for Long Island."

PRESIDENT KADEN ATTENDS SCOPE DINNER TO WELCOME NEW SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD MEMBERS

Jim Kaden and Executive Director **Lorraine Deller** were invited guests at SCOPE's annual dinner for new superintendents and board members, attended by 170 school representatives. Guest speaker Dr. Daniel Domenech, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators, recalled his Long Island roots, where he began his career, served as an administrator, superintendent and district superintendent. He emphasized the importance of administrators and board members in determining the future of the students in their charge and cited the weight carried by the pressure of many decisions that can be life-altering.

NYSSBA'S ONE-DAY ACADEMY FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

NYSSBA Area 12 Director Fred Langstaff and N-SSBA Executive Director Lorraine Deller interacted with 50 new school board members at N-SSBA's 2008 New School Board Member One-Day Academy held at Nassau BOCES. Many of the attendees had also attended N-SSBA's dinner for newly-elected school board members held in June. Mrs. Deller was given the opportunity to speak about the Association and the services it provides for boards of education in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

*2nd ANNUAL NASSAU BOCES
"EDUCATION PARTNER" AWARDS GALA
HONORS TWO OF N-SSBA'S OWN*

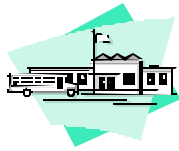
Alice Willett, former Executive Director of N-SSBA (1975-2000) and past member of the N-SSBA Executive Committee; and the late **Robert Lupinski**, a member of the N-SSBA Executive Committee, were among 11 honorees at the 2nd Annual Nassau BOCES "Education Partner" Awards Gala, billed as a tribute to the "Most Influential People for Public Education in Nassau County."

Mrs. Willett has been an advocate for public education for decades, initially as a member of the PTA in Syosset Public Schools. She went on to serve as the president of the New York State PTA, and the National PTA Board. She was elected to the Syosset Board of Education in 1967, where she extended her service to the Executive Committee of N-SSBA. She continues to advocate on behalf of public school children as the Suffolk Region PTA's representative to the Long Island Education Coalition.

The late Robert (Bob) Lupinski was elected to the Glen Cove School Board in 1991, serving as its president for four years. As such, he became a member and officer of the Board of Directors of the New York State Association of Small City School Districts. Beginning in 1996, he expanded his board service to Nassau BOCES. His advocacy for public education included his election to the N-SSBA Executive Committee, as well as activities on the state and federal levels, including the New York State School Boards Association's State Legislative Network; and the National School Board Association's Federal Relations Network. In 2007, he was honored by the Association with the awarding of a "Robert E. Lupinski – Speak Truth to Power Award."

All proceeds from the Gala support the Nassau BOCES Educational Foundation, an independent, nonprofit, community-based organization. Its purpose is to acquire and distribute funds to enhance educational opportunities for all students who attend or take part in Nassau BOCES schools, services or programs. The Foundation supports initiatives that are beyond the scope of the agency's budget and actively seeks donations, grants and government funds.

N-SSBA Executive Director **Lorraine Deller** was honored as an Education Partner last year.



DATES TO REMEMBER



DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
Sept. 4	N-SSBA Joint Finance/Legislation Committee Meeting	Western Suffolk BOCES, Dix Hills
Sept. 5-7	NYSSBA Summer Institute for School Board Members	The Desmond, Albany
Sept. 12	NYSSBA Media Relations Boot Camp	Plainview
Sept. 18	N-SSBA Executive Committee Meeting	Western Suffolk BOCES, Dix Hills
Sept. 23	N-SSBA Resolutions Dinner Meeting	Fox Hollow, Woodbury
Sept. 25	R.E.F.I.T. Annual Dinner	Stuart Thomas Manor, Farmingdale
Oct. 2	N-SSBA Executive Committee Meeting	Western Suffolk BOCES, Dix Hills

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