

newslines

NASSAU-SUFFOLK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A "DONE DEAL" THREE MONTHS AGO.....BUT.....that was before N-SSBA blew the whistle on the scheme that would cost Long Island's schools \$24.4 million annually, and launched a campaign to ensure that school budgets weren't raided to fund the bailout of the MTA.

Working in collaboration with the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) and gaining the support of Long Island's educational organizations, N-SSBA and Long Island board members unleashed an unrelenting barrage of communications to Governor Paterson, Legislators and the media.

Our collective voice made the difference.

Newsday's analysis of the "winners" and "losers" in the MTA bailout places public schools in the "mixed bag" column, saying that our complaint about the payroll tax "appears to be the sole one heeded..."

We'll take that as a (qualified) win.

At the end of the prolonged deliberations on the bailout, the Governor and payroll tax proponents finally were forced to acknowledge its costly impact on school property taxpayers and negotiated a solution that carved out schools, and only schools, for special consideration.

However, while the Governor has pointedly stated that the school monies will remain in a "locked box" to ensure reimbursement, the funds must be appropriated annually in the state budget.

Herein lies the "mixed bag", with details that raise considerable concern and skepticism.

Will the payroll tax reimbursement:

- be appropriated annually?
- be viewed as an extra state aid going to "rich" Long Island?
- be subsumed by other school aids, meeting the same fate as other categorical aids?

How long will it be before school districts are chastised for the increase in their expenditure budgets to accommodate the additional payroll costs?

A scheme to tap suburban school budgets to fund a transit authority could be advanced only by a "city centric" state leadership that has no regard for the burden Long Island property taxpayers assume to protect their investment in high quality public schools.

If we have learned nothing else from the MTA experience, it is that we must be collectively vigilant and outspoken in our advocacy for Long Island and its schools.



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CHANGE IN PROGRAM

NASSAU-SUFFOLK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

50th ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2009

Hon. Merryl H. Tisch

Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents

Meet the recently-elected 36th Chancellor of NYS's Board of Regents in her inaugural appearance in the region.

"Public Education:
Driving the Economic Engine of
New York State's Future"

Distinguished Service Award
Adoption of 2009-10 Budget
Election of Officers & Executive Committee Members

WOODBURY COUNTRY CLUB

Registration: 6:30 p.m.

Dinner Program: 7:30 p.m.

See Your District Clerk or Superintendent for Registration

N-SSBA CREDITED WITH IMPACT ON MTA BAILOUT LEGISLATION

Calling it a "distinctive victory" that made the best of a bad idea, David Little, Director of Governmental Relations for New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) credited the collaborative efforts of NYSSBA and N-SSBA, together with other local school boards associations and school board members statewide with the concessions made for school districts in the MTA Bailout Bill.

"Your calls and faxed letters were largely responsible for schools, and only schools, receiving full reimbursement of all funds paid for this new tax," Little said.

He specifically singled out the efforts of N-SSBA's Executive Director **Lorraine Deller**.

N-SSBA circulated nine letters to Long Island's State Legislators, the Governor and the Senate leadership, which were followed by phone calls. The letters, four Legislative Alerts and a press release were shared with member districts, as well as other educational organizations.

Letters-to-the-Editor from N-SSBA President Jim Kaden's appeared in *Newsday* (2), multiple weekly newspapers in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, the *Legislative Gazette* in the Capitol, and the *Daily News*. Mr. Kaden's *Editorial Reply* was posted by Cablevision.

Phone calls to reporters and editorial staffs also generated media coverage and editorials.

ANNOUNCED

N-SSBA's Nominating Committee, (**Susan Bergtraum**, Chair; **Lana Ajemian**, **James Brennan**, **Patricia Kopystianskyj**, **Gregory Nardone** and **Sandra Townsend**), announced the 2009-10 Slate of Officers and Executive Committee members to be presented to the membership for approval at the Annual Meeting.

Jay L.T. Breakstone, current Nassau Vice President is nominated for President. Breakstone is a trustee of the Bellmore School Board, chairs the Board In-Service Committee and is a member of the Legislation Committee.

Fran Greenspan is nominated to retain her role as Suffolk Vice President. President of the Half Hollow Hills School Board, she chairs the Legislation Committee and serves on the Nominating Committee.

Secretary/Treasurer **Mary Jo O'Hagan**, President of the Baldwin School Board, is nominated for the Nassau Vice President position. She chairs the Finance Committee and is a member of the Board In-Service Committee.

Nominated for Secretary/Treasurer is **James March**, President of the Bayport-Blue Point School Board. He chairs the Budget Committee, is Vice Chairperson of the Finance Committee and is a member of the Legislation Committee.

Nominees for new terms on N-SSBA's Executive Committee are:

NASSAU - **Deborah Coates**, Nassau BOCES; **Patricia Rudd**, President, New Hyde Park/Garden City Park; **Lana Ajemian**, Syosset; **Mark Masin**, President, Rockville Centre; **Dolores Garger**, Vice-President, Hicksville.

SUFFOLK - **John Verdone**, President, Sayville; **Karen Lessler**, President, Middle Country; **Gary Schoer**, Harborfields.

BOARD MEMBER ON BOCES PANEL

Executive Committee member **Sandra Townsend**, a member of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES board, was among the invited panelists at a conference, *BOCES at a Crossroads*, held in Albany on May 1. The program examined recommendations to expand BOCES' scope of instructional and non-instructional services, and to help determine the future of the organization as an education service agency.

In Memoriam
JAMES BRENNAN

N-SSBA colleagues are saddened by the loss of their Executive Committee colleague, Jim Brennan, who passed away on April 24th. He was a long-term member of the Harborfields Board of Education and filled a Suffolk seat on N-SSBA's Executive Committee. Jim was a passionate advocate for school boards and Long Island schools in his roles as NYSSBA State Legislative Issues representative and NSBA Federal Relations Network representative.

New School Board Member Dinner

WED., JUNE 3RD—FOX HOLLOW CC

Start them off right!

Encourage your newly-elected board members to attend N-SSBA's New School Board Member Dinner, where they will be introduced to their new role and responsibilities by N-SSBA officers and by renowned presenter Jeff Olefson.

Your District Clerk has registration information. The nominal registration fee for new school board members is permissible under state law.

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER PAYS LIP SERVICE TO UNFUNDED MANDATES

Just days before the signing the MTA bailout that imposes a \$24.4 million annual payroll tax on Long Island school districts, Governor Paterson issued Executive Order No. 17: *Establishing Measures to Evaluate Costs of Mandates on Local Government to Advance Property Tax Relief.*

His April 27 press release states that the Executive Order will "ensure an increased flow of information in an effort to make better decisions about the impacts of proposed legislation and regulations on property taxes for New Yorkers."

WHOOOPS! What about the MTA payroll tax impact on schools and municipalities?

From the Chamber floor, Senator John Flanagan referred to the new Executive Order and requested the requisite impact research on the MTA payroll tax. His appeal fell of deaf ears.

Nassau County Comptroller Howard Weitzman estimates it will drain a minimum of \$2.3 million from the County's budget alone. The estimated cost to the Suffolk county budget is \$3.4 million.

Martin Cantor, Director of Dowling's L.I. Economic and Social Policy Institute, estimates the annual cost to Long Island employers at nearly \$200 million.

N-SSBA WEIGHS IN AT LI 2035 VISIONING CONFERENCE

Long-term planning for Long Island's future development that does not include input from school boards? No way!

As the sole representatives of Long Island schools at the LI Regional Planning Council's *LI 2035* Regional Visioning Initiative Conference and Sustainability Planning Program, N-SSBA's **Mary Jo O'Hagan**, **Lorraine Deller** and **Myra Vaughn** stressed the importance of including schools and boards of education in the development of any proposals for where the next generation of Long Islanders will live and work.

Emphasizing that participation from the education community is paramount, N-SSBA has secured representation on the *LI 2035* Regional Visioning Initiative project.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Date	Event	Location
June 1	N-SSBA Annual Dinner with <i>Regents Chancellor Meryll Tisch</i>	Woodbury Country Club, Woodbury/6:30 PM
June 3	New School Board Members Dinner	Fox Hollow Country Club/6:30 PM
June 16	Universal School Revote Day	