



# **Advocating for Sustainability While Preparing for an Emergency**

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# Overview



- SCSSA Guiding Principles for Advocacy
- Executive Budget Analysis
- The Elusive Fair Share
- Advocating for Sustainable, Secure, High-Quality Schools
  - The Reality of Long Island
  - Promoting Sustainability
  - Property Tax Dependence / State Aid
  - Promoting School Security
  - Mandate Relief
- Emergency Preparedness Kit



# **SCSSA Guiding Principles for Advocacy**



## SCSSA Guiding Principles for Advocacy



Long Islanders support and value public education. Time and time again, Long Islanders have sacrificed to maintain the quality of the schools that drew them to the region and that they have dug deep into their pockets to build. Accordingly, the SCSSA prepares our annual Advocacy Program based upon these guiding principles:

- Long Islanders acknowledge that the quality of life in our region is directly tied to our outstanding public schools.
- Long Islanders acknowledge that our public schools have to be preserved and are “worth fighting for.”



## SCSSA Guiding Principles for Advocacy (cont'd)



- Long Islanders acknowledge that there is an achievement and revenue gap between our most wealthy and least wealthy school districts.
- Long Islanders agree to work to close the gap by bringing the bottom up.
- Long Islanders resist efforts to undermine public education by those who paint all public schools with a broad brush.
- Long Islanders have no higher priority than providing a safe, secure school environment for students and staff.



## SCSSA Guiding Principles for Advocacy (cont'd)



- Long Islanders support structural changes that will assure that our high-quality schools are sustainable in this challenging economic environment.
- Long Islanders continue efforts to educate our fellow New Yorkers about the reality of Long Island and dispel the longstanding misperceptions of our region.
- Long Islanders support the principles of “local control” that have enabled communities to build school districts that reflect their values.
- Long Islanders acknowledge that students need access to multiple “pathways” to high school graduation in order to join the workforce of the future.



# Executive Budget Analysis



# Executive Budget Analysis



- The Executive Budget proposes that Long Island school aid be increased by \$67.9 million (2.8%). However, even with this increase, our schools will receive over \$137 million less state aid in 2013-14 than was received in 2008-09 (\$2.48 billion vs. \$2.62 billion).
- Forty-five (45) school districts will lose aid while another twenty-one (21) will receive less than a 2% increase. Seven (7) low-wealth (CWR <1.0) school districts, enrolling approximately 50,000 students, are in this group.





# Executive Budget Analysis (cont'd)



- Long Island schools have lost over \$1 billion between 2011-12 and 2013-14 as a result of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA).
  - This represents a 17% loss of aid during that period.
  - Over one-half (\$539 million) of the loss was incurred by the 28 low-wealth (CWR <1.0) school districts on Long Island.



# Executive Budget Analysis (cont'd)



- The GEA and its partial restoration have a disproportionately severe impact on Long Island schools.
  - The GEA reduces aid to Long Island schools at a **higher** rate than schools across the rest of the state (11.8% vs. 9.4%).
  - The GEA Restoration restores aid to Long Island schools at a **lower** rate than the rest of the state (9.2% vs. 15.9%).
  - **If Long Island lost aid and had aid restored at the same rate as the rest of the state, our schools would receive \$78.2 million more than projected.**



# Executive Budget Analysis (cont'd)



- Nearly 75% of the statewide reduction in High Tax Aid is absorbed by Long Island schools (\$37M of \$50M).
  - Over one-half (65 of 124) of Long Island school districts experienced a 70% cut in High Tax Aid (28 in Suffolk and 37 in Nassau).
  - Nearly one-half (13 of 28) of Long Island's low-wealth school districts lost High Tax Aid. Nine (9) of the 13 experienced a loss in excess of 20%. The total loss for these districts is \$8.3 million.
  - **This \$37 million must be restored.**



# Executive Budget Analysis (cont'd)



- Foundation Aid remains frozen in the Executive Budget. This aid comprises nearly 75% of all Formula Aid. **The Foundation Formula must be overhauled.** Projected 2013-14 Foundation Aid per pupil on Long Island is \$3,436, which is 31% less than the per pupil allocation for the rest of the state (\$4,941). The formula has shortchanged Long Island from the day it was implemented. Due to this formula:
  - Long Island schools continue to educate 17% of the state's students yet receive only 12% of the aid.
  - Seventy-seven (77) Long Island school districts receive less than 20% of their revenues from New York State. Forty-three (43) receive less than 10%, while another thirty-four (34) receive between 10% and 20%.
  - Regional cost differences are underaccounted for in the distribution of aid.
  - **If Long Island received a share of Foundation Aid equal to the share of students (17%) educated in our schools, an additional \$74 million would be directed to the region.**



# Executive Budget Analysis (cont'd)



- The Executive Budget includes \$203 million for “Fiscal Stabilization” funding provided “in recognition of extraordinary fixed costs including pension contributions.” The SCSSA proposes that these funds be allocated to schools through a wealth-sensitive, expense-driven formula.



# The Elusive Fair Share



## The Elusive Fair Share



1. Receiving a “fair share” of aid has proved elusive since the Foundation Formula was introduced. That formula, which underfunds the region, drives 75% of all state aid (\$3,461 per pupil on Long Island vs. \$4,941 in the rest of the state).
2. The state then reduced school aid using a Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) that takes a larger percentage (11.8%) from the region than the rest of the state (9.4%).
3. In restoring aid lost due to the GEA, the state used a formula that returns aid to the region at a lower rate (9.2%) than the rest of the state (15.9%).
4. It is now proposed that Long Island’s High Tax Aid be reduced by 55% (\$37 million). This is the aid category that was created to offset the inequities perpetuated by the other formulas.



# **Advocating for Sustainable, Secure, High-Quality Schools**





# The Reality of Long Island - 2012 Costs and Outcomes Report



- Long Island students outperform their peers from across the rest of the state on every assessment (including the ELA and math assessments as well as Regents examinations) administered by the State Education Department (SED).
- Over 40% of the students on Long Island are enrolled in school districts that fall below the state wealth average (41.7%). Only 16% are enrolled in the wealthiest school districts (CWR >2.0).



# The Reality of Long Island - 2012 Costs and Outcomes Report (cont'd)



- Due to higher regional costs, \$1 purchases only \$.65 worth of goods and services on Long Island according to the SED cost index.
- New York State funds only \$.23 of every \$1 spent on Long Island education (23.1%).
- Long Island schools enroll 17% of the state's students yet receive only 12% of school state aid.
- Over 20% of students on Long Island qualify for Free/Reduced Price Lunch according to federal guidelines.



## The Reality of Long Island - Tax Burden and Wealth



- Long Island's income wealth per pupil has dropped dramatically since 1999-2000, from nearly 40% to just 13% above the state average.
- Long Islanders fund educational services across the state. A December 2011 Rockefeller Institute study found that the "downstate suburbs," including Long Island, provide 27.4% of New York State receipts, yet only 17.7% of state expenditures are directed to the region.



# The Reality of Long Island - Tax Burden and Wealth

(cont'd)



- If every penny of aid allocated to the wealthiest Long Island school districts was redistributed to the rest of the state, it would result in just a \$39 per pupil increase. These school districts fund nearly 90% of their budgets with local property taxes.
- In the typical Suffolk County school district (CWR 1.25, Enrollment 3,900, Budget \$81M), projected 2013-14 rate increases for health insurance, ERS and TRS alone, will drive a budget increase of nearly 4% and a tax levy increase of 5%.



# The Reality of Long Island - The LIEC Budget Survey Results



- Long Island schools eliminated 1,820 positions between 2010-11 and 2011-12, resulting in 932 staff members being laid off.
- Long Island schools eliminated another 1,233 positions between 2011-12 and 2012-13, resulting in an additional 682 staff members being laid off.
- Between 2010-11 and 2012-13, the percentage of low-wealth school districts with an average class size over 25 grew from 15% to 32% at the elementary school level, 48% to 68% at the middle school level, and 40% to 60% at the high school level.



# The Reality of Long Island - The LIEC Budget Survey Results (cont'd)



- Between 2010-11 and 2012-13, the percentage of mid-wealth school districts with an average class size over 25 grew from 3% to 13% at the elementary school level, 32% to 47% at the middle school level, and remained unchanged at the high school level (48%).



# The Reality of Long Island - The LIEC Budget Survey Results (cont'd)



- Between 2010-11 and 2011-12, one third of low-wealth school districts significantly (10%+) reduced career and technical education (CTE) opportunities for students, while one-fifth of these school districts made similar cuts to alternative education programs. Another 18% of these districts made significant cuts to CTE programs between 2011-12 and 2012-13.
- Long Island schools eliminated 235 interscholastic athletic teams between 2010-11 and 2011-12.



# Promoting Sustainability



- Modify teacher certification requirements to provide for a career ladder for members of the teaching profession.
- Require that all members of the Teacher Retirement System contribute to the pension fund.
- Change staffing requirements to maximize cost savings resulting from the expanded use of technology.
- Establish a separate funding mechanism for charter schools.





## Promoting Sustainability (cont'd)



- Provide SED with improved capacity to support school districts interested in functional consolidation.
- Increase Reorganization Incentive Aid.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of all state mandates established pursuant to federal law to determine the extent to which state mandates exceed federal requirements.



## Property Tax Dependence/State Aid



New York State should become a full partner with local property taxpayers and establish a goal with a timeline for providing a level of aid equivalent to 50% of the statewide cost of education. Additional aid generated by the increased share should be distributed to school districts through the introduction of new expense-driven formulas that partially reimburse school districts for the following mandated/state-set expenses:

- Race to the Top (RTTP)/Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) expenses
- New York State Health Insurance Plan (NYSHIP) premiums
- New York State pension system (ERS and TRS) contributions



# Property Tax Dependence/State Aid (cont'd)



The state funding of education should be overhauled as follows:

- Modify the Foundation Formula to utilize a regional cost index that recognizes the true costs of “doing business” across the state.
- Modify the Foundation Formula to utilize wealth and poverty measures that are regionally sensitive.



# Property Tax Dependence/State Aid (cont'd)



- Modify the Foundation Formula to utilize a sharing ratio that generates a reasonable, as well as a minimum and maximum, level of expected local effort.
- Reinstate true expense-driven transportation aid
- Support the introduction of a “CTE Pathway” to high school graduation by promoting the coordination of school-based career academies with regional BOCES career and technical education (CTE) programs through enhanced BOCES Aid.



## Promoting School Security



- Expenses incurred for school security operations should be partially reimbursed by the state through a wealth-sensitive, expense-driven formula.
- Provide funding, through a wealth-sensitive, expense-driven formula, to schools and communities for adequate mental health, social and guidance services, and resources for the purpose of prevention, support, and response.



## Promoting School Security (cont'd)



- Expenses incurred for school security, mental health, and social and guidance services should be exempt from the property tax cap.
- Increase funding for school resource offices for stronger school-community partnerships.



## Mandate Relief



State mandates drive local school costs.

Opportunities to relieve school districts of mandates have been identified but not yet acted upon.

The SCSSA and NCCSS join the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents (LHCSS) in supporting an array of mandate relief proposals.

A complete list is available on our websites:

[suffolksuperintendents.org](http://suffolksuperintendents.org) and  
[nassausuperintendents.org](http://nassausuperintendents.org)



# Emergency Preparedness Kit



## “Know Before You Go” – Prepare to Discuss:

- State Aid
- Spending/Budget
- Tax Levy
- Cost Drivers
- Fund Balance
- Cost Cutting
- Academic Programs
- Extracurricular Programs
- Class Size
- Accomplishments
- Community Support
- “Signature” Programs





# Emergency Preparedness Kit Fiscal Facts



- Compare 2013-14 (Executive Budget) and 2012-13 (January 2013 estimate) State Aid to 2008-09 State Aid
- Compare State Aid as a % of budget in 2008-09 to 2012-13 and/or 2013-14 (projected “rollover”)
- Calculate the average annual budget increase between 2008-09 and 2012-13 and/or 2013-14
- Compare Tax Levy as a % of budget in 2008-09 to 2012-13 and/or 2013-14



# Emergency Preparedness Kit Fiscal Facts (cont'd)



- Calculate 2013-14 budget increase and tax levy increase driven by ERS, TRS, and health insurance increases
- Compare the amount of Fund Balance applied to the tax levy year-to-year from 2008-09 to 2012-13/2013-14
- Calculate the change in Fund Balance available to apply to the tax levy from 2008-09 to 2012-13/2013-14



# Emergency Preparedness Kit Fiscal Facts (cont'd)



- Know the impact of the proposed High Tax Aid cut on your district
- Know the aggregate amount of aid lost due to the GEA
- Know the amount of Foundation Aid per pupil received by your district
- Know the \$ value of building projects recently deferred



# Emergency Preparedness Kit Program Facts



- Know the change in average elementary class size between 2008-09 and 2012-13 / 2013-14
- Know the change in average secondary class size between 2008-09 and 2012-13 / 2013-14
- Know changes in number of opportunities to participate in athletics
- Know changes in number of opportunities to participate in performing groups



# Emergency Preparedness Kit Program Facts (cont'd)



- Know changes in number of opportunities to participate in after school / before school clubs and activities
- Know changes in number of opportunities to enroll in secondary electives
- Know changes in number of opportunities to enroll in CTE programs
- Know any major change in program offerings



# Emergency Preparedness Kit Program Facts (cont'd)



- Know major cost reduction initiatives recently introduced
- Know the district's "Signature" programs
- Know the \$ value of scholarships annually awarded to graduating seniors
- Remember – You know your district best!



# Emergency Preparedness Kit Typical School District



<b>State Aid 2008-09 vs. 2012-13</b>	<b>\$15,360,000 vs. \$13,387,000</b>
<b>State Aid 2008-09 vs. 2013-14</b>	<b>\$15,360,000 vs. \$13,744,000</b>
<b>State Aid as % of budget 2008-09 vs. 2012-13</b>	<b>20.5% vs. 16.6%</b>
<b>State Aid as % of budget 2008-09 vs. 2013-14 (5% rollover)</b>	<b>20.5% vs. 16.2%</b>
<b>Average annual budget increase 2008-09 to 2012-13 (4 Years)</b>	<b>1.93%</b>
<b>Tax levy as % of budget 2008-09 vs. 2012-13</b>	<b>75.2% vs. 75.6%</b>
<b>2013-14 Budget increase due to ERS, TRS, Health Insurance</b>	<b>3.75%</b>
<b>2013-14 Tax levy increase due to ERS, TRS, Health Insurance</b>	<b>5.10%</b>
<b>Applied fund balance 2008-09 vs. 2012-13</b>	<b>\$1,775,000 vs. \$3,700,000</b>



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