



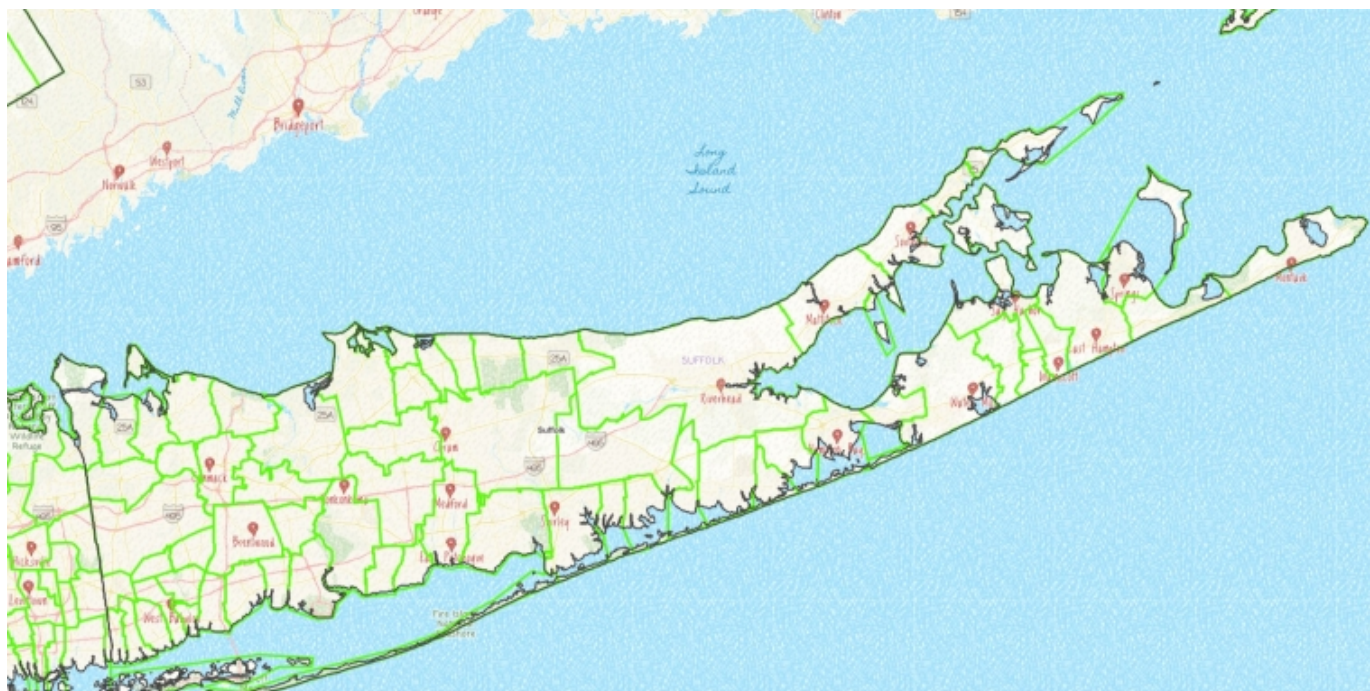
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Monica R. Martinez

## Statement from Sen. Monica R. Martinez on Clarification to NYS Education Department Regionalization Plan

MONICA R. MARTINEZ December 10, 2024

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State Senator Monica R. Martinez released the following statement regarding recent amendments to the Regionalization Initiative by the New York State and the Board of Regents:

“Today, I commend the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Board of Regents for amending and clarifying their regionalization plan to emphasize its voluntary nature. This decision reflects a critical understanding of the importance of preserving local control over our schools and ensuring that no district is compelled to adopt policies that do not align with their community's needs.

As a former teacher and school administrator, I understand firsthand the profound impact that misguided policies can have on students, educators, and school districts. Long Island's schools have long been recognized for their excellence and innovation. Many districts already collaborate voluntarily to share resources—such as sports teams and advanced coursework—when it benefits students and taxpayers. These partnerships exemplify the strength and autonomy of our local school systems and underscore why state-imposed mandates are unnecessary and counterproductive.

When the initial regionalization plan was proposed, I immediately requested a meeting with NYSED officials to express my concerns and advocate for the rights of our local school districts. I strongly opposed language that would compel districts to participate in regionalization efforts or impose changes that undermine the authority of our locally elected school boards as I have consistently advocated for the autonomy of Long Island schools.

The initial language of the regionalization plan would have compelled districts to comply with state directives. This amendment, changing "compel" to "request," is a victory for the educators, parents, and school leaders who voiced their concerns. It reaffirms that collaboration, not coercion, is the path forward.

However, while this clarification is a step in the right direction, we must remain vigilant to ensure local school boards retain full authority over decision-making and that no district is pressured into regionalization against its will. I will continue to work alongside my

colleagues, school leaders, and parents to ensure transparency and accountability in education policy.

Long Island's students deserve a system that prioritizes their unique needs and empowers their communities. I am proud to stand with our educators and families in championing that vision.”