



SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Testimony from Public Hearing on BOCES as a Model for Delivering Taxpayer Savings in Wheatley Heights, N.Y. on October 2, 2009

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SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE

ON EDUCATION

PUBLIC HEARING

WESTERN SUFFOLK BOCES

OCTOBER 2, 2009

Testimony by:

Michael J. Mensch, Ed.D.

**Chief Operating Officer,
Western Suffolk BOCES**

Senate Standing Committee on Education Michael J. Mensch, Ed.D. - Remarks

This afternoon you will hear remarks from Nassau and Suffolk school superintendents, business officials, the transportation industry, a consultant engineer who serves as a Career and Technical Advisory Committee Chair, BOCES' administrators, a BOCES' Board member and a representative from the Suffolk County Executive's office.

All of these speakers, I suspect, will have positive comments about their individual BOCES and the BOCES they know and rely on each day to meet the needs of their districts' Special Education and Career and Technical program students along with their staff development and technology needs. You will also hear about our shared services programs, cooperative bidding, regional transportation and several business office functions that create an economy of scale effort that assist districts with complex everyday solutions. While still expensive in our Long Island region, these programs prove to be less costly due to our cooperative approach across both counties.

Western Suffolk BOCES, the BOCES in the middle between 2 of the largest BOCES in the state, serves 18 component districts with a combined K-12 student enrollment of over 90,000 children. The scope of our services are summarized in the brochure titled "Welcome to Western Suffolk BOCES 2008-09", which is attached to the copies of my remarks.

The following are just a few important points to make and to keep in mind as we work collaboratively toward cost savings initiatives:

1. Western Suffolk BOCES and the Lindenhurst school district in cooperation with the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association successfully received a New York State efficiency grant to explore possible solutions to reduce costs in health insurance and prescription drug plans. We are currently finalizing an RFP for consultant services due out later this month.
2. The three BOCES already have a cooperative structure that we utilize daily to communicate via email and in regional meetings with every school district and superintendent in the county, as well as the entire state. This structure aided both counties recently in assisting the county and state Health Department's response and training for H1N1. This structure serves as a daily reminder that the BOCES network minimizes complex communications and maximizes relevant and timely notification, planning, and feedback across all agencies in both counties. This long established structure and network is poised and available to respond to new and innovative approaches to assist our county and state with possible cost-saving efforts. Shared services, shared staff, transportation, health insurance, and purchasing are just a few areas to begin in this effort.
3. Last year, Western Suffolk BOCES provided Career and Technical education (job training and placement assistance) for over 16,000 secondary students, adults, and out of school youth in five state-of-the-art technical centers that are focused on training and

preparing Long Islanders for the workforce. 636 of these students were graduating high school seniors. Attached to my remarks is a survey of the Wilson Tech Class of 2008 in which 585 of the 636 (92%) high school students responded. (Note: these are secondary high school students sent by our 18 component districts and not the much larger population of adult learners that numbered over 15,000 last year). It is important to note that 98% of the students in this response graduated with a high school or equivalent diploma and have only a 7% unemployment rate. The Nassau/Suffolk rate for the same age group was 21.7%. Whatever the outcome of this initiative, the essential education delivery systems of the BOCES statewide are a model for delivering efficient, cost-effective instruction that fuels our workforce and economy. Every effort to preserve and nurture this structure is essential. Nassau and Eastern Suffolk BOCES have even greater numbers of participants and with similar results.

In closing, the bureaucratic layers between what is and what might be will always present road blocks to progress; but together, with an eye on what is best for children and all residents of our great state, we can bring about change. Long Island native, Billy Joel, once wrote "I'm in a New York State of Mind". We all need to be in the same "state of mind" on this issue as the cost of living here in New York, if not controlled, will ultimately drive our young people and retirees to other less expensive states. If so, there will be nothing left to sing but "the blues". My colleagues and I stand ready to assist you in taking any small or big steps towards reducing the cost of services and living here in our state.

Good afternoon. My name is James Feltman and I am the superintendent of the Commack Union Free School District. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before this Committee. Since 1948 BOCES statewide have been providing services on a shared basis to almost 700 school districts. In the Western Suffolk BOCES area, approximately 90,000 students are served by the local BOCES. My mission as a superintendent of schools is to provide a program of instruction that permits every child to succeed, to become contributing members of our society and, hopefully, to realize their full potential and personal aspirations. The state legislature in 1948 saw the wisdom of establishing BOCES simply because so few school districts had the assets to afford every possible program to every child. In a tight economy such as we see today, that remains true. In 2008, the Commission on Local Efficiency and Competitiveness and the NYS commission on Property Tax Relief recognized BOCES as a model for delivering cost saving programs and services. There are services and programs that BOCES cannot currently offer, however, that should be explored as they will encourage sharing or consolidation of back office functions. I will address just one later in my comments.

I will be the first to tell you that Commack doesn't take advantage of every program offered by the various local BOCES. Similarly, I don't visit my local library every day. Nor do I call 911 on a daily basis. However, that doesn't mean that I wouldn't miss what the library offers were its services to be cut back or its doors closed, or that the 911 police function is unimportant. The same is true of BOCES.

successful is the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Cooperative Purchasing Program, which I chaired for five years. In that program, which 73 of the 75 Suffolk County school districts, two local colleges and two towns participate in, purchasing power is leveraged by the sheer size of purchases the Program is able to make. Discounts from retail prices often exceed 40% and in some cases are more than 50%, and it is common for prices to be lower than those available on state or county contracts. In addition, the Cooperative Purchasing Program can bid services such as fuel oil tank testing, a benefit over county contracts, because current laws prevent local school districts from taking advantage of the county's bids for services. Several school districts use the Cooperative Purchasing Program to issue purchase orders, thus saving additional staffing costs by sharing clerical help at the BOCES level.

Although the Cooperative Purchasing Program is a shining example of how BOCES shared services can save money through collaboration and partial consolidation of the purchasing function, BOCES offers a wide array of other back office programs to help keep local school costs down. They include professional development, where state and national experts can be engaged on a shared basis so that school districts can hear them without the expense of either sending teachers to an out-of-town conference or spending large amounts to benefit a small teaching population; library automation; a regional summer school where children from several districts attend a regional center so every school district can afford to offer a remedial summer program; numerous special education services for students needing extensive remediation; non-public textbook

**NYS SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
October 2, 2009**

**Allan Gerstenlauer, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Longwood Central School District**

Good afternoon. My name is Allan Gerstenlauer and I am the Superintendent of the Longwood Central School District. Longwood is a component district of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, located in central Brookhaven Township. We serve a large and diverse student body of 9,300 students.

First, let me thank you for the opportunity to speak regarding the importance of our current relationship with BOCES, as well as the untapped potential for additional benefits from shared services. This conversation takes on a greater sense of urgency as economic conditions deteriorate and school districts face the pressing need to reduce costs, while preparing students to be successful in an environment with greater complexity and higher expectations. It is truly a Perfect Storm for schools and for our society, and most of all, for our students. The time to act is now. . . . the children we serve cannot afford any further delay. I believe that one viable mechanism for addressing the funding crisis in public education lies in unleashing the untapped potential for BOCES to expand shared service offerings to schools.

Longwood enjoys a rich relationship with BOCES which enables us to provide direct instructional services for students, that we would be unable to provide; to benefit from program support and technical expertise that would otherwise not be available; and to enjoy the advantages of combined purchasing power that we could not achieve on our own. The most significant part of our relationship with BOCES is in providing experiences for kids that, as big and comprehensive a program we offer, we simply cannot offer on a local level. For many of our students, BOCES is the difference between leaving school, and leaving school with a high school diploma and a set of skills and attitudes that prepare them to participate in society in a meaningful way.

Longwood sends about 100 students with disabilities to out-of-district placements at BOCES. Another 200 students attend BOCES Career and Technical Education programs in fields as varied as cosmetology, culinary arts, veterinary science, child care, nursing and aviation. And while these are all opportunities that we cannot replicate, they come at great expense to local taxpayers. The average cost for the 100 special education children who attend BOCES is about \$100,000 per child; and tuition payments for the CTE programs are about \$11,300 per student. There ought to be a mechanism through which the state and federal government can incentivize career development programs in high demand fields and reduce those costs to local taxpayers. I also believe the state should be promoting and encouraging a review of the ways in which services are provided to students with disabilities to ensure that services are integrated in a manner that is more beneficial for children and more cost effective.

Aside from the direct instructional services through BOCES, Longwood benefits from an array of program supports available through the agency:

- Professional development that is so important to providing quality instruction,
- Data reporting required for state and federal accountability measures,
- Systems management for financial records, student data, substitute teachers, parent contacts, etc.,
- Technical expertise and support for health and safety, technology, employee assistance programs among others.

These represent services that a single school district cannot provide independently. We also enjoy the economic benefits of cooperative bidding and purchasing agreements.

On a side note that may be unique to districts served by Eastern Suffolk BOCES, I must tell you that Superintendents throughout the region rely heavily upon the expertise and support of the Leadership team at Eastern Suffolk BOCES. The District Superintendent for Eastern Suffolk BOCES has assumed responsibilities for Western Suffolk and Nassau County, limiting our access to him, as well as his ability to advocate for us. Given the number of districts in Eastern Suffolk BOCES and the complexity of the challenges we face, I believe this is an issue that needs to be addressed at the State level.

Our challenge now is to seek opportunities to support and expand the scope of shared services offered through BOCES. The mechanism exists, we need to take full advantage. The Suozzi Commission, and others, have made recommendations to optimize the use of shared services to help individual school districts contain costs, optimize the use of shared services to help individual school districts contain costs, and I won't rehash all of them. However, there are some with particular promise for districts like Longwood, which can be facilitated through BOCES. With technical support from BOCES, districts should be encouraged to collaborate to consolidate services, such as out-of-district transportation or other areas in which such efforts may result in cost savings. Larger school districts, like Longwood, could be encouraged to form partnerships with smaller neighboring districts to consolidate functions and share services on a local level. This type of collaboration is occurring on an ad hoc basis, but could be better supported through BOCES.

There exists through BOCES the enormous potential to address the complex challenges we all face. We need your support to unleash that potential.

Thank you.

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Presented by
Gary D. Bixhorn
Chief Operating Officer
Eastern Suffolk BOCES

October 2, 2009

Good afternoon. I'm Gary Bixhorn, Chief Operating Officer of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, and Chairperson of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association (SCSSA) Legislative Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to address the Senate Standing Committee on Education with regard to the future of BOCES.

I've had the opportunity to testify about BOCES and shared services on several occasions over the past two years. I've made presentations to the Suozzi Commission, the Lundine Commission, the Suffolk County Commission to Evaluate School District Expenses and Efficiency, and at forums sponsored by the State Comptroller, the New York State PTA, and the New York State School Boards Association. The SCSSA and the BOCES have also worked with Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy to identify potential areas of cooperation between the county and school districts.

BOCES and shared services have been closely studied as state and national economic conditions have deteriorated and the need to reduce costs has intensified. There seems to be a consensus from all those who have been involved that shared services can reduce costs and that BOCES is well positioned to provide, promote, and expand shared service offerings.

Given the consensus, this testimony will focus on the recommendations involving BOCES and/or shared services, proposed by the Suozzi Commission, the Lundine Commission, and the New York State District Superintendents. The time to study and analyze is coming to a close. The time to act on these recommendations is here. The key leaders in Albany, including the Governor, Legislators, the State Comptroller, and the Commissioner of Education, need to accept the recommendations of those that they have asked to study the issues, and remove the obstacles to optimizing the use of shared services as a cost savings measure.

Lundine Commission Recommendations

- **To encourage the use of BOCES for “back-office” school district operations** like payroll and purchasing, the state should facilitate a demonstration project that will serve as a model for school districts in other BOCES regions.

Using BOCES “back-office” services can be a cost-effective way for school districts to perform operational, management, and other non-educational functions, and many districts are already using them to do so. If these services are performed within statutory and State Education Department guidelines, most are “aidable” – meaning the school district is eligible to receive BOCES aid over and above general school aid. However, there are a number of “grey areas” in what can or cannot be aided, and it

would be beneficial to review current practices and regulations with a view to enabling efficient local sharing of back-office functions, particularly in technical areas such as information technology. This should include an examination of where private consultant services can be efficiently provided through BOCES, more efficiently meeting the needs of school districts throughout the region. (Final report, page 41)

Comment: A consortium of 13 school districts and 3 municipalities on the south fork of Long Island is reapplying for a Local Government Efficiency Grant to establish a shared purchasing office through BOCES. The grant was not funded this past year. This is exactly the type of grant that should be awarded and then monitored through the implementation phase. Both SED and the Comptroller's office should play an active role in the monitoring so that we can assure that replication is feasible.

- **To reduce the cost of transporting non-public school students within a BOCES region**, school districts could jointly provide transportation for students crossing district lines. The State should facilitate a demonstration project or projects to determine the effectiveness of this approach and whether it should be adopted for statewide use.

One area where BOCES-wide services may be able to reduce expenditures significantly is in school transportation. School districts which provide transportation to public school students must also provide it to their residents attending private schools, whether those schools are within their boundaries or not. As a result, school district buses going to non-public schools often cross district lines, and multiple school districts separately plan and provide transportation to the same non-public schools. One BOCES estimated that they could save 5 percent (\$1 million over 25 districts in that example) by coordinating transportation and letting a single contract. Pilot projects could be used to examine whether significant savings could be achieved by centralizing non-public transportation through BOCES. (Final report, page 42)

Comment: The Connetquot School District is the LEA for a grant to study the expansion of existing regional transportation services in Islip Township. Eastern Suffolk BOCES has provided regional transportation services across Suffolk County for many years. We are now working with our school districts to identify new opportunities to realize savings.

- **Ease provisions relating to municipal cooperative health benefit plans** to base reserve requirements upon actuarial assessments and to allow for a transition period to build up reserves; to reduce the required number of participating municipal corporations from five to three; and to require insurers to provide specific claims experience to municipalities analyzing the feasibility of forming a cooperative. (Final report, page 53)



Comment: The Lindenhurst School District is the LEA for a grant to study the combined purchasing power of all Suffolk County school districts for health benefits. This grant application was first developed as a result of a collaborative effort between the SCCSA and the Suffolk County Executive. At the time, we were looking at

*the combined purchasing power of the County and our schools.
This is something that we remain interested in evaluating.*

Suozzi Commission Recommendations

- **Amend Education Law Section 1950 and General Municipal Law Article 5-G to remove obstacles and clearly authorize BOCES to enter into agreements with other local government entities for non-instructional services.** Article 5-G of the General Municipal Law broadly authorizes “municipal cooperation” among counties outside of New York City, cities, towns, villages, BOCES, fire districts, and school districts for the performance of functions or provision of services. However, unlike other public entities, BOCES requires the approval of the State Education Department before entering into such agreements. To foster implementation of such initiatives on a broader basis, it may be appropriate to remove this approval requirement for BOCES participation in non-instructional shared service agreements, placing BOCES on the same footing as other public entities with ability to enter into, or lead, joint ventures. The State Education Department should, however, retain full jurisdiction over BOCES services that involve instruction or other activities for which state aid reimbursement would be available. Article 5-G should also be amended to permit public institutions of higher education, including community colleges, to participate in inter-municipal agreements. (Final report, page 88)

- **Rescind the statutory cap on the BOCES district superintendent salaries.** The BOCES district superintendent serves two roles. The individual is the Chief Executive Officer of the BOCES who is hired by and reports to the BOCES Board. The individual is also an employee of the Commissioner of Education and his or her representative in matters of concern to the Commissioner. The BOCES District Superintendent’s salary is paid in part by the BOCES district and in part by the State Education Department.

Currently, District Superintendent salaries are linked to the salary of the Commissioner of Education to maintain alignment. This salary level has proved to be an obstacle to hiring and retaining the BOCES superintendents in wealthier areas of the state where School District Superintendent’s salaries are either on par or higher. Testimony presented to this Commission suggests that the current 25 percent vacancy rate in this pivotal leadership position resulted from non-competitive salary levels. The commission recommends rescinding the BOCES salary cap to improve the ability of BOCES districts to hire and retain highly-qualified individuals for this demanding job. (Final report, page 88)

Comment: This has been especially troublesome on Long Island for many years. The BOCES had experienced a regional turnover of District Superintendents until most recently when two of the three were simply unable to fill the positions. Currently, a single District Superintendent, Edward Zero of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, is serving as interim District Superintendent of both Nassau and Western Suffolk BOCES. This situation has existed for over a year. This needs to be addressed.

- **The Governor should direct the appropriate state agencies to collaborate and coordinate with each other and with local school districts to provide social services to students in schools.** By using existing state and local resources, social services could be provided more efficiently and effectively to children who need them in their own schools. (Final report, page 91)
- **Increase interagency collaboration to provide efficient regional delivery of emotional and psychiatric treatment.** Regional treatment of students with severe emotional disabilities could be established through partnerships that include school districts, the State Education Department, the New York State Office of Mental Health, and/or BOCES to determine whether there would be tuition and transportation savings. Providing more locally based services has the advantage of allowing students to remain in their homes and local schools, wherever possible. (Final report, page 84)
- **Share out-of-district transportation for special education,** preferably as part of a broader shared non-instructional services effort through BOCES or through local district consortia. (Final report, page 84)
- **Facilitate school district consortia to provide local alternatives to out-of-district special education placement.** School districts should consider joint planning to develop specialized programs that can be made available to other districts and coordination to make underutilized special education programs available to students from neighboring districts. These strategies could limit the need to send students to private programs. (Final report, page 84)

New York State District Superintendents Recommendations

- **We recommend that Education Law, Sections 1950(4) (d) and 1950(4) (bb) be revised to separate BOCES powers from determinations of aidability.** This will direct and restrict the traditional Co-Ser review process toward consideration of aidability only and not as a vehicle for limiting BOCES activities. This will allow the state to properly focus on whether state funding is being directed in accordance with public policy, and will eliminate bureaucratic confusion over whether school districts and BOCES have the ability to cooperate jointly on other mutually beneficial – yet unaided activities under authority of either the Education Law or Article 5-G of the General Municipal Law.

Education Law Section 1950(4) (h) needs further revision to remove restrictions on entering into cooperative services with other entities, including public entities. As a public corporation, a BOCES should be able to enter into contracts which will allow it to carry out its statutory mission, as is typical for public corporations. Unfortunately, the courts have interpreted the very specific – and limited – list of contractual purposes and entities found in this section of law, to preclude other contractual relationships.

Section 1950 could be amended to provide specific authority to BOCES to contract with other public entities to provide services. Alternatively, Article 5-G could be amended to authorize municipal corporations to contract with BOCES to carry out services whether

or not the BOCES has the underlying separate authority to provide the function or service on its own. (November 2008 Testimony, page 4)

- **We recommend the repeal of those provisions of Education Law Section 1950 that restrict BOCES authority to provide services to all general and special purpose local governments.** Further, we encourage the New York State Education Department to adopt a policy that encourages the capacity building of BOCES that will result from expansion of cooperative services beyond school districts through use of inter-municipal agreements. Where it can save taxpayer dollars, BOCES should be providing services to towns, villages, cities, counties, colleges and universities, charter schools, libraries, museums, and not-for-profit organizations with educational purposes. (November 2008 Testimony, page 3)

- **Eliminate the cap on the amount of BOCES Aid that is paid to school districts for staff shared through BOCES** to strengthen the incentive for school district participation in BOCES programs, build the capacity of BOCES to deliver cost-effective services, and expand intermunicipal cooperation.

Currently, BOCES Aid to school districts is limited to the first \$30,000 in salary paid to BOCES employees shared among local school districts, while the cost of fringe benefits is aided at the full BOCES Aid ratio. This limit has been in existence for 18 years. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics - \$30,000 in 1991 would equate to \$48,197 in 2008. Therefore, the relative value of BOCES Aid has decreased by 62.5% during a time when the state through various administrations has promoted intergovernmental cooperation. This situation negatively impacts the capacity of BOCES to provide regional school improvement services, educational programs, and leadership development experiences for teachers and aspiring school leaders. It also undermines and belies state policy promoting regional cooperation to save taxpayer dollars. (November 2008 Testimony, page 5)

- **Amending Section 1950 of the Education Law to authorize BOCES to enter into leases for up to 30 years**, with an option to purchase the subject property at intervals will provide BOCES with a stronger bargaining position in dealing with real estate developers. As the current debt on BOCES building and aid to districts is based upon a 15 year schedule, the schedule would be modified to conform to the extended 30 year period. This would stretch out aid payments over the period of the lease. Additionally, EXCEL Aid, currently available to school districts, should be made available to BOCES. (November 2008 Testimony, page 11)

Senate Standing Committee on Education
Public Hearing
“BOCES as a Model for Delivering Taxpayer Savings”
October 2, 2009

Comments by Robert J. Hanna, Deputy Superintendent of Schools, Nassau BOCES

Nassau BOCES has been serving the 56 school districts of the county since 1967. With our partner school districts, Nassau BOCES has been a model for delivering taxpayer savings for all of those 42 years.

In 2009, Nassau BOCES and all school districts have partnered with Nassau County to seek ways to share non-instructional services among municipal agencies in our effort to save taxpayers money. For Nassau BOCES and the school districts, this partnership represents an opportunity to not only save taxpayer dollars but to better focus resources on our primary mission which is to educate the students of Nassau County.

As you may know, we secured a \$1 million grant from the New York Department of State to create a shared services platform concentrated in four key non-instructional functions. Those are:

1. **Purchasing**—“Just in Time”

Other Municipalities can do it but not schools or BOCES.

2. **Internal Auditing**—Many districts need only a part-time position for this. Nassau County can coordinate, saving all participants dollars.

3. **Out-Of-District Transportation**—School districts send their students out of district daily to private/parochial schools and special education programs, among others. Additional coordination through communication will help districts save dollars.

4. **Information Technology and Telecommunications**—Districts and Nassau BOCES now share an up-to-date network for telecomm. Including municipalities will bring costs down for both school districts and municipalities.

We do need assistance from our legislators, the State Education Department and the NYS Comptroller's office in implementing three of the four shared services described before. With regard to purchasing, as noted, municipalities are permitted to utilize "just in time" purchasing, but not school districts or BOCES. The potential savings here are in administrative and clerical costs. Municipal agencies including schools/BOCES have been involved in cooperative bidding which has saved taxpayers money for many years. We need the NYS Comptroller's Office to give schools/BOCES written permission to utilize "just in time" purchasing.

With regard to "out-of-district" transportation, we need the State Educational Department to change their requirements/directions with regard to "piggy backing." This will allow districts to gain transportation aid in situations where they can work with a neighboring district to share a bus run. I am informed that Senator Oppenheimer has presented Bill #5523 that will support this initiative.

Regarding information technology and telecommunications, we need legislative support in changing Education Law 1950, Section 4(h)(7) (see attached). We are requesting language that adds “municipality” to the list of agencies with which any BOCES can partner and adds “telecommunication services” to improve outdated language and provide the opportunity for significant savings in telephone and internet services. We are currently working with Senators Skelos and Foley and Assemblyman Saladino to bring this forward. Your support will be appreciated.

BOCES has been the answer for more than 50 years statewide in saving property taxpayers money. It will continue to be the vehicle to do so well into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee.

Recommend revision of Education Law 1950, section 4, h (7) as follows:

(7) To enter into contracts with the state of New York, any community college, agricultural and technical college, municipality or public agency for the purpose of providing electronic data processing and telecommunications services to such agencies. Any such proposed contract shall be subject to the review and approval of the commissioner, who may only approve such proposed contract when, in his opinion, such contract will not disrupt the level of services provided to component school districts and will result in a more economical utilization of existing board of cooperative educational services computer facilities. The commissioner shall issue a finding in writing in making all determinations pursuant to this subparagraph.



Friday, October 2, 2009

Summary - S05523

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S05523 Summary:

BILL NO S05523

SAME AS No same as

SPONSOR OPPENHEIMER

COSPNSR

MLTSPNSR

Add S308-a, amd SS1709, 1950 & 2023, Ed L; amd S6-r, Gen Muni L

Establishes the education mandate relief act of 2009; authorizes the board of education to enter into piggyback contracts with another school district for transportation services and directs BOCES to convene committees to recommend options for school district consolidation and shared services.

S05523 Actions:

BILL NO S05523

05/13/2009 REFERRED TO EDUCATION

06/02/2009 REPORTED AND COMMITTED TO FINANCE

06/08/2009 REPORTED AND COMMITTED TO RULES

S05523 Votes:

S05523 Memo:

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Friday, October 2, 2009

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S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

5523

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

May 13, 2009

Introduced by Sen. OPPENHEIMER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law and the general municipal law, in relation to enacting the education mandate relief act of 2009

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

- 1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
 2 the "education mandate relief act of 2009."
 3 S 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 308-a to
 4 read as follows:
 5 S 308-A. SPECIAL PROVISIONS; MANDATES. 1. AS USED IN THIS SECTION,
 6 "MANDATE" MEANS (A) ANY STATE LAW, RULE OR REGULATION WHICH CREATES A
 7 NEW PROGRAM OR REQUIRES A HIGHER LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR AN EXISTING
 8 PROGRAM WHICH A SCHOOL DISTRICT, ORGANIZED EITHER BY SPECIAL LAWS OR
 9 PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF A GENERAL LAW, IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE; OR
 10 (B) ANY GENERAL LAW WHICH GRANTS A NEW PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION OR
 11 INCREASES AN EXISTING PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION WHICH ANY SUCH SCHOOL
 12 DISTRICT IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE.
 13 2. IN THE EVENT THAT A MANDATE WHICH IMPOSES A COST UPON A SCHOOL
 14 DISTRICT IS CREATED AFTER THE ADOPTION OF A SCHOOL BUDGET, SUCH MANDATE
 15 SHALL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED UNTIL NO SOONER THAN THE FOLLOWING YEAR FOR
 16 WHICH SUCH SCHOOL BUDGET WAS ADOPTED.
 17 3. NOTWITHSTANDING SUBDIVISION TWO OF THIS SECTION, SUCH A MANDATE MAY
 18 BE IMPOSED IF:
 19 (A) THE MANDATE IS PROVIDED AT THE OPTION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT UNDER
 20 A LAW, REGULATION, RULE OR ORDER THAT IS PERMISSIVE RATHER THAN MANDATO-
 21 RY;
 22 (B) THE MANDATE IS REQUIRED BY, OR ARISES FROM, AN EXECUTIVE ORDER OF
 23 THE GOVERNOR EXERCISING HIS OR HER EMERGENCY POWERS; OR
 24 (C) THE MANDATE IS REQUIRED BY STATUTE OR EXECUTIVE ORDER THAT IMPLE-
 25 MENTS A FEDERAL LAW OR REGULATION AND RESULTS FROM COSTS MANDATED BY THE

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

LBD11869-01-9

S. 5523

2

1 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO BE BORNE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, UNLESS THE STATUTE OR
2 EXECUTIVE ORDER IMPOSES COSTS WHICH EXCEED THE COSTS MANDATED BY THE
3 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

4 S 3. Paragraph h of subdivision 25 of section 1709 of the education
5 law, as added by chapter 700 of the laws of 1993, is amended to read as
6 follows:

7 h. (1) The board of education is authorized to enter into a contract
8 with another school district, a county, municipality, or the state divi-
9 sion for youth to provide transportation for children, provided that the
10 contract cost is appropriate. In determining the appropriate transporta-
11 tion contract cost, the transportation service provider school district
12 shall use a calculation consistent with regulations adopted by the
13 commissioner for the purpose of assuring that charges reflect the true
14 costs that would be incurred by a prudent person in the conduct of a
15 competitive transportation business.

16 (2) NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SUBDIVISION FOURTEEN OF SECTION
17 THREE HUNDRED FIVE OF THIS CHAPTER, SECTION ONE HUNDRED THREE OF THE
18 GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW, OR ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY,
19 THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL BE AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO A PIGGYBACK
20 CONTRACT WITH ANOTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT TRANSPORTS STUDENTS PURSUANT
21 TO A CONTRACT WITH A PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTOR, PROVIDED THAT
22 THE BOARD FINDS THAT THE CONTRACT COST IS APPROPRIATE AND ENTRY INTO A
23 PIGGYBACK CONTRACT WILL RESULT IN A COST SAVINGS TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.
24 FOR PURPOSES OF THIS PARAGRAPH, A "PIGGYBACK CONTRACT" MEANS A CONTRACT
25 FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS THAT: (A) PROVIDES TRANSPORTATION TO
26 A LOCATION OUTSIDE THE STUDENTS' SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE TO WHICH
27 ANOTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT IS ALREADY PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO ITS OWN
28 STUDENTS THROUGH AN EXISTING CONTRACT WITH A PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION
29 CONTRACTOR, OTHER THAN A COOPERATIVELY BID CONTRACT; (B) IS ENTERED INTO
30 BY THE PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTOR AND EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT
31 INVOLVED; AND (C) PROVIDES FOR TRANSPORTATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
32 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SUCH EXISTING TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT.

33 S 4. Paragraph f of subdivision 2-a of section 1950 of the education
34 law, as amended by chapter 602 of the laws of 1994, is amended to read
35 as follows:

36 f. [In the event of a vacancy in the membership of a board of cooper-
37 ative educational services which occurs prior to January first in any
38 school year or during the period commencing five days prior to the date
39 designated for submission of nominations of candidates to the board of
40 cooperative educational services and ending on the last day of the
41 school year, a special election to fill such vacancy shall be conducted
42 in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs b, c and d of this
43 subdivision on a date designated by the president of the board of coop-
44 erative educational services not late than forty-five days after the
45 date the vacancy occurred.] In the event of a vacancy in the membership
46 of a board of cooperative educational services [which occurs on or after
47 January first and prior to the fifth day preceding the date designated
48 for submission of nominations of candidates the board of cooperative
49 educational services], SUCH BOARD may fill such vacancy by appointment
50 and the person so appointed shall hold office until the next annual
51 election of the board of cooperative educational services. [Notwith-
52 standing any other provision of this subdivision, any vacancy which
53 occurs on or after July first, nineteen hundred ninety-three and prior

54 to January first, nineteen hundred ninety-four shall be filled by a
 55 special election in accordance with paragraphs b, c and d of this subdi-
 56 vision.]
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1 S 5. Subdivision 4 of section 1950 of the education law is amended by
 2 adding a new paragraph oo to read as follows:
 3 OO. THE BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (BOCES) SHALL
 4 CONVENE COMMITTEES OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LEADERS IN EACH BOCES REGION
 5 TO RECOMMEND OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT CONSOLIDATION AND SHARED
 6 SERVICES AND ISSUE A REPORT BASED ON SUCH FINDINGS TO THE COMMISSIONER,
 7 NO LATER THAN JULY FIRST, TWO THOUSAND TEN. SUCH REPORT SHALL INCLUDE,
 8 BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO AN EXAMINATION OF THE VIABILITY OF REGIONAL ADMIN-
 9 ISTRATIVE OPERATIONS, TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY PROCUREMENT AND HEALTH
 10 INSURANCE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE BULK PURCHASE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

11 S 6. Subparagraph 1 of paragraph d of subdivision 4 of section 1950 of
 12 the education law, as amended by chapter 474 of the laws of 1996, is
 13 amended to read as follows:

14 (1) Aidable shared services. At the request of component school
 15 districts, and with the approval of the commissioner, provide any of the
 16 following services on a cooperative basis: school nurse teacher, attend-
 17 ance supervisor, supervisor of teachers, dental hygienist, psychologist,
 18 teachers of art, music, physical education, career education subjects,
 19 guidance counsellors, operation of special classes for students with
 20 disabilities, as such term is defined in article eighty-nine of this
 21 chapter; pupil and financial accounting service by means of mechanical
 22 equipment; CLAIMS AUDITING OR INTERNAL AUDITING SERVICES; maintenance
 23 and operation of cafeteria or restaurant service for the use of pupils
 24 and teachers while at school, and such other services as the commission-
 25 er may approve. Such cafeteria or restaurant service may be used by the
 26 community for school related functions and activities and to furnish
 27 meals to the elderly residents of the district, sixty years of age or
 28 older. Utilization by elderly residents or school related groups shall
 29 be subject to the approval of the board of education. Charges shall be
 30 sufficient to bear the direct cost of preparation and serving of such
 31 meals, exclusive of any other available reimbursements.

32 S 7. Subparagraphs (v), (vi), (vii) and (vii) of paragraph b of subdi-
 33 vision 4 of section 2023 of the education law, subparagraphs (v) and
 34 (vi) as separately amended by section 1 of part D-2 of chapter 57 and
 35 chapter 422 of the laws of 2007, subparagraph (vii) as added by section
 36 1 of part D-2 of chapter 57 of the laws of 2007 and subparagraph (vii)
 37 as added by chapter 422 of the laws of 2007, are amended and a new
 38 subparagraph (ix) is added to read as follows:

39 (v) expenditures in the contingency budget attributable to projected
 40 increases in public school enrollment, which, for the purpose of this
 41 subdivision, may include increases attributable to the enrollment of
 42 students attending a pre-kindergarten program established in accordance
 43 with section thirty-six hundred two-e of this chapter, to be computed
 44 based upon an increase in enrollment from the year prior to the base
 45 year for which the budget is being adopted to the base year for which
 46 the budget is being adopted, provided that where the trustees or board
 47 of education have documented evidence that a further increase in enroll-
 48 ment will occur during the school year for which the contingency budget
 49 is prepared because of new construction, inception of a pre-kindergarten
 50 program, growth or similar factors, the expenditures attributable to
 51 such additional enrollment may also be disregarded;

52 (vi) non-recurring expenditures in the prior year's school district
 53 budget; [and]

54 (vii) expenditures for payments to charter schools pursuant to section

55 twenty-eight hundred fifty-six of this chapter[.];
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1 [(vii)] (VIII) expenditures for self-supporting programs. For purposes
2 of this subparagraph, "self-supporting programs" shall mean any programs
3 that are entirely funded by private funds that cover all the costs of
4 the program[.]; AND

5 (IX) EXPENDITURES FOR THE AMOUNT OF ANY INCREASED COST FOR PENSION
6 CONTRIBUTIONS, RETIREMENT BENEFITS AND HEALTH INSURANCE OVER THE PRIOR
7 SCHOOL YEAR.

8 S 8. Paragraphs b and c of subdivision 1 of section 6-r of the general
9 municipal law, as added by chapter 260 of the laws of 2004, are amended
10 to read as follows:

11 b. "Participating employer" means: (I) a participating employer as
12 defined in subdivision twenty of section two of the retirement and
13 social security law or in subdivision twenty of section three hundred
14 two of such law; OR (II) AN EMPLOYER AS DEFINED IN SUBDIVISION THREE OF
15 SECTION FIVE HUNDRED ONE OF THE EDUCATION LAW.

16 c. "Retirement contribution" shall mean all or any portion of the
17 amount payable by a municipal corporation to: (I) either the New York
18 state and local employees' retirement system or the New York state and
19 local police and fire retirement system pursuant to section seventeen or
20 three hundred seventeen of the retirement and social security law; OR
21 (II) THE NEW YORK STATE TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM PURSUANT TO SECTION
22 FIVE HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE OF THE EDUCATION LAW.

23 S 9. This act shall take effect immediately, provided, however, that
24 section six of this act shall take effect July 1, 2010.

Contact Webmaster

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NYS Senate Hearing

Oct. 2, 2009 at Western Suffolk BOCES Conference Center

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak about career and technical education at Western Suffolk BOCES. To keep its programs current with the needs of local businesses, BOCES recruits representatives from Long Island businesses to serve on committees as advisors to each program - I am one of those advisors.

I have enjoyed a long history with this BOCES— 8 years as a consultant committee member and 13 years as a member of the overall Advisory Council and 10 years as Chairman of that Advisory Council. Over the course of 31 years I have seen first hand the tremendous success Wilson Tech has in preparing students with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in today's workforce.

This BOCES was the first career and technical education program in NYS to be approved for the Technical Endorsements in EVERY one of its 31 programs, a major distinction between BOCES programs and a program in local school districts. This means that EVERY Wilson Tech program has been certified by a nationally recognized organization.

Earning a Technical Endorsement on their Regents Diplomas is hard work. By combining hand-on learning experiences with academics – Wilson Tech Students, who have had difficulty learning in their local schools, become interested, and motivated. Now - for the first time, many students GET IT – they understand and “internalize” importance of academics - and learn the importance of good writing skills and math skill.

To Earn a Technical Endorsement on their Regents Diploma Tech students have to complete their Tech assignments, maintain an attendance rate of at least 85%, passed a nationally recognized certification exam and they must also pass five Regents exams just as every other high school student does. Let me point out many of these certification exams were created for those completing post-secondary programs.

It's not surprising that most students come to Tech because they don't want to attend college – What most don't realize is that about half of the students who graduate from Wilson Tech attend colleges specializing in their chosen career – and many with advanced standing.

BOCES provides career training that our local school districts cannot afford to replicate. Training at Tech is provided by teachers who became teachers only after they became experts in their chosen professions. To be a successful teacher at BOCES you must first have proven expertise and to a genuine respect for the career subject your teaching. Tech teachers have lived the career path their teaching – the knowledge and love of their careers are automatically learned and respected by Tech Students.

What I learn about BOCES each year is impressive:

- 1,200 high school students are enrolled in 31 programs ranging from auto mechanics to video production.
- Nearly 700 other high school students from special education programs in our local districts are enrolled in 13 programs with small class sizes to facilitate their ability to live independent lives after graduation.

- Learning for our Wilson Tech graduates does not end at BOCES. From almost every class, half the Tech graduates go on to post secondary education. Our 2008 graduates are attending colleges ranging from local community colleges, to most SUNY colleges such as - Johnson and Wales University, Katharine Gibbs, the School of Visual Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rhode Island School of Design and others. Quite an impressive list, I think!
- For those students who do not go to college directly from high school, and, yes, on Long Island there are many who do not, the career training at Wilson Tech makes a significant difference to their job prospects. From the Class of 2008, the unemployment rate for Tech graduates is 7% compared to 21.7% for that same age group on Long Island. The career and technical training that only a BOCES can provide gives students a substantial head start over their peers.
- BOCES helps many struggling students complete high school AND prepare for work. Tech's alternative programs help meet the needs of
 - teen parents who can access a licensed child care center while they continue their education, and
 - at-risk students who can earn enough credits to graduate as they learn skills in a Tech program.
 - local school district just could not provide these specialized services on a cost effective basis.
- 10,000 adults also attend Wilson Tech to expand their skills for a promotion, prepare for a career change, or learn new skills for a first job.
 - Providing educational services to 10,000 adults per year is hard to believe - but it's true.

- Adults earn 43 different licenses or certificates to be successful in fields as varied as health care or internet commerce.
- BOCES also provides tailored Educational services for Adults Business and Industry.
- Through GED and the External Diploma Program, BOCES helps hundreds of adults complete their high school education
- And BOCES provides English instruction to thousands of adults each year.
- BOCES support of its graduates does not end at graduation. Wilson Tech graduates have lifetime access to our Placement Office.

The stories I hear as I tour our programs and visit with staff, students and parents always reassure me that the cooperative relationship we have developed over the years with our local districts really makes a difference in the lives of our students. By pooling resources, BOCES provides a level of career preparation that local districts would find far too expensive to provide on their own. I am very proud of the wide range of our program offerings and the successful careers and independent lives that BOCES students enjoy.

I'm proud to have been a part of this BOCES, and I thank our local districts as well as the NYS Senate for their continued support.

Here are our most recent figures. I think the number of distinct students is close to 10,000)

Continuing Career & Technical Education (part-time evening programs) 2500 - 3000

Full time programs: 400

Business & Industry: approx. 2000

Online students: 2500

GED 620 per month (many continue for several months)

ESL 990 per month (many continue for several months)

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE
NASSAU BOARD OF COOPERATIVE
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

Before the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Education

October 2, 2009

Subject:

BOCES as a Model for Delivering Taxpayer Savings

Presented by Eric B. Schultz, Vice President

**Nassau BOCES
71 Clinton Road
Garden City, New York 11530-9195
(516) 396-2202**

Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Eric Schultz and I have the honor to serve as the Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services. I have been a member of this Board since 2001. Prior to my service as a member of the Nassau BOCES Board of Trustees I was a member of the Board of Education of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District for Twelve (12) years. Based upon my history, I have an intimate knowledge of both the operation of BOCES as well as a deep appreciation of the value of the agency to local school districts.

As you are aware, BOCES stands for the Board of Cooperative Educational Services. BOCES is not only a corporate body, established by the New York State Education Law, but also a municipality which already has the power to cross contract with other municipalities under the New York State General Municipal Law. While I do not think that this committee is looking to re-invent the wheel, the proposals being considered for the use of the institution of other than pedagogical purposes must be carefully scrutinized.

The purpose of a BOCES is, and must remain, first and foremost, educational in nature. Throughout their existence, the 38 BOCES throughout New York State have provided their local school districts with the ability to provide additional educational opportunities to students which would otherwise be cost prohibitive. We enable our component districts to provide their students with, among other things, enrichment programming, training in the arts, vocational training, career education, clinical programs, programming for the physically and emotionally challenged and programs for those with disrupted educational history. If not for BOCES, many of our local districts would have great difficulty providing programs for both their most challenged and most

gifted students. BOCES have been successful in providing programs and services which are cost effective to our districts and which then enable them to expand programs and services and to use their savings directly in the classroom or reduce their tax rates.

At Nassau BOCES our staff has been proactive in the development of services in the areas of technology, commutations, health services, printing services, emergency preparedness and so much more. They have spent much of their time listening to their colleagues in local district and then coming to the Board of Trustees with programs well suited to meet the specific needs of our constituents. This takes place in BOCES throughout the state.

Please make no mistake about it, there is a great deal of excitement among my colleagues insofar as we welcome the opportunity to provide shared services to other municipalities thereby reducing costs to both our own agency and our component districts. After all, each board member is also a tax payer. However, there also is great concern over the manner in which this will take place.

Perhaps the greatest concern is the possibility that the goal and purpose of our agency will somehow be lost or diluted as other jurisdictions begin to make use of the BOCES. We are greatly concerned that the educational purpose as well as educational programs may become lost in the shuffle as counties, towns, villages and other taxing jurisdictions begin to make greater use of BOCES as a business aimed at the development of programs other than those which impact school districts and education.

There is enormous concern that as more and more outside agencies begin to embrace the cost saving ability of BOCES and create a business platform to be operated through the BOCES, there will be greater and greater pressure to position these agencies

to play an administrative role in the operation of the BOCES. As BOCES are used by more jurisdictions to provide cost savings in more diverse areas there are well founded fears that new and burdensome levels of bureaucracy will develop weighing down the agency and causing its administrative operations to resemble the very government programs you wish to replace.

There is also great concern among School Board Trustees both at Nassau BOCES, as well as the members of the Boards of Education of our component districts, that there will be political pressure to elect BOCES Trustees based upon the candidates' political allegiances rather than his or her educational goals and objects. There may be pressure to relieve the component school districts from their role in the election of BOCES Trustees. There is also great fear that the agencies which will make use of the BOCES will demand that they be represented on the Board of Trustees by appointment, a fear that has already manifested itself in private conversation

The legislature will be required to make numerous amendments to the Education Law expanding the powers and duties of the District Superintendants. To do that without getting rid of the antiquated D.S. salary cap would be hypocritical and short sighted.

Currently, our component districts each pay their proportionate share of the administrative cost related to the operation of the agency. This is separate and apart from the cost each district incurs as a result of the enrollment of their students in BOCES programs or the use of BOCES for other purposes, exclusive to that district.

As more and more non-educational services are operated through BOCES there will be a concurrent increase in staffing which will in turn require additional office space and equipment. These new costs must NOT be passed on to the local school districts as

part of the Administrative and Operations budget. Any additional costs related to the expansion of BOCES for the benefit of agencies other than school districts must be borne by those agencies.

Some of my colleagues from component districts throughout Nassau County have already expressed their fear that the costs of administrating these new programs will somehow be funded by the local districts through the BOCES Administrative Budget which will result in higher property taxes for every district.

A question also arises as to whether the projected savings will be solely the result of these new business models or will any of these new services qualify for BOCES aid? If it is not your intention to at least permit the continuation of BOCES aid to the districts, as it may currently exist, then your program is doomed to failure.

That being said, given the State's poor record in keeping its promises as they relate to BOCES as well as other educational aid programs, you must make sure that there are no cuts to BOCES aid in favor of any of these new programs administered for the benefit of other agencies or jurisdictions.

Under the leadership of many of our county's most experienced School Superintendants and in conjunction with the Nassau County Executive's office, we have begun to test the waters. Taking baby steps is a must. Careful consideration must be given to which programs worked, which failed and the reasons for both. We must carefully examine the results of these test programs and make realistic determinations as to which have the potential fulfill their objectives and which should be scrapped. We must look carefully at the results and allow them to assist us in fashioning better programs in the future.

I pray that we do not insist on keeping a failing program simply because it is “feel good” politics. Too many have too much to lose.

TESTIMONY TO THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
October 2, 2009

Presented by Dr. Patricia Mitchell
On behalf of Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy

Good afternoon. My name is Patricia Mitchell, assistant to Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy. Since Mr. Levy is unable to be here today, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to speak on his behalf.

County Executive Levy has been championing the cause over the last few years of having schools consolidate various functions in a more efficient way to potentially save millions of dollars in taxpayer funds. He recognizes that while it may be extremely difficult to muster the political will to consolidate actual districts, it would be much more palatable to effectuate a consolidation of specific functions, including food services, transportation, printing, security, and buildings and grounds, just to name a few.

Although Suffolk County does not control school taxes or spending, the County has an interest in supporting public education while keeping costs down. Suffolk County has worked with local school districts and BOCES to explore cooperative efforts and shared services. There are several examples of County resources currently being shared with school districts.

- Suffolk County has made its twenty-five fuel sites available for schools to use to refuel their vehicles if they find that it is less expensive than their current supplier. Two districts are now considering using County fuel sites and we are encouraging more districts to explore this.
- The County has recently drafted an agreement to allow schools to use certain services of the County Print Shop, which schools may use if cost savings can be achieved.
- Another agreement is being drafted to offer schools the use at County cost of certain heavy equipment – the kind that they use infrequently and would have to rent, or to replace equipment that is temporarily out of service.
- The County has invited schools who are self-insured to join the Suffolk County Prescription Drug Plan to participate in volume purchasing. The County Prescription plan will also be considered in the comparative costs of health insurance study that is soon to be conducted with the Local Government Efficiency Grant awarded to the Lindenhurst School District and Western Suffolk BOCES.
- For another Local Government Efficiency Grant to study transportation efficiency awarded to the Connetquot Central School District and Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Suffolk County will share its extensive bus route system information and GIS data.

In 2006 Suffolk County Executive Levy chaired a meeting with representatives of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association and the two BOCES Centers. Together the group established a variety of goals centered on shared services, and they outlined the legislative changes that would clear the way to permit them to meet these goals. Many of these legislative changes have been suggested by school district and BOCES executives at various commissions on property tax relief and local government efficiency. I will leave it to the School Superintendents to speak about aid formulas, but I would like to reiterate the support of Suffolk County for legislation that would allow closer cooperation among municipalities – county, town, and school districts.

1. Suffolk County urges New York State to enact enabling legislation to authorize the County of Suffolk to enter into cooperative agreements with school districts, towns, and villages within the County to pay for the provision of health care services to their employees, without being subject to the provisions of Article 47 of the New York Insurance law. A municipal cooperative health plan should not be treated with the same restrictions as an insurance company.
2. New York General Municipal Law section 103 allows a school district to purchase materials through the County. But the only *services* they may contract for through the County are those services *not* subject to Article 8 (dealing with public works) and Article 9 (dealing with building services). Schools may not use County contracts for public works, or for guards, cleaners, groundskeepers, refuse removal, or fuel delivery, to name a few. The County would support legislation to eliminate the exclusions covered in Articles 8 and 9.
3. Section 103 establishes a threshold of \$10,000 for commodities and \$20,000 for public works projects above which competitive bids are required. The bid limits apply to all local governments – school districts, county, and town – regardless of their size, budget or population. These bid limits are well below the national average. An increase in these thresholds would make purchasing consortia more practical.
4. State law is very restrictive regarding the issuance of RFP's by school districts. The County, while recognizing the need to maintain standards, hopes for more flexibility for school districts in joining together or with other municipalities in issuing RFP's, especially for transportation and cafeteria services.

At a meeting convened by the County Executive on September 14, 2009, he offered to facilitate shared purchasing efforts by offering to issue Requests for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) in four areas of school services. The County will reach out to various vendors throughout the area to collect information from proposers on how they think they can cut costs when they serve multiple districts as opposed to a single district. Districts were asked if they wished to be listed in each RFEI as interested districts without being obligated to pursue negotiations with proposers. The proposals will be collected to provide information to districts on what savings might be achieved when they subsequently issue RFP's. The four service areas for which the County is prepared to issue the RFEI's are: Transportation, Printing, Security and Cafeteria Services.

Of the 45 School Districts represented at the September 14th meeting, 30 districts thus far have completed a survey indicating their desire to participate. Every respondent indicated an interest in at least one RFEI. Twenty-nine of 30 respondents would like to be listed on the RFEI for printing services; 22 for transportation services; 16 for cafeteria services; and 14 for security services. Clearly our Suffolk County school district superintendents are actively looking for ways to cut costs and they believe that cooperative purchasing is an important part of the solution.

The Office of the Suffolk County Executive stands ready to cooperate with school districts and other municipalities and to facilitate cost sharing efforts within the limitations of existing laws. We ask that our New York State government use this time of fiscal crisis to consider the legislative agendas that our school leaders have brought to you at these hearings to enable all of us to pursue cost savings on behalf of all of the taxpayers of New York. I thank you for the opportunity to listen to our school district and BOCES executives, and to speak in support of enabling BOCES and our school districts to expand their mission of cooperation.



NYAPT

NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

266 Hudson Avenue • Albany, NY 12210 • PH: 518-463-4937 • FX: 518-463-8743 • WWW.NYAPT.ORG

Our future is riding with us!

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
HEARING OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION RE:
BOCES AS A MODEL FOR DELIVERING TAXPAYER SAVINGS**

OCTOBER 2, 2009

My name is Peter Mannella and I serve as the Executive Director of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation.

Thank you for this opportunity to come before this Committee to discuss the role of BOCES in the delivery of school transportation services for our students with a special emphasis on delivering savings to our taxpayers. This topic is timely and is part of a vital conversation in which we must all engage if we are to survive this financial crisis we face.

WHO ARE WE?

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation (NYAPT) is a not-for-profit membership organization comprised of some 600 women and men who are dedicated to the safe and efficient transportation of more than 2.3 million school children in our state. These professionals have dedicated their lives to the incredible and exemplary school bus safety record that has been established in our state over the years.

Our members are committed to on-going, rigorous professional development, proactive advocacy, research and preparation to ensure excellence in the school transportation enterprise. (Please visit our website www.nyapt.org for information about our members and our work.)

THE PROBLEM FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE

Our state faces significant financial obstacles that are challenging our ability to provide many services, most particularly the education of our children. These challenges require us to perform our responsibilities in smarter, more efficient ways. It is important that we learn from this situation and enable our education enterprise to grow and thrive on behalf of our children.

The members of NYAPT fully subscribe to the idea that school transportation is an investment by taxpayers that must be managed smartly and efficiently. We understand that school transportation is no less subject to cost-reduction and management measures than any other school service or discipline. But we also believe that school transportation should not be subject to those efforts **more** than other disciplines or services.

We believe that there are ways in which transportation services might be rendered more efficient through shared services between districts, shared maintenance facilities or services between

districts and municipalities, shared services for out-of-district special education transportation, joint training programs and cooperative purchasing arrangements among school districts/municipalities.

We believe the state needs to look at those laws and regulations or procedural requirements that stand in the way of progress on these fronts and begin to provide incentives for such arrangements. They make sense; therefore they will occur if they are fostered and facilitated.

But let this be clear: school transportation managers have been required to constrain costs and minimize routes and expenses for many years. We work hard each year to optimize our routing through computer-based routing software and drive our routes to look for ways to reduce costs and time on the road. This is nothing new for transportation professionals.

However, we are concerned about the kinds of proposals that have surfaced with specific regard to school transportation services, particularly those proposals that center on top-down consolidation or regionalization of those transportation services. Accordingly, in recent months, we have had conversations with our members and with others in the education arena. We have made presentations to state commissions and have met with others in the education community. We have shared communication with the Board of Regents and with staff at the Education Department. We have made our thoughts known to the Executive and to the State's Budget Division.

Our message has been the same: we do not object to working with proposals to coordinate or consolidate. But we do object to a wholesale "one size fits all" approach that, without a reasonable amount of study and cost analysis, would attempt to consolidate or regionalize on the basis of no facts and no cost and impact estimates. We do believe that there are answers but none will be easily found. Accordingly we cannot subscribe to the unsubstantiated notion that cost savings in school transportation will be derived by requiring those services to be conducted on a regional or consolidated basis.

When it comes to transportation services, there are many factors to be considered that are not in play when one considers other so-called "back office" operations like purchasing, contracting or accounting and legal services. School transportation is *unique* in that it involves the moving of our children to multiple destinations using a variety of routes and encountering all sorts of challenges along the way. Our members transport 2.3 million children every day from their homes to school buildings in nearly 700 school districts in the state. Those children ride on 50,000 state-of-the-art school buses driven by some 50,000 well-trained and safety-conscious school bus drivers. Of necessity, school transportation services are reflective of the culture of a community and they often change from district to district in accordance with the needs and priorities of that individual district's parents and taxpayers.

Any potential solutions under consideration must be able to address those needs and priorities or be susceptible to failure and the disdain of taxpayers. In the case of ensuring the safety of our children, we don't have the option of experimenting for a few weeks or months to see if it works; *we had better be sure it works first time, every time.*

THE VALUE OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The yellow school bus adds value to the school day and the community at several levels – any of which could be affected by efforts to consolidate or coordinate services from the top.

First of all, we believe that the school bus ride is actually the first class of the day. It is on the yellow school bus that more than 2.3 million children have their first contact with their school system each day. It is important that that bus ride be of the highest quality, safety and efficiency for all involved.

Second, the yellow school bus provides an economical and environmentally sound approach to moving over 2.3 million children from home to school and back again each day of the school year. Riding on the yellow school bus averts the need for the parents of those children to drive their personal vehicles to school in the morning and the afternoon, adding to traffic at the school entrance and adding to the pollution caused by their vehicles. The yellow school bus is the educational version of public mass transit.

Third, the yellow school bus provides access to education for all children. Recent studies about attendance and performance in school suggest that the absence of a school bus results in increased truancy and absences from school, which in turn results in decreased performance and academic success.

Fourth, the availability of the school bus means that moms and dads are able to ensure that their children get to school on time and that they can get to their places of employment on time as well. The absence of the school bus can prove to be an economic detriment to those same parents.

Lastly, and most important, academic research has determined that the school bus is the absolute safest means to transport our children. Bar none. This research shows that a child is 430 times more likely to be injured or killed in a parent's vehicle or a friend's vehicle or on foot or on a bicycle than when riding in a school bus. It does not get more compelling than that.

LOCAL VS. REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Over the past year or so, our profession has been reacting to commission reports and Regents proposals that have focused almost exclusively on the idea of consolidating or 'regionalizing' school transportation services. We are pleased at this opportunity to share with the Committee several perspectives on school transportation efficiency in the context of this hearing related to the utilization of BOCES for school services.

Many of the proposals that have emanated from several studies and reports in recent years suggest that school transportation can be more effectively delivered through a consolidated approach with BOCES in the role of coordinating those services. Moreover, some of the proposals are based on the suggestion that partially filled school buses are indicative of waste and duplication in the transportation system. The loading and routing of school buses has become a more precise exercise in recent years due to the onset of computer-based routing software that encourages efficiencies in routes and schedules. Transportation managers are constantly re-configuring their routes to accommodate more children with more diverse needs and schedules. These very

sophisticated systems that often include GPS for moment-to-moment route management have greatly streamlined transportation services. The charge that the system is inefficient is inappropriate and the solution of consolidating transportation to avoid perceived inefficiencies is inappropriate as well without detailed analysis of the cost and operational implications of such a change. We hope to discuss these implications below. Our intent is not to shut down discussions about consolidation or increasing efficiency. Rather, we want there to be an intelligent and research-based review that will lead to well-considered policy options that are good for our children and our taxpayers.

While this committee and others are looking at ways to more effectively utilize BOCES services, we would offer that such services historically have been available to school districts to accomplish objectives that were not attainable individually. If the state is looking at ways to engage BOCES, that same measure must hold true: BOCES services should not be mandated but should be made accessible on a flexible, cost efficient basis to address local priorities and needs.

As those services are provided, the Senate and this committee are urged to consider several factors that affect the use of BOCES or that might suggest other approaches to cost containment and resource optimization

PRICE OF SERVICES

It often has been suggested by commissions and in other forums that resources could be saved or expenses reduced by consolidating transportation and other services through the BOCES or other regional entities. While we do not disagree that some school transportation operations might become more efficient with BOCES coordination, we do not believe it is a formula that works effectively in all situations or locations in the state.

More to the point of costs, our members in the Capital region and in Suffolk County share episodes where the use of BOCES to deliver school transportation services has actually cost their school district more money than other options. BOCES operations increase the base costs of providing transportation through their ability (requirement?) to charge an administrative fee on top of the direct cost of the transportation. In an era when private contractors are being held to no increase for inflation (because of the contractual increases statutorily linked to the CPI which is at or below zero), it is inexplicable that a BOCES should charge more than the private contractor for services.

There is no financial incentive for a district to utilize the services of a BOCES if the costs are prohibitively high. For example, one Capital area school district found that it could transport a child to a Rochester school at half the cost by cooperating with another school rather than contracting with BOCES. This scenario plays out in other cases elsewhere in the state as well. Accordingly, we propose that – if regional systems are advanced -- the fee structure for BOCES delivery of such services, similar to the CPI concept, should be reviewed to ensure economies in the system as well. Such measures would help to make the utilization of BOCES for these and other services more competitive and cost effective.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

We offer several *reality-based* situations or factors that our members have raised with us that should be given consideration in any plan to consolidate or regionalize school transportation. Again, the intent is not to object or reject the idea of consolidation but to be realistic in assessing the applicability of consolidation in all settings.

Geography:

There are many places in the state where it is just plain impractical to suggest that reasonable bus routes could be assembled for larger geographic areas. These include communities separated by mountains such as in the Catskills or Adirondacks. It also includes areas separated or connected by major bridges or interstates which pose traffic and movement obstacles. Moreover, it would be impractical to suggest that routes could be effectively managed in larger districts with larger distances between schools and homes in high traffic communities. These are real concerns that will affect the length of the ride for our children, the conditions of that ride, effects on equipment and related concerns.

Geo-Politics:

In order to make a system work effectively, it will often be necessary to incorporate a small city school district within a regional area. These districts are governed in different ways and are not required, for instance, to transport students to schools outside their geographic boundaries. How will this be accommodated if the area is regionalized?

Moreover, district priorities reflect the priorities and needs of the citizens and taxpayers who live in and support the school districts with their tax dollars and votes. The further away we take transportation services from those invested citizens, the more likely we are to encounter problems and criticisms.

Number of School Facilities:

The Legislature must realize that there is no potential for reducing costs in any significant way if there is no change in the number of school districts or school buildings. Even a regionalized transportation system will still need to deliver a set number of children to a set number of school buildings. The number of students and the number of destinations determines the overall cost of the transportation service---it is not determined by how many depots or bus yards are involved.

That is to say: regardless of whether there are fewer transportation operations in school districts, the number of building destinations will always determine the cost of the transportation. Without a change in the number of district or buildings, the costs of transportation can be reduced or moderated only slightly.

To this point, we are aware of two studies that were conducted by groups of school districts that were interested in consolidating their transportation services. One group was located in the Capital district and the other in the Binghamton area. Both groups undertook the study in the hopes of merging efforts and operations to save costs and duplication. Neither group moved forward with those plans because they found that there were little or no costs savings. This was due in large part to the fact that there were no reductions in the number of destinations, hence limited opportunities for savings.

Students with Special Needs:

We are concerned that state reports and commissions have targeted the costs of transportation but have not studied the reasons for these costs. That is, there are significant costs attached to transportation of children to extra-curricular activities (which is not borne by the state but demanded by numerous local school districts for our students) and the costs of transporting students with special needs or homeless students who need access to a quality education.

Transportation becomes the equalizer to ensure these students receive the education to which they are entitled. We believe strongly in the importance of that service and providing a quality ride to school for all students. But we remind the committee that such services can be more specialized and can also be more costly as a result. We are eager to look for ways to mitigate those costs or to have them moderated by improved communication between those who implement and those who manage these programs and services for the children.

Bell Times:

We know that there are additional school buses being deployed to transport students to private and parochial schools as well as to BOCES programs because of the lack of coordinated bell times. Clearly no transportation system, regionalized, consolidated or otherwise described, can deliver children to multiple stops that require their arrival at the same times, regardless of how close they are located. It is simply not possible.

We have sought out the schools involved, including BOCES operations and tried to adapt bell times to allow for fewer buses as well as drivers and assistants being on the road – and less costs being incurred. The response has been scant and the opportunity has been lost – so far. We will continue to pursue such avenues and look to the Legislature and the State Education Department to assist and facilitate such changes, whether through statute or by policy development and technical assistance. We believe that millions of dollars can be saved in this way and we are eager to try to implement some of our suggestions.

Multiple Depots:

There is a theory being shared in many reports that consolidation will yield savings simply by reducing the need for large numbers of staff. In reality, larger geographic areas will continue to require multiple school bus depots that are equipped with reasonable numbers of school buses. No regional area can operate out of one depot. The private sector has demonstrated this fact, e.g., United Parcel Service, FedEx, or even private school bus operators. The location of multiple operations reduces dead-head miles and the length of ride for school children (note well that length of ride is the most common complaint from parents/taxpayers). The Legislature should think seriously about the reality that there will be minimal reductions in school transportation staffing levels and very little reduction in the actual number of school buses on the roads.

Capacity:

As state policy-makers explore the concept of regionalizing transportation into BOCES operations, we ask that you consider that there is currently little or no capacity at the BOCES to deliver such services. Where transportation services are being provided, the BOCES are doing quite well as our members will acknowledge. We are proud of many BOCES transportation professionals among our members and they contribute to our work in many ways. They are dedicated professionals.

However, most BOCES transportation programs focus on training or transporting students with special needs or disabilities. Several BOCES programs also have stepped in to provide transportation management services on a contractual or shared services basis and employ new or retired transportation managers to carry out these responsibilities. While they perform well at these services, they do not currently have the capacity to carry out the broader responsibilities of transporting 2.3 million children every day.

If the state were to move to a BOCES-based system, the BOCES would need to purchase or assume ownership of sufficient vehicles, maintenance facilities, drivers and staff to maintain a safe fleet for our children. They also would need to retain the services of management personnel (transportation supervisors) who would ensure the efficiency and compliance of their operations. This is a similar approach to what some Southern states are doing in their larger county operations, but does require an investment in facilities, staff and rolling fleet.

Simply put, they would subsume many of the assets and human resources of local school districts to carry out their new role. While there might be frictional changes in the number of personnel required to accomplish this, the numbers of children and schools dictate that base operations would remain, albeit under different oversight. The minimal costs savings (lower administrative staff?) does not, in our opinion, justify the resulting disruption in services to children and taxpaying parents. We strongly urge that a serious analysis of these factors be completed by an independent source before any steps are taken to advance a policy change that will affect so many of our children.

Weather:

Consider this scenario: it is snowing in Averill Park school district and it is expected to bring 10 inches of snow and a coating of ice. In neighboring East Greenbush schools, it is lightly snowing but there is added sleet in the mix. In Rensselaer schools immediately adjacent to the East Greenbush schools, it is just raining.

The three school districts are contiguous and are part of a regional school transportation operation under the state's plan. If they were not consolidated for transportation purposes, Averill Park would close, East Greenbush might delay opening for an hour and Rensselaer would open on schedule. Under a consolidated approach, all three would be forced to close out of deference to the risk inherent for the children who would be transported to the schools in Averill Park. Once the routes are consolidated or merged, there is no reasonable or efficient way to segregate them out to allow one component school to open while the others close.

Here again, the Legislature and others supporting such consolidations need to consider these real-time problems that must be addressed BEFORE casting that die.

SHARED SERVICES INCENTIVES

We would encourage the state to invest more substantially in programs like the Department of State Shared Services Municipal Grant Program as one means to provide incentives for local school districts and municipalities to explore and demonstrate the efficacy of coordinated efforts. School districts can serve as laboratories for the creative and practical ideas that are generated by

the professionals who manage our schools, including transportation managers who must innovate to solve problems every hour of the day.

OVERALL COST REDUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer a range of ideas that have been generated by conversation with our members over the past 8-10 months in regional and chapter meetings. We firmly believe that school transportation is an enabling service that is used by school administrators and others to ensure that all children get the education they need and are entitled to receive. This often includes exclusive routes to meet a student's needs or late day transportation to facilitate after-school programs – all of which are costly to deliver. We are concerned that, as a result, transportation is being viewed as costly and a place for cost reductions. We believe that there are systemic improvements that could be made that would by their implementation reduce the costs and inefficiencies that are perceived as transportation-related.

Our initial thoughts are included here:

- *Increase Efficiency of Transportation by Coordinating School Calendars and Bell Times:* Coordinate annual school calendars and, to the extent possible, session times for all public, charter, parochial and non-public schools to facilitate transportation services and to make such services more efficient. This needs to be considered on a statewide basis or, at the very least within a BOCES district to achieve real savings.
- *Incentives for Shared Services:* Provide incentives for OR remove disincentives to increased sharing of transportation services among school districts. Currently districts are penalized in the aid formula if they share services on a formal basis that involves an exchange of funds to absorb costs.
- *Allow Piggybacking among School Districts:* Remove obstacles that prevent school districts from 'piggybacking' on existing contracts for transportation services, with the concurrence of the contractor. If this practice were allowed or facilitated, a school district could, under certain circumstances, be included in another district/districts' contract for, for instance, special education transportation.
- *Disallow Transportation of Non-Public Students before the Official Start of School:* There is some ambiguity in the law regarding whether school districts may or must provide transportation services to non-public school students prior to the official opening of their own school year. The Education Department is considering allowing such transportation, which could add up to significant additional expenditures at a time when we are seeking to reduce expenditures. This issue needs to be clarified in statute. The potential costs and disruption to school districts are considerable.
- *Eliminate Duplication of Fingerprinting for School Bus Drivers:* Amend the Education Law to allow school bus drivers who have already cleared the Article 19-A finger-printing requirements and SED training requirements to serve as attendants or monitors without having to satisfy those requirements a second time.

- *Freeze on New Equipment Mandates for School Buses:* Impose a freeze on new mandates for equipment to be installed on school buses absent a fiscal note and an assessment that determines the safety benefits of the equipment and the impact on other equipment currently installed on the school bus.
- *Review Current School Bus Equipment for Potential Cost Savings:* Implement a comprehensive study of equipment that is currently mandated to be installed on school buses (particularly where such equipment exceeds recommended or regulatory federal standards) with the purpose of identifying those that could be modified or eliminated without compromising safety.
- *Eliminate Mandate for Costly Back-Lit 'SCHOOL BUS' Sign:* Allow school bus operators the option of equipping school buses with reflective front and back "SCHOOL BUS" signs in lieu of the back-lit signs currently mandated.
- *Increase Efficiency of Special Education Transportation Through Increased Coordination:* Require consultation by the Committee on Special Education with school transportation officials in the development of Individualized Education Plans for students with disabilities where such IEPs involve transportation, prior to the execution of the IEP.
- *Transportation Costs for Universal Pre-Kindergarten Students:* Provide funds in support of school transportation services for students in the state's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program; presently the costs for such services, to the extent they are allowed, are not eligible under Transportation Aid and are borne by local taxpayers.
- *Reduce the Transportation Radius to 10 Miles:* We have heard from some districts that estimate that more than 20% of their costs are incurred for transportation provided between 10 miles and 15 miles for attendees at non-public schools. While this is not scientific, the point is that the additional miles traveled results in significant expenses and requires dedicated buses so that those trips do not affect the length of ride for other students. There are advocates for increasing this mileage radius to 25 miles that would significantly increase the costs to school districts. We cannot support such an increase and are considering advocating for a reduction in the statutorily mandated radius.

IN SUMMARY

In summary, our position is that:

- the school transportation system in New York State has served our children and our taxpayers well and we maintain the best safety record in the nation as a result;
- school transportation services have historically been best addressed at the local level;
- efforts to consolidate school transportation services should be based in exhaustive study of costs and operational impact and then led by local decision-makers to address local needs;

- efforts by the state to super-impose a regional transportation scheme over a geographic area without similar changes in school boundaries cannot be supported by fact or experiences;
- every option should be given a fair hearing and thorough discussion to ensure success. This clearly includes more expansive and creative utilization of BOCES for transportation and other service in our schools;
- the state should facilitate efforts by local school administrators, school transportation managers and school boards to share services, consolidate services, and reduce costs without reducing or affecting the safety of our children.

Our children rely on our best judgment and decisions. They cannot afford our failures in this matter. For them, it becomes a matter of life and death.

On behalf of the members of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation:



Peter F. Mannella
Executive Director

HALF HOLLOW HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

OF HUNTINGTON AND BABYLON

VICTOR P. MANUEL

Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities

Testimony from Victor Manuel, Assistant Supt. for Finance & Facilities

Half Hollow Hills Central School District

New York State Senate Hearing

Senate Standing Committee on Education

Oct. 2, 2009 at Western Suffolk BOCES Conference Center

Summary of Testimony:

- **Introduction and background**
- **Actualized cost reductions**
- **Collaboration with BOCES**
- **BOCES coordinated purchase and delivery of technology equipment and technology support**
- **BOCES RFP for Special Education Professional Services**
- **Other BOCES Bids and RFPs**
- **Additional shared services**
- **Potential cost saving opportunities**
- **Conclusion**



Thank you for inviting me to speak today. My name is Victor Manuel. I have worked as a School Business Official on Long Island since 1995, and have been an Assistant Superintendent for 9 years. I am a Past-President of the Suffolk Association of School Business Officials, a Board of Director for the NYS Association of School Business Officials, and Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Facilities of the Half Hollow Hills CSD.

With the intention of providing the committee with perspective on the Half Hollow Hills CSD, and how we work collaboratively with our component BOCES, I present the following information:

Half Hollow Hills CSD is considered a large suburban school district transporting and educating over 10,000 students throughout 7 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools. Our annual budget is approximately \$200 million. We process 400 accounts payable checks each week, 2,000 payroll checks each pay period, issue 7,000 purchase orders per year, provide benefits administration to over 1,300 active employees and 1,000 retirees, develop and implement a \$200 million budget, manage transfers and journal entries, provide cash management in order to maximize interest earnings, and file over 100 state reports annually to various State Agencies. All of this is accomplished while being audited at unprecedented levels. We run an extraordinarily efficient operation, as indicated in our recent positive audit from the NYS Comptroller's Office.

There has been much discussion about how school districts may achieve cost reduction through consolidation of “back office functions” such as payroll, purchasing and other support activities. I would like to point out that our entire business office represents 0.75% of the total budget. While having a central payroll and/or purchasing function could be cost saving in certain Districts, it would not be the case for our District. For example, as indicated above, we process approximately 2,000 payroll checks each pay period with only two payroll clerks. If this function was centrally located, the need for at least two payroll clerks would still exist to manage our volume, not to mention the accessibility of being on site to address the numerous issues that arise each and every pay period.

With that said, I would like to communicate to the committee what we have been accomplishing in collaboration with our local BOCES, and offer some thoughts for you going forward.

Districts throughout Suffolk County have for many years participated in regional cooperative purchasing organized by Eastern Suffolk BOCES which has produced bids and contracts for a wide range of products and services. With the opportunity to sell to a larger pool of potential buyers, this cooperative buying service has obtained lower prices that have resulted in significant cost savings to local districts.

Beyond the contracts available regionally through Eastern Suffolk BOCES, the Districts within the Western Suffolk BOCES component have looked for other areas in which cooperative bidding, RFPs, or quotations could benefit

Districts by providing pricing advantages. During the past year the 18 Districts within the Western Suffolk component have benefited from BOCES services in purchasing through a variety of areas:

Technology Equipment and Technology Support

In addition to providing planning and technical advice to component Districts in the development of their technology activities, Western Suffolk BOCES Purchasing Office has coordinated the purchase and delivery of more than \$5.6 million of computers, networking equipment, printers and technical support. This process has required more than 25 bids, numerous quotations and the use of state and other available contracts in order to obtain the most advantageous pricing and timely delivery. In addition, BOCES arranged financing agreements with banks and other financial institutions on behalf of component districts. As a result, districts have been able to finance many of their purchases with installment financing at a lower rate than they would have secured individually.

Special Ed Professional Services

In order to identify and appropriately place students with special needs, Districts must obtain the services of a variety of professionals from psychologists to physical therapists to medical doctors. Last year, Western Suffolk BOCES proactively issued an RFP that resulted in a list of qualified professional providers with their pricing structures, licensing documentation and insurance certificates. BOCES negotiated lower rates with all the providers, a cost savings to component districts and to BOCES. There was no charge to the component districts to participate in this RFP process.

Other Bids and RFPs

Western Suffolk BOCES has or is in the process of conducting bids or RFPs for interested component districts in other areas such as actuarial services for GASB 45 reporting and a Health Consortium Feasibility Study.

In addition to procurement services, WSB also offers in-service activities for the business management staff in component Districts. Such activities provide discussions of legal issues, accounting updates and purchasing topics that are of current interest to foster more cooperative and ultimately cost-saving responses. Our BOCES has always been responsive to any needs of its component Districts, and their service is invaluable.

Separately from BOCES, Half Hollow Hills CSD shares services with other municipalities as well. For example, we contract with a neighboring District for certain security services. Additionally, we have an agreement with our Town to keep sand/salt inventory on their property for use during inclement winter weather.

There are some areas in which potential cost reduction can take place with further analysis. There is certainly the possibility of cost savings with the evaluation of a Health Consortium Study. We look forward to the results of how a consortium can provide identical benefits while reducing costs. Also, there can be significant savings in the area of transportation of private and parochial students. Currently, individual Districts are responsible for transporting their own private and parochial students, many times traveling to the same school as a neighboring District. A centralized system to

transport private and parochial students could provide a significant cost savings.

School Districts have always and will continue to proactively work to achieve cost reductions for the benefit of our taxpayers. In making recommendations, it is always helpful to see first hand what is actually taking place. On behalf of the Half Hollow Hills CSD, I would like to invite anyone on this committee to shadow me for a day or two to enhance your understanding of what takes place in the day to day operation of a school district business office. I thank everyone for your time, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

to the

New York State Senate Standing Committee on Education Public Hearings on BOCES as a Model for Delivering Taxpayer Savings

BOCES as a Regional Leader/Coordinator to Deliver Taxpayer Savings

**Edward J. Zero
District Superintendent, Eastern Suffolk BOCES
Interim District Superintendent, Western Suffolk BOCES
Interim District Superintendent, Nassau BOCES**

October 2, 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony to the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Education.

Currently, I serve as the District Superintendent of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, the Interim District Superintendent of Western Suffolk BOCES, and the Interim District Superintendent of Nassau BOCES. I believe this broad responsibility gives me a unique perspective on the potential for BOCES, a perspective which may be helpful to the Committee as it considers ways of utilizing BOCES as a model for delivering taxpayer savings.

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are the premier example of inter-municipal collaboration in New York State that work. Since 1948, local school districts have been able to leverage the authority of BOCES to provide a wide range of cooperative educational and support services to component school districts and deliver them in a most cost-effective manner. BOCES provides educational programs and services through an organizational structure that is a model of inter-district cooperation.

BOCES offers three major areas of service:

- Non-instructional support services (management services) including:
 - central business office;
 - state aid planning and financial services;
 - cooperative purchasing;
 - health insurance collaboration; and
 - energy consortia.
- Direct instructional programming including:
 - Regents level career and technical education;

- Regents level alternative learning programs;
 - Regents level special education; and
 - a variety of adult education and job training programs.
- Instructional support including:
 - student achievement data analysis;
 - professional development;
 - curriculum development; and
 - school improvement planning and implementation.

BOCES continues to demonstrate the power of inter-municipal cooperation to achieve economies and efficiencies, expand educational opportunities, close gaps in student achievement, improve educational equity, and serve children from all districts, regardless of enrollment, income, or wealth.

There are many ways in which BOCES can help local school districts save money, such as cooperative purchasing, supplying regional accounting and regional payroll services, etc., and I am certain you will hear many such suggestions. With this in mind, I would like to use my time to suggest that there is yet another dimension to realizing the mission of BOCES and the tax savings already achieved via our cooperative model. Because BOCES is the regional coordinating agency of local school districts, it is in a unique position to bring together school districts and other groups for the purpose of addressing regional issues, in effect, leveraging the effort from a local issue to a regional one. Therefore, BOCES must continue to serve as the leader/coordinator of a wide range of instructional and fiscal reform efforts on a regional basis.

On Long Island, through the use of existing funding sources, such efforts are currently underway. Here are some examples.

1. Regional Forums: Long Island BOCES meet regularly with all local superintendents to coordinate regional efforts in all pertinent areas, including curriculum and instruction, staff development, leadership training, superintendent searches, financial matters, health and safety (most recently H1N1 flu), and so forth. These forums save taxpayers money because they enable school districts to coordinate their efforts through a regional agency, rather than working on them independently through a myriad of organizations or governmental entities including the State Education Department in Albany.
2. New Superintendent Orientation Program: Eastern and Western Suffolk BOCES support the new superintendent orientation program that is sponsored by the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association (SCSSA) and meets regularly with new superintendents to help them become acclimated to the demands of the position, as well as the demands from outside agencies, including the federal and state governments. I have been advised that as of July 1, 2009 there were 11 new (to the district) chief school administrators within the 51 school districts that comprise the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Supervisory District.

In addition, commencing July 1, 2010, approximately one-third of the superintendents in Suffolk County (22/69) will be ending their first year in the position or starting their first year. These sessions save taxpayers money by increasing the knowledge base and competencies of new superintendents and, therefore, increasing the likelihood of stronger fiscal oversight, improved administration and governance, and a longer tenure - all of which contribute to district stability. This is not only a cost savings, as it also has educational benefits by virtue of the fact, shown by research, that higher student achievement is associated with longer tenure of superintendents (Waters, J. T., & Marzano, R. J., 2006. *School district leadership that works: The effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement*. Denver, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning)

3. P-16 Institute of Higher Education Partnership for High Quality Teachers: Long Island BOCES coordinated a partnership of college deans of education and K-12 school leaders (NYSED, school superintendents, and teacher centers) established for the purpose of ensuring that all children have access to high quality teachers...a high priority of the New York State Board of Regents and the new Commissioner of Education. The initiative is referred to as the P-16 Institute of Higher Education Partnership for High Quality Teachers (P-16 IHE HQT) and focuses on five core goals:

- anticipate the short- and long-term teacher needs on Long Island;
- design mechanisms to coordinate IHE teacher candidate information with school district vacancies;
- ensure high quality in-service opportunities for Long Island teachers;
- develop an awareness of existing P-16 partnerships and find ways of sharing information and replicating best practices; and most recently
- how to ensure equity in the distribution of HQT in low performing, high poverty school districts.

One issue we are currently discussing is helping teachers make the transition from college student to seasoned teacher. Far too many new teachers leave the profession in the first few years. They have made an enormous investment in their own education, and their school districts have made an enormous investment in their professional development as new teachers. The loss of these teachers represents a major cost to taxpayers as well as to the continuity of instruction in our classrooms. The partnership is discussing how higher education, school districts, teacher centers, and other groups can collaborate to develop a smooth transition that will enable future talent to remain in the classroom to teach our children.

This P-16 group is also working on developing a regional web site with the assistance of New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) that has the potential for “tracking and connecting” high quality teacher candidates with districts that have positions available. This innovative idea emerged from our collaboration with our

higher education partners and our local superintendents and has the potential for reducing the duplication of effort now experienced by individual school districts seeking to hire teachers (and teacher candidates seeking positions). Once field tested, the format and functionality could be replicated in any region of the state.

We also believe that our work on the development as well as the distribution of High Quality Teachers in low performing school districts, places us in a very favorable position for consideration of “Race to the Top” funding as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

4. USNY Partnership: Two years ago, Regent Roger Tilles and the then NYS Commissioner of Education, Dr. Richard P. Mills, had the Long Island BOCES convene a meeting designed to strengthen the region’s USNY partnership. I designed and chaired the meeting with invitations extended to key individuals associated with one of the following partnership themes: Math, Sciences and Technology, Latino Heritage, Cultural Arts, Human Services, Literacy, Pre-K, Child Care, and Library Services with the goal of improving and expanding educational opportunities for all. Commissioner Mills and Regent Tilles commented at the close of the session that it was an extraordinarily productive and informative program and that the partnerships that were being implemented in Suffolk County were worthy of replication throughout the state.
5. Governor’s Summit on Drop-out Prevention and Student Engagement: The Long Island BOCES lead the way for the region in responding to the Governor’s call for a summit to address the issues of drop-out prevention and student engagement. After attending the statewide kick-off event at Nazareth College in Rochester in October 2008, the Long Island participants organized and created an action plan including the scheduling of a major conference event featuring Daniel Pink, noted author of the book entitled “A Whole New Mind” and the identification of “Best Practices” here on Long Island. Important information was shared with over 185 conference attendees as new networks of collegial support were developed. Our work in this area continues.
6. Early Reading First: ESBOCES “Bridges to Literacy”: Eastern Suffolk BOCES provided the leadership role in developing a successful Federal grant application and secured a \$3.2 million grant designed to transform preschool classrooms in four school districts and Long Island Head Start programs into “centers of excellence”. Served by the Long Island Regional School Support Center, children in preschool classrooms in Central Islip, Hempstead, South Country, and Wyandanch will reap the benefits of this important initiative. The grant is part of a national effort to transform preschools by raising the quality of the programs and by helping staff in the programs to more effectively meet the diverse needs of preschool-aged children, including children with limited English proficiency, disabilities, or other special needs. This goal reflects the Federal Early Reading First mission “to ensure that all children enter kindergarten with the necessary language, cognitive, and early reading skills for continued success in school.”

This will be accomplished in coordination with the teacher education programs in the following Long Island Institutes of Higher Education: St. John's University, St. Joseph's College, and C.W. Post/Long Island University.

7. School Improvement - Long Island Regional Strategic Planning Network (LIRSPN): This is a collaborative, cohesive network of technical assistance providers whose mission is to build capacity and to close the achievement gap in the identified districts and schools targeted by New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the Executive Committee of the Long Island Regional School Support Center (LIRSSC). LIRSPN is comprised of the following entities: Long Island Regional School Support Center (LIRSSC), Bilingual/ELS Technical Assistance Center (BETAC), Regional Special Education - Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC), Student Support Services Network (SSSN), Regional Adult Education Network (RAEN), Teacher Centers, Institutes of Higher Education, Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) a regional service of the Vocational Education Service for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) and the School Improvement offices at the SED. One of their many initiatives included the development of operational protocols specific to the region. The protocols are designed to strengthen the capacity of the network and include the following:

- establish a process by which members of the network will communicate, collaborate, plan, and provide technical assistance to the targeted districts and schools;
- enable the network to direct critical resources to include any and all partners as needed; and
- serve as a model and a guide for regional technical assistance strategies.

Through the work of the LIRSPN and the leadership and support of the Long Island BOCES, high quality technical assistance is provided to high poverty, low performing school districts as identified by NCLB.

These represent only a small sample of the many regional efforts currently underway through the coordination of the three Long Island BOCES. While these efforts are bearing fruit, they are struggling for lack of funding. And, while these represent a good start, they barely "scratch the surface" of the potential for BOCES to serve as the regional leadership/coordinating agency. Through a combination of greater support for and increased use of BOCES shared services and our expected participation in the new Federally funded "Race to the Top" program, I truly believe that the Long Island BOCES will be in a key position to serve as the leader in the region.

Looking forward and aside from the "obvious" regional functions that BOCES is already coordinating as evidenced throughout this document, the possibilities for additional regional leadership are endless. Here are just a few:

- BOCES could work with school districts to coordinate regional “e-learning,” thus benefiting students who have gone beyond the local district curriculum in certain areas.
- BOCES could lead groups of districts to apply for new funding opportunities to meet their specific needs.
- BOCES could expand its current role for regional data collection.
- BOCES could assist with the coordination of libraries and museums, which come under the aegis of the State Education Department.

I would like to seize the moment to elaborate on one of these ideas in greater detail. In the area of expanding the BOCES role for regional data collection, I offer the following:

The Suffolk Regional Information Center (RIC) at Eastern Suffolk BOCES has developed a truly robust, corporate caliber datacenter that currently provides extensive networked data management, retention, and disaster recovery services for all types of district data, Internet, Internet2, LAN, WAN, VoIP, state of the art video/web conferencing, website management and development, test scoring and assessment reporting, and a full range of associated professional support and development services to the 69 public school districts across Suffolk County. Research and development into new technologies, service options, and collection and management of school district data constitutes a significant part of our operating model and frequently includes partnerships with local higher education partners e.g. NYIT, Dowling College, SUNY Stony Brook, and Hofstra University. Through the aggregation of district participation, the leverage for pricing, service provisioning, and enterprise level packaging that the RIC has and continues to achieve with various third party providers of software and hardware, far exceed anything that a district could achieve on its own. Use of local resources infusing school district dollars back into their systems through RIC services have further extended fiscal savings for our schools and has positioned the Suffolk RIC to be able to accommodate future forward advancements such as online assessments and other 21st Century technologies on a solid, reliable foundation that is easily extensible and scalable.

Some of the reports that were developed for regional use have also been adopted by the state and are now part of the new L2RPT statewide reports launched this year by the SED to help mitigate the data reporting issues that districts have been struggling with. This has created additional savings for districts through the SED’s use of RIC resources to develop these types of vehicles by leveraging the expertise of those who are intimately familiar with district needs and reporting requirements, as opposed to expending dollars with external for-profit entities to facilitate this kind of development.

Continued support through the SED, CoSer reform that focuses on the highly expert resources available from the RIC will mitigate the ability of local BOCES to provide competing services to smaller groups of the same pool of districts, and formalized

approval for the SED to contract directly with the RICs for statewide education related technology solutions in lieu of bidding to for-profit vendors would provide a natural re-investment of state funds through the RICs to help fund this goal and achieve statewide consistent standards and delivery models. Additional legislative support to allow USNY members and local municipalities to contract with a RIC for technology related services would provide natural paths of consolidation that would further infuse state funds directly back into the region's local communities and would provide an avenue for the state to create a consistent technology foundation and common set of standards to achieve a true statewide vision for technology in all areas. This model, built on the foundation of what the RICs have already constructed and implemented, would be a cornerstone for further implementing 21st Century solutions, fueled by regional talent and expertise across the state through a proven collaborative partnership and supplemented through a fiscally responsible re-investment.

In summary, to promote economies of scale and efficiency and to reduce the impact of the local property tax, the State must use the aid it provides to leverage greater intergovernmental cooperation with schools and local governments. This is all the more true during a time of fiscal distress when opportunities abound to vividly demonstrate the value of inter-municipal cooperation and the need to secure a future for New York's economy.

I call on you, the members of the Senate Standing Committee on Education, to provide the necessary leadership to unleash the full potential of BOCES, enabling us to expand intergovernmental cooperation, eliminate duplication, and achieve cost savings for New York State property taxpayers. The BOCES have an outstanding record of providing high quality programs and achieving cost savings for school districts. I have shared with you specific examples as to how this is being done and can be done in the near future.

Though BOCES currently serves as a leading/coordinating agency for regional efforts, there is much unexplored terrain, terrain with enormous potential not only to reduce the burden on our taxpayers, but also to improve services to the children of New York State.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to share this important information with you. I look forward to supporting the Committee's efforts in any way that I can.

**Testimony to the NYS Senate Standing Committee on Education
Presented by**

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers (NYS PTA®)

October 2, 2009

Senator Oppenheimer, committee members and staff. My name is Susan Lipman. I am the current president of the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers and speaking on behalf of the nearly 350,000 volunteer PTA members dedicated to child and educational advocacy. My comments will be brief. Given today's economic challenges, this is a critical time to recognize the priorities that will permit us to maintain our commitment to public education. We have voiced past support for the value of the BOCES shared service model as a means of delivering quality service at least cost and welcome the opportunity to do so again.

Since the creation of the BOCES by the 1948 NYS legislature, member school districts have enjoyed the opportunity to share services without the need to relinquish local control over school programs. Experience has shown us that school district consolidations tend to be expensive and resisted by individual communities who fear loss of local control that could result from imposed mergers. The functional consolidation of services through the BOCES on the other hand has been welcomed by school communities because services are requested, not imposed. The result has been savings of millions of dollars. We have only scratched the surface of the potential for improving service while saving future tax dollars. At the present time, however, service sharing permitted through the BOCES is limited to services that are primarily educational in nature. Greater savings would be possible if support services in areas such as finance, maintenance and construction were permitted. Even greater savings would be possible if the pool of potential service clients were expanded to provide additional clients' access to the wide range of services that BOCES could readily make available. Our specific recommendations include:

1. Support legislation that would permit BOCES to offer a greater range of non-instructional services in areas of maintenance, capital improvement, fiscal management, information technology, communications, planning and professional development.
2. Support legislation and resources that would permit and encourage BOCES to offer support services to a wider range of clients including municipal governments and non profit education and human services providers.
3. Modify regulations to take advantage of the entrepreneurial nature of BOCES service offerings by encouraging individual BOCES organizations to develop specialized support services that could be effectively delivered beyond their regional service area. Quality services such as but not limited to the Questar III State Aid Planning Service, The Capital Region BOCES Communication Service and the OCM BOCES Energy purchasing consortium have thrived by offering high quality at modest cost shared by hundreds of school districts statewide.

The basic structure exists to take fullest advantage of the entrepreneurial and competitive talents that Boards of Cooperative Educational Services bring to New York's public education community. By expanding the limits on the application of those talents, and with appropriate oversight and accountability, New York State's children can benefit from improved quality of service without loss of local school district control and with direct cost benefits to local property taxpayers.



Gary D. Bixhorn
Chief Operating Officer

Barbara M. Salatto
Associate Superintendent for
Management Services

Pat Martell
Transportation Administrator

October 9, 2009

Ms. Darlene D. Murray, Clerk
Senate Education Committee
Legislative Office Building Room 846-A
Albany, NY 12247

RE: Written Testimony

Dear Ms. Murray:

Eastern Suffolk BOCES Regional Transportation Program (RTP) would like to submit written testimony regarding the issue of examining ways that the BOCES model might be expanded to achieve efficiencies resulting in greater taxpayer savings. Specifically with regard to transportation shared services, the best way to accomplish this is to expand the services of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Regional Transportation Program.

Eastern Suffolk BOCES Regional Transportation Program works cooperatively and effectively with school districts and county officials, teachers, parents, children, school bus drivers, and contractors to help ensure safe and efficient passage of children to school every day, with particular attention to the individual needs of special education students. RTP transports students to various educational programs: special education, occupational education, special occupational education, gifted and talented, nursing programs, coach and field trips and work study programs as well as to private and parochial schools.

Eastern Suffolk BOCES Regional Transportation program has five school bus contractors transporting students throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties. By blending students from their numerous participating school districts, RTP is able to save the districts a considerable amount of money.

In many cases, local school districts do not have the expertise to operate a centralized regional bussing operation. On the other hand, Eastern Suffolk BOCES Regional Transportation Program has over 33 years of experience in developing the most economical and efficient regional bus operation possible. Consider the following with local school districts making their own shared transportation arrangements:

1. How will districts (A & B) know that only approved students are on their contracted buses?
2. How will districts (A & B) verify that they are being billed correctly (for their fair share) and



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RE: Written Testimony

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- that there are no additional students on their bus that are being paid for in full by districts (C & D), which may be causing a longer ride for their shared students? Who will oversee the district invoice process?
3. Will sharing districts (A & B) each pay for half the bus or will each district pay for the actual number of students utilizing the bus as well as for the days those students are actually in attendance on the bus?
 4. If the contract is wet, how will sharing districts (A & B) pay for the fuel? Will the fuel be prorated based on the number of students who utilize the bus?
 5. Which district (A or B) will oversee contractor compliance with 19A, SED, DOT and Federal Motor Carrier regulations?
 6. Which school district (A or B) will oversee school bus incidents and accidents?
 7. If districts (A & B) are sharing a wheelchair van with ambulatory students on it, which district (A or B) will pay for the higher cost differential of the wheelchair van?
 8. During inclement weather, will districts (A & B) agree on their delayed opening and early dismissal times?
 9. Will both districts (A & B) have route approval and will both districts agree on the order of the students being picked up and dropped off?
 10. If a student terminates from one district (A) and moves to the other district (B), how will the bill be adjusted and which district will be responsible for tracking the students' attendance on the bus and resultant bill adjustments?
 11. If one sharing district (A) has no school and the other (B) is open, how will the cost be adjusted?
 12. Who will oversee the process of which students are not in attendance on the bus?
 13. If a school bus contractor is policing itself, will districts (A & B) have confidence that all deficiencies are being corrected?
 14. Very often contractor staffing is lacking and response time in an emergency is delayed. Which district will cover accidents and collect all required information (driver/ attendant, student and witness statements, police reports, photos, seating charts, injuries, hospitals, etc.)
 15. Which district (A or B) will carry out discipline when students are fighting on the bus and will the discipline standards be the same for both districts?

ESBOCES Regional Transportation Program (RTP) is an objective third-party agency that handles all of the above items and a great deal more. RTP bills are prorated based on services rendered. ESBOCES tracks and informs participating districts when students are not on the bus and strives to save its districts transportation costs whenever possible. The school bus contractors work with ESBOCES to keep the buses as populated as

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possible, while maintaining the highest possible level of service. Furthermore, as more districts participate in the Regional Transportation Program, the less expensive the costs becomes for existing participating districts.

On the other hand, local districts in shared arrangements will not only be venturing into unfamiliar “transportation territory,” they may find themselves in need of additional staffing to handle these unforeseen problems. Ultimately, this will create several smaller, less efficient shared arrangements all over Long Island that may undermine what the Regional Transportation Program has accomplished over the past thirty-three years.

Furthermore, the ESBOCES Regional Transportation Program is able to share its expertise with other BOCES throughout New York State to assist them in providing shared transportation services to school districts currently without the benefit of a regional transportation option. Please see the enclosed example, *How Regionalization Works*.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Martell".

Pat Martell
Eastern Suffolk BOCES
Regional Transportation Administrator

Enc.

How Regionalization Works

BOCES – Maximized Use of Three (3) Out-of-District Buses
54 students on 3 vans (18 per van)

Number of Districts	Number of Students Per District	Number of Destination Schools	Total Number of Students	Cost Per Bus	BOCES Admin Fee	Cost Per Student	Total Cost for Three Districts
6	9	3	54	\$5,000	\$1,500	\$306	\$16,500

Compared With Three Districts in Shared Arrangements

Two (2) Local Districts Sharing Three (3) Out of District Buses
6 Students on 3 vans (6 per van)

Number of Districts	Number of Students Per District	Number of Destination Schools	Total Number of Students	Cost Per Bus	BOCES Admin Fee	Cost Per Student	Total Cost for Two Districts
2	9	3	18	\$5,000	N/A	\$834	\$15,000

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6 students on 3 vans (6 per van)

Number of Districts	Number of Students Per District	Number of Destination Schools	Total Number of Students	Cost Per Bus	BOCES Admin Fee	Cost Per Student	Total Cost for Two Districts
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2	9	3	18	\$5,000	N/A	\$834	\$15,000

Two local districts each enter into three shared arrangements - $\$15,000 \times 3 = \$45,000$

Per student cost = $(\$45,000 / 54) = \mathbf{\$834.00 \text{ (Rounded Up)}}$

BOCES regionalization of three shared buses (maximum bus utilization)

$\$5,000 \times 3 = \$15,000 + 10\% \text{ Administration Fee} = \$16,500$

Per student cost = $(\$16,500 / 54) = \mathbf{\$306.00 \text{ (Rounded Up)}}$

BOCES regionalization per student savings - $(\$834.00 - \$306.00) = \mathbf{\$ 528.00}$