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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Long Island Delegation to the NYS Senate
Members of the Long Island Delegation to the NYS Assembly

FROM: Dr. Julie Davis Lutz, Legislative Co-Chair
Dr. Walter F. Schartner, Legislative Co-Chair

DATE: January 16, 2015

RE: Appointments of Seven Regents

As you undertake the appointments of seven Regents, we, the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association, believe that this is a critically important time for public education in our state, and that these are critically important appointments. The individuals you select should have a background in education and a clear and unequivocal commitment to a sound and basic public education for all children, just as Regent Roger Tilles has demonstrated over the years.

It has been our experience that the recent reform agenda in New York State has been driven by a handful of powerful individuals; the voice of individual Regents has been largely muted. This reform has also excluded meaningful participation and connection to the public, superintendents, and boards of education. We offer these leadership qualities and behaviors for your consideration as essential for any Regent:

- The temerity, resilience, and willingness to question and demand carefully researched information prior to acting in support of new initiatives.
- The willingness to call for an immediate reconsideration of any current reforms that are not working.
- The courage to advocate publicly as a minority voice, and to view this as a duty.

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- To embrace an ongoing dialogue among school leaders, board members, parents, and community members, not just in times of crisis.
- Maintain a commitment that ensures superintendents and school board members are the primary resource for determining the value of new reforms and initiatives before they are advanced.

Our public education system is one of the most significant public services a democratic society provides; in selecting these individuals please keep that significance – ensuring that the education of every child in New York is at the center of your decision making. As Horace Mann reminds us, "Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery."

We stand ready and willing to assist you throughout your deliberations, and we have every confidence that you, our representatives, will continue to do your very best to support the public education of children in our great state.

JDL/WFS/mp

c: SCSSA Members