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MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Julie Davis Lutz, Ph.D., Chairperson  
Suffolk County School Superintendents Association's Legislative Committee

DATE: November 10, 2020

RE: Transportation Aid

We write to ask for your immediate assistance related to Transportation Aid. On Friday, November 6, school districts and BOCES across the state received a letter from Phyllis Morris, Chief Financial Officer for NYSED, indicating that schools would not be reimbursed, pursuant to the Transportation Aid formula, for all costs incurred by schools during the spring 2020 remote learning window.

As you know, during this time, school districts were directed to provide meals to students and ensure remote instructional services. In order to comply with these mandates, buses had to be used to not only deliver meals, but such things as: instructional packets, technology, supplies, equipment for many disabled students, and library books. Additionally, there were spots in the state where buses were used to provide Wi-Fi access to students. All of this was done in an effort to maintain educational programming for the students across New York State.

In addition to this state directive to provide ongoing access to instruction and meals, the federal CARES Act provides that any school district or other entity receiving aid under the Education Stabilization Fund "...shall to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to the Coronavirus." School districts worked hard to comply with this requirement.

The New York State Education Department is seeking legislation to provide Transportation Aid reimbursement for costs associated with the use of school buses to deliver meals, homework packets, and Wi-Fi access during periods of school closure.

At a time when school districts across this state are working to maintain the health and safety of staff and students, while providing instruction that looks very different than ever before, at costs that were not anticipated, it is critical that aid for services that were delivered as directed this past spring be provided. We ask for your support in ensuring that the law governing Transportation Aid be amended as per Bill A10757 (Same as S08585-A).

Thank you for your support during these unprecedented and critical times.

JDL/km  
c: SCSSA Legislative Committee