



# SCSSA Legislative Priorities Summary

## Safety, Sustainability and Success

The 2023-2024 school year has been the first year realizing the full phase-in of Foundation Aid. This, coupled with Federal ARP and CRRSA funds, has ensured our school districts have been funded at levels appropriate to provide our students with the supports necessary to address the social, emotional and academic challenges that continue to linger after the COVID-19 pandemic. The cost to provide a quality education for our youth continues to rise due to these challenges. The following summary represents the legislative priorities for the superintendents in Suffolk County for the upcoming year.



### Safety: Actions to Enhance School Safety and Mental Health Wellness in Our Schools

We advocate for increased funding and legislative remedies to enhance school safety measures, including support for state-of-the-art security systems, comprehensive mental health programs and critical training for staff.



### Sustainability: Actions to Enhance the Long-Term Sustainability of Our Schools

We seek reliable funding mechanisms to ensure the long-term financial stability of our districts. This includes updating and revising the Foundation Aid formula to provide equitable and predictable funding for our schools, allowing districts to plan for the future with confidence.



### Success: Actions to Support the Enduring Success of Our Schools

We advocate for policies that prioritize student success for all by providing greater access to UPK, promoting practices that ensure our districts are staffed with the highest quality teachers/staff and enhancing teacher professional development.

## Safety: Actions to Enhance School Safety and Mental Health Wellness in Our Schools

### Support Trauma-Informed Collaborations

- Encourage and foster collaborative partnerships with law enforcement agencies for programs like Handle With Care

### Tax Cap Exemption for Safety Initiatives

- Provide for an exemption to the tax levy limit calculation to exclude expenses related to additional mental health supports and school safety/cybersecurity

### Categorical Aid for Safety Initiatives

- Establish an expense-driven categorical aid with the designation of “School Safety Aid” to partially reimburse districts for expenditures related to implementation of school security and mental health initiatives

### Retiree Earning Limits

- Permanently remove the earnings limit for retired law enforcement officers working as school security staff and other personnel

## Sustainability: Actions to Enhance the Long-Term Sustainability of Our Schools

### Foundation Aid

- Immediate: Reinstate Save Harmless and utilize CPI as the Inflation Factor
- Long-Term: Invest in a study and convene a committee to revise and update the Foundation Aid Formula

### Reserve Fund Flexibility

- Increase 4% limit on Unrestricted Fund Balance
- Allow districts to borrow from reserves to eliminate the use of Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs)

### Zero-Emission Buses

- Provide flexibility in the timelines for implementation of Zero-Emission Buses
- Allow for exemptions from the universal requirement based on feasibility studies

## Prudent and Reasonable Modifications to the 2% Tax Levy Cap

- Eliminate negative tax levy caps
- Include properties covered by PILOTS in the tax base
- Modify the tax levy limit calculation to exclude expenses related to:
  - Addition of new school safety, cyber-security and mental health initiatives
  - New unfunded government mandates
  - Exempt increases in health insurance costs above 2%

## Success: Actions to Support the Enduring Success of Our Schools

### APPR - Ed Law 3012-d

- Adjust the current law 3012-d to establish a system focused on rewarding innovation and enhancing professional practice to improve teaching and learning and return the process of oversight to local control

### Civil Service Reform

- Offer tests on a continuous basis to allow for real-time recruitment and modernize exam content to ensure relevance to job requirements
- Allow the transition of successful provisional employees to permanent status
- Allow part-time employees for some titles to be hired noncompetitively
- Eliminate requirement of traditional mail for canvas letters by allowing for electronic canvassing
- Create a larger candidate pool by amending the rule of 3 to a rule of 5

### School Calendar Flexibility

- Ensure the latest possible Regents Rating day
- Allow permissibility of instructional days in August

### Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)

- Increase the minimum per pupil allotment for school districts
- Allow for local control over and greater flexibility in the use of UPK funding