

# Exploring Advocacy:

## A Multifaceted View



## 18th Annual SCSSA Advocacy Workshop

Saturday January 20, 2024



# Suffolk County Our Story

- 219,000 Students - 10 Towns, 69 Districts, 2 BOCES
- 37% of Districts low wealth (CWR < 1.0)
- 61% of our students live in low wealth districts
- Cost of educating students in Suffolk County
  - \$1,000 upstate = \$708 on Long Island
- Taxpayers bearing the brunt - Districts receiving more than 60% of their revenue through local sources
  - Suffolk County - 63%
  - Rest of State - 24%



# Suffolk County 10 - Year Enrollment Trends

- Since 2013-2014 Suffolk County has lost:
  - 26,932 Students
  - 11% of our Students
- 56 Districts lost enrollment
- 13 Districts increased enrollment
- Significant Demographic Changes - Increase in High-Cost Students and Economically Disadvantaged
- Increased need for additional services to support students



# Executive Budget Proposal Includes Two Key Changes to the Foundation Aid Formula

**Save Harmless** - Ensures districts receive no less Foundation Aid than in the prior year, notwithstanding what the actual formula would deliver

- Executive budget eliminates save-harmless, using a wealth-adjusted formula to determine the amount districts would lose
- No guaranteed minimum included

**Inflation Factor** - Governor's Budget lowers the inflation adjustment to the standard per pupil amount

- Current law would call for a 4.1% inflation factor based on monthly changes in the Consumer Price Index over 2023.
- Governor's Budget uses 2.4%, based on a 10-year average of CPI annual change, excluding the highest and lowest year



# NYS Budget Process

1. **The Governor's Executive Budget Proposal** - Due 2nd Tuesday following the 1st day of the annual meeting of the Legislature (January 16, 2024), or by February 1st following a gubernatorial election year
  - Must be a Balanced Budget Proposal
    - Currently Projecting a Structural Deficit of \$16.8 B by FY 2028
  - 30-Day amendments
  - Binding Revenue Forecast due 3/1 or Comptroller will issue by 3/5
2. **Legislative Budget Hearings** - January 23 - February 14, 2024
3. **One-House Budgets** - Early March
4. **Reconciliation of One-House Budgets** - March
5. **Negotiations between Governor, Senate Pres. and Speaker of the House** - Late March
6. **Budget Adoption Deadline** - March 31



# Perspectives to Advocacy



**Fred W. Thiele Jr.**  
NYS Assemblyman



**Bob Vecchio**  
Executive Director N-SSBA



**Dr. Ken Graham**  
Superintendent of Schools  
North Babylon UFSD



## Perspective from a Legislator



**The Honorable  
Fred W. Thiele Jr.  
NYS Assemblyman**

- Lifelong Resident of Sag Harbor
- Former Southampton Town Supervisor
- Currently 13th Term
- NYS Assembly since 1995
- Chairman of the Assembly Local Governments Committee
- Committee Memberships:
  - Rules Committee, Environmental Conservation Committee, Oversight, Analysis and Investigation Committee, and Transportation Committee
- Transportation, Affordable Housing and Environmental Issues - Peconic Bay Community Preservation Fund (CPF) (\$1.4b and 10,000 acres)

**A Board Member's Role  
in Legislative Advocacy  
For Your District**





**Remember, Effective Boards Stay out of the weeds!**  
**This is true when advocating!**



# Your Team is The Best Advocate For Your District

- Make sure your team is prepared! Know the facts!
- Who leads the meetings? Who is most effective with presentation?
- Make sure all voices are heard, no one voice dominates.
- Be early for your meetings and END ON TIME!
- Meet both at their offices locally and either in Albany or in D.C.

# Your Team is The Best Advocate For Your District

- Remember as board members, stay at the 30,000 ft level!
- Tell your district's story!
- Let the Superintendent and his team get into the details!
- Stay aligned with regional priorities consistency matters!
- They need your voice just as much as you need theirs!
- Remember you both have been elected by the same voters!



# Create an effective “leave behind”



Elmont Union Free School District



<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>3,382</b>
Total Pre-K to grade 2	1,576
Total Grade 3 to grade 6	1,806
Total Special Education	388
Total SIFE students	3
Total ENL students	394
Total Homeless	17

<b>Gender</b>	
Female	48.7%
Male	51.3%
<b>Free &amp; Reduce Lunch Count</b>	
#	%
1859	55%

	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Total ENL students	394	11.6%
Total Special Education	388	11%

- **Combine Wealth Ratio: 0.83300**
- **Total ESL Dollars Spent: \$ 2,318,128**
- **Total IDEA owed to district: \$1,017,252**
  - Effect on district due to lack of fully funding IDEA
    - If Congress were to fund 40 percent of cost of Special

Education at Elmont UFSD via IDEA, total IDEA funding would be \$7,755,144, not \$1,017,252. If the \$6,737,892 gap in funding special education were provided, the district could expand special education services to \$26.1 million, instead of \$19.4 million, a 35% increase in special education teachers, aides, and materials.

<b>Languages Spoken:</b>	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>%</b>
Arabic	5	1%
Bengali	12	3%
Chinese	7	2%
French	4	1%
Haitian Creole	20	5%
Hindi	3	1%
Korean	1	0%
Malayalam	6	2%
Punjabi	16	4%
Pashto	16	4%
Spanish	232	61%
Turkish	2	1%
Urdu	56	15%
Vietnamese	2	1%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>382</b>	

Ethnicity by Grade:							
Grade	Hispanic	American Indian/Alaskan	Asian	Black	Multiracial	Pacific Islander	White
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>PKF</b>	22%	1%	39%	37%	4%	0%	19%
<b>K</b>	31%	2%	32%	35%	5%	2%	23%
<b>1</b>	33%	2%	24%	42%	2%	2%	29%
<b>2</b>	33%	1%	26%	38%	3%	1%	31%
<b>3</b>	36%	2%	23%	39%	3%	2%	30%
<b>4</b>	28%	0%	27%	38%	4%	1%	30%
<b>5</b>	30%	1%	23%	42%	4%	1%	29%
<b>6</b>	31%	2%	21%	45%	2%	1%	29%
<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>28%</b>

- The District need for increased ESEA investment would enable us to hire the additional staff needed to provide the academic intervention support for our students in light of the pandemic academic gaps. Specific focus on English Language Learners, students with disabilities and bridging the literacy gap in the primary grades. The increase in the ESEA funds will continue to fund our Social Emotional learning curriculum.



# Relationships Matter, Build Them!

- Don't only meet with your legislators or the staff once a year, advocacy is a year-round job
- Know where they stand on issues, what have they supported in the past, what haven't they supported in the past! (Billtrack 50 from N-SSBA)
- If they only hear from you once, they may think the issues aren't that important
- Invite your legislators to events at your schools
- Go to local meetings where they are scheduled to speak, like civic meetings, town halls, that's a good time to tell the community they have been a friend to the district!
- Follow them on social media (don't stalk them!)
- Regardless of political affiliation, work with them professionally and respectfully



*Remember we are always here as a resource for your advocacy teams!*



N-SSBA

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association

[bvecchio@nssba.org](mailto:bvecchio@nssba.org)

# Questions???





Thank you



N-SSBA

Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association





# Perspective from a Superintendent



- Superintendent's journey and understanding the communities that we serve
- 3 districts, 3 stories
- The North Babylon Story

# A Journey of Advocacy & Your Community

**Suffolk County, 13K students,  
22% Economically  
Disadvantaged, 0.83 CWR**

- Gap Elimination Adjustment
- Smart Schools Investment Plan
- Religious exemptions for vaccinations
- School safety and security

**Nassau County, 1.9K students,  
17% Economically  
Disadvantaged, 3.5 CWR**

- Covid-19 & mandates
- Student ceremonies, celebrations, & athletics
- Vaccination requirements
- School safety and security

**Suffolk County, students, 54%  
Economically Disadvantaged,  
0.73 CWR**

- School meals
- Funding
- Graduation requirements
- Electric buses
- School safety and security



# Core Beliefs

The North Babylon Public Schools are committed to the core values that guide our work. Our core beliefs derive from the idea that **all children can learn and excel and deserve the best education** that we can provide to maximize their potential, become lifelong learners and productive 21st-century citizens. Striving to educate the whole child, we believe in **fostering the academic, social and emotional needs of every student** through programs that have high standards and rigorous content.

To maintain an educational environment that encourages **creativity, critical thinking and citizenship**, we believe that it is essential to develop skilled teachers, strengthen academic programs, acquire up-to-date **technology** and encourage cooperative parent-school-community **relationships**. Children thrive when the adults in their lives (parents, teachers, community leaders) establish common goals and work **collaboratively**, on their behalf, to achieve these goals.

Our Mission and Vision align with these Core Beliefs. They frame our goals, program development and support systems and are the foundation for what the District envisions as its purpose. Our core beliefs form the groundwork for all the **initiatives** that the District undertakes, focusing the District's **energies and resources**, and serving as its anchor point.

# Board of Education & Points of Pride

## Points of Pride

- I believe our schools generally have a culture of inclusivity. We embrace and celebrate our diversity
- The growth and development over the last ten years
- The Diversity and Inclusive Supportive culture & climate that exists.
- I'm most proud of our community's, Teacher's and staff commitment to improving outcomes for our students
- Our district has an overwhelming sense of pride & esteem; a generationally proud district which authentically engages in schools/community-life, I find that invaluable as a district. Also there are areas which truly stand out; such as but not limited to the arts, athletic & music/theatre programs in addition to the most recent growing Pre-K & Cosmetology programs as well.



# Board of Education & Points of Pride

What area(s) would you like to see improvements and growth in? Provide any examples that you would like.

- Academic rigor-increase in test scores (e.g., Regents and AP)
- Continue to make improvements communicatively on all levels/buildings
- More support towards imaginative, creative & academic rigor for Gen Ed & Spec. Edu. students
- Implementation of more restorative discipline practice/procedure
- The establishment/growth of a 9 pd. day & the continual support of growing pathways towards graduation & improved academic excellence.
- Grading practices
- Catching students up post-Covid
- Ensure our staff has the training and tools they need to help our students succeed
- Establishing culture of a growth mindset



# District Goals



*Safe and Secure Schools*

*Meeting the needs of ALL students*

*Enhance Student Achievement and Instructional Practices*

*Staff Development*

*Communication and Community Relationships*

*Finance and Facilities*

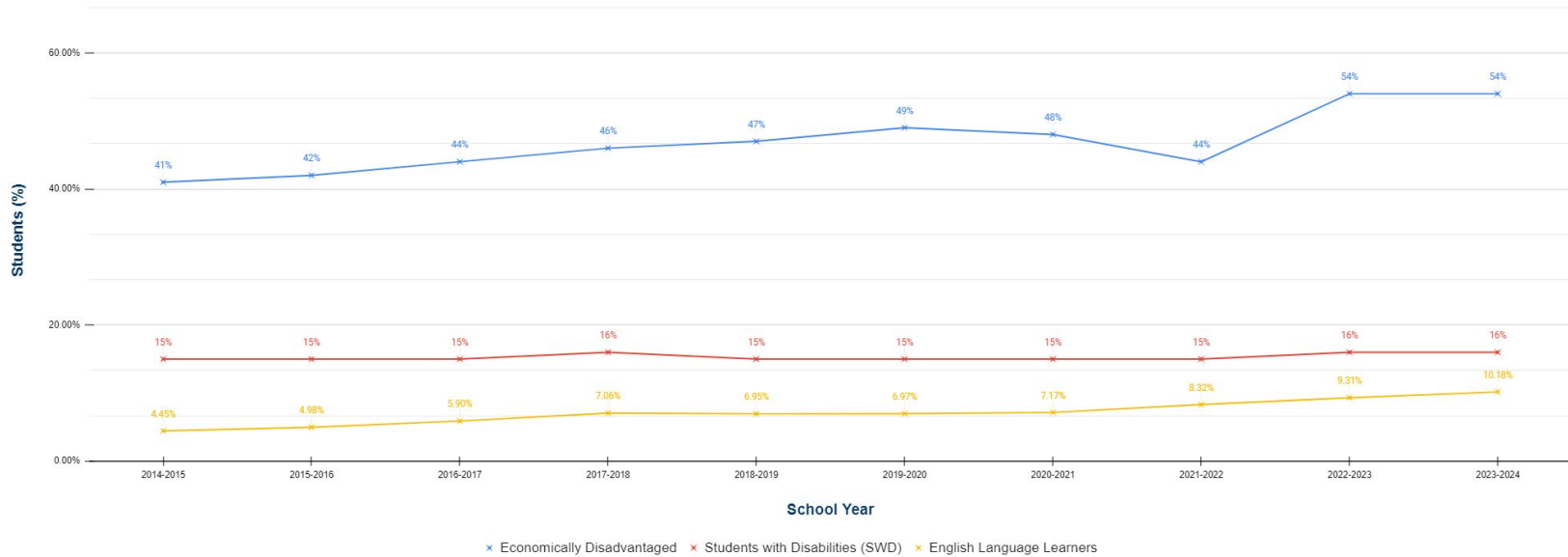
# Bulldogs by the numbers...

<u>Demographics</u>	<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2023-2024</u>
White	52.5%	28.0%
Hispanic	18.5%	36.0%
Black	24.0%	24.0%
Asian	4.6%	7.0%
Multi-Racial	0.2%	4.0%
Other (American Indian / Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander)	0.2%	0.6%
Combined Wealth Ratio	0.81	0.73
English Language Learners	176 (3.6%)	468 (10.2%) *20+languages
Economically Disadvantaged (Free and Reduced Lunch)	1,562 (32%)	2,382 (54%)
Students with Disabilities	720 (15%)	707 (16.0%)

\*153 New ENL entrants since 7/1/2023

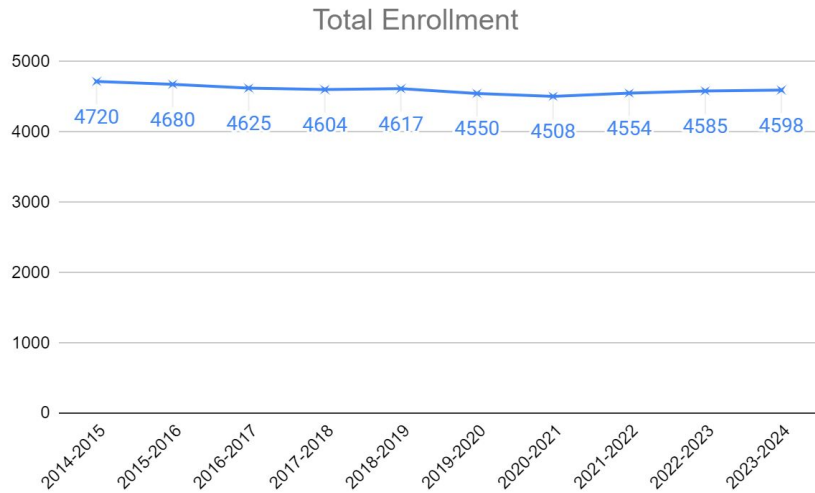
# Bulldogs by the numbers...

## 10 Year Demographic





# Bulldogs by the numbers...



- 92% graduation rate
- 40% of graduating seniors earn the Advanced Regents Diploma
- 13 students earned NYS Seal of Biliteracy
- 26 students earned the Seal of Civic Readiness
- 30 AP Scholars
- Students graduating with Cosmetology licensure
- Inaugural production by students in the new TV Studio
- Increasing # of AP Exams administered (2017 - 479, 2023 - 665)
- Addition of UPK program - 160 students

# Bulldogs by the numbers...

- Four year sequence in theater ending with a college credit bearing course
- New courses in art and the development of arts pathways (ie. Ceramics)
- 72% of all sixth grade students participate in at least one musical performing group
- Growing the high school performing groups and increasing student retention within - 300 high school students participate in at least one musical performance group
- 22+ years as a BEST Community for Music Education
- Over 70 Interscholastic athletic teams with over 615 athletes each season
- Local, state and nationally ranked athletes



# North Babylon UFSD - “Our Story”

- Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity
- Instructional program - 9 period day and class size
  - Career pathways
  - Co-enrolled classes
- Co-curricular and extracurricular offerings
- Commitment to community



# Our Story Should Help Drive our Advocacy Efforts

**Suffolk County, 13K students,  
22% Economically  
Disadvantaged, 0.83 CWR**

- Gap Elimination Adjustment
- Smart Schools Investment Plan
- Religious exemptions for vaccinations
- School safety and security

**Nassau County, 1.9K students,  
17% Economically  
Disadvantaged, 3.5 CWR**

- Covid-19 & mandates
- Student ceremonies, celebrations, & athletics
- Vaccination requirements
- School safety and security

**Suffolk County, students, 54%  
Economically Disadvantaged,  
0.73 CWR**

- School meals
- Funding
- Graduation requirements
- Electric buses
- School safety and security

To learn more about the North Babylon Story visit [northbabylonschools.net](http://northbabylonschools.net), Our Story





# School District Advocacy Action Planning

Assign a facilitator for your group. Then review the guiding questions for advocacy below:

1. Based on a review of the information presented and your district-specific data, consider:
  - a. What steps will you take to develop or build upon relationships with your elected officials?
  - b. What data is important to include as you seek to develop your districts unique story?
  - c. How does this impact your local advocacy priorities?
  
2. Complete the Accompanying Chart: **Action Steps to Advocacy Planning Document**
  - a. Develop your story and your district's Local Priorities for Advocacy (2-4 Priorities)
  - b. Decide what data points you will utilize to drive your story and educate your target audience?
  - c. Decide who will be involved in the advocacy and your target audience with your advocacy efforts.
  - d. Decide when you will engage in the advocacy work



**Thank you!!**