



North Shore Schools

Discovering Your Dreams

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November 22, 2024

Dr. Lester Young, Chancellor NYS Board of Regents
Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner of Education
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Chancellor Young and Commissioner Rosa,

We are writing to you today on behalf of the North Shore Central School District.

Along with other school districts throughout New York State, we have questions regarding the emergency regulations related to regionalization.

We certainly understand the benefits of strategic cooperation and already work closely with neighboring school districts and our local BOCES.

At the same time, we feel strongly that decisions to utilize local taxpayer funds must involve the formal deliberation, public discussion, and action of our Board of Education trustees, who are the elected representatives and fiduciaries for our school community and its resources. We appreciate that representatives from NYSED have reassured local school districts that any component of regionalization plans would be purely optional.

We also agree with the sentiment offered by our Regent, Roger Tilles, at the November Board of Regents meeting, that changes to the language in the regulation could help clarify misunderstandings and concerns about whether districts, as stated by NYSED, will still maintain local control over any decisions related to collaboration.

There are contradictions between the NYSED FAQ document related to regionalization which states that: **“school districts need only pursue implementation of activities they have agreed or consented to for their local context in the final plan,”** and the regulation language. For example, in **section 124-2.5d** of the regulation, it states:

*The Department and district superintendent shall monitor the implementation of the regionalization plans by component school districts, and may conduct site visits and review performance metrics, to ensure outcomes meet the strategic objectives outlined in the plan as related to preparing students for college, career, and civic readiness opportunities and enacting operational efficiencies. If such metrics are not being met, the Department or district superintendent **shall compel the component district** to amend its section of the regionalization plan to achieve desired outcomes as set forth by the component school district pursuant to subdivision (b) of this section.*

Language in this section suggests forced compliance with regionalization efforts. Making changes to the regulation language that emphasize and ensure local control and autonomy for local school boards to make any decisions related to regionalization (as stated in NYSED communications), would restore a sense of calm to our community and allow us to focus on the important work of educating our students and in seeing the opportunities that collaboration could offer.

We appreciate that regionalization is being offered as a solution to the rising cost of education and to find efficiencies that ultimately create opportunities for students. At the same time, we are also concerned that regionalization plans alone cannot cover anticipated cuts in Foundation Aid. This is especially the case in North Shore. Our District, like few others across Long Island, has suffered tremendously from the continued loss of millions of dollars in real property tax revenue because of the decommissioning of power plants.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective, that is predicated on protecting the investment of our community in the future our students.

Sincerely,

The North Shore Central School District Administration and Board of Education

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