



Regionalization Follow-Up

[Mary O'Meara](#) • Thursday, Oct 31

October 31, 2024

Good afternoon, Plainview-Old Bethpage School Community.

I hope this finds you preparing bowls of goodies for today's visitors. With the beautiful weather, I am sure the sidewalks will be filled with Spider-men, princesses, Elsa, and more. This message is quite long, but it aims to address the questions and concerns posed to the District.

I am writing with more information about the NYS Regionalization Initiative after attending Tuesday night's webinar with members of our Board of Education. The webinar, hosted by Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association, provided its audience with more information from two members of the State Education Department, Senior Deputy Commissioner Dr. Jeffrey Matteson, and Mr. David Frank, Senior Advisor for Policy Research & Development. [Here is a link](#) to the presentation from this webinar that has been labeled on slides 5 & 6 with "Fact" and "False" regarding details of the Regionalization Initiative. Many of the items on slides 5 & 6 address questions submitted to POB Schools via the form sent home last Friday. Also, [here is a link](#) to the recorded presentation on the Regionalization Initiative provided to the NYS Board of Regents.

During Wednesday's webinar, the SED officials emphasized that this initiative does not intend to combine school districts and take local control away from school districts, nor does it seek to divert resources from one district to provide for another district. The SED officials stated the emergency regulation was necessary to address four key areas that leave many districts vulnerable during the development of the New York State budget. The four areas are:

- Declining enrollment in many districts across New York: Some districts are struggling to offer the base program of courses required for graduation; decreasing funding would have catastrophic impacts on students.
- Fiscal constraints: There are 337 districts that would be significantly impacted by the [Governor's proposal to remove hold harmless](#) which assures districts that State funding for the upcoming year will not be less than the previous year's funding.
- [The Foundation Aid Study](#): It was originally believed 18 months would be given for the study to be completed and to give recommendations to the Governor; however, the deadline given to the Rockefeller Institute to provide the Governor with recommendations is December 1, 2024.
- Graduation Measures: The recommendations and implementation of the [Blue Ribbon Commission](#) on the NYS high school diploma requirements will provide students with multiple

pathways to earn a high school diploma, thus necessitating multiple programmatic opportunities.

The Regionalization Initiative is requesting Superintendents to work collaboratively with the BOCES Superintendent on a Regionalization Plan that addresses needs within our region, Nassau County. Of utmost interest was SED's assurance that any plan that does not have the approval of the local district involved in the plan will not be approved and sent back for further discussion. It is this requirement that has put to ease concerns that BOCES will consolidate all districts under one governing body. Clarification has been requested about language in the regulations that has left room for interpretation. However, what has not been addressed is how the State will address the financial implications of plans submitted to SED. The meetings, led by SED, continue to stress the need for regionalization plans so they can advocate for fair funding of public schools. During Wednesday evening's webinar, the State Education Department officials explained that taking information that has been collaboratively developed with local Superintendents at their regional BOCES enables State Education to hear directly from districts about their gaps through BOCES rather than the 700+ individual districts submitting plans. This, they predict, will permit them to prioritize their advocacy efforts with the NYS Government.

At Monday evening's Board of Education meeting, the Plainview-Old Bethpage Board of Education made clear they oppose any attempts to remove local control from the District and have requested the Legislative Committee to craft a letter and submit it to SED during the 60-day public comment period. In addition, the District will continue to work with its stakeholder groups to ensure all are well-informed and submit constructive feedback to SED. In addition, our local and State officials are actively engaged with Superintendents, Boards of Education, and community members. In addition, Assemblyman Blumencranz has drafted legislation, *Our School, Our Rules Act*, and other elected officials are sponsoring it.

At this point, we will continue to learn more about the work requested of districts and the BOCES' Superintendents and will share new information with the community. The actions we are taking now include informing the community and other stakeholder groups and preparing feedback to submit to the State Education Department during the public comment period.

The following concerns have been shared with the District; and at this point, we can assure the following:

- Plainview-Old Bethpage will not be combined with other schools.
- Our revenues will not be shared with other districts.
- We will maintain local control over our curricula.
- We will not be directed by NYSED to accept students from other districts into our schools.

For more information about the Regionalization Initiative, please visit the [SED website](#). To submit concerns or questions to SED during the public comment period, please email them to: regionalization@nysed.gov. The public comment period ends on November 25th.

Have a good evening.

Dr. Mary O'Meara

Superintendent of Schools