



Regionalization Advocacy Letter

Friday, Nov 8 • **Plainview-Old Bethpage Central School District**

November 8, 2024

Good evening, POB School Community.

Below is a letter from the POB Board of Education and co-signed by the District's union leaders, and PTA leadership. Please feel free to use the information contained in the letter to submit your own comments to the NYS Education Department during the public comment period which ends on November 25th. The email to submit comments and concerns about the Regionalization Initiative is regionalization@nysed.gov.

November 7, 2024

Honorable Betty Rosa

Commissioner of Education

New York State Education Department

89 Washington Avenue

Albany, NY 12234

Dear Commissioner Rosa,

We, the undersigned representatives of the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District, wish to express our concerns regarding the recent emergency regulations enacted by the State Education Department (SED). These regulations were introduced at a crucial time when our district was entirely focused on ensuring a smooth transition back to school for our students, faculty, and staff.

Members of our Board of Education, Superintendent, and Assistant Superintendent attended the October 29th webinar. Despite the efforts of SED officials to clarify the necessity of this regulation, the suddenness and nature of these changes have caused confusion and concern within our well-informed community, naturally raising questions that disrupt the trust essential to our collaborative work. We understand SED officials' clear emphasis and support of local control over the issues discussed and expect that this commitment will ensure that autonomy remains with individual districts.

Our district places a strong emphasis on media and news literacy, and as such, we have undertaken a thorough examination of the emergency regulation, explained its implications to our community, and actively participated in the required survey to comply. Nevertheless, the recent activity of the *Coalition of New York State School Board Members* has many community members and leaders apprehensive that there may be elements of this regulation that could

potentially impact the integrity and stability of our school environment. As elected members of the school community, we are compelled to inform you of these community concerns and reaffirm our district's commitment to transparency, equity, and the preservation of local control.

Our district's mission prioritizes a safe, inclusive environment where academic excellence, equity, and belonging are integral to every student's experience. We are dedicated to meeting each student's academic, social, emotional, and physical needs. Our community is aware of the ratio of tax dollars contributed to public education and the minimal foundation aid it receives in return. We would not support any initiative that further diverts funds from our community, reduces current levels of local control, and/or ties compliance to regionalization plans to financial aid.

In closing, we appreciate Regent Tilles' recent suggestion to clarify language in the emergency regulation before its anticipated adoption in January. This clarification will ensure that all districts understand where local autonomy is preserved and where state compliance is mandatory, allowing us to make informed decisions regarding future advocacy. We look forward to continued collaboration and open dialogue with SED to advance our shared mission of supporting the educational welfare of all students.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Debbie Bernstein, President of the Board of Education
Mr. Seth Greenberg, Vice President of the Board of Education
Mr. Gary Bettan, Board of Education Member
Mr. Jared Goerke, Board of Education Member
Mrs. Ginger Lieberman, Board of Education Member
Dr. Karen Reiss-Medwed, Board of Education Member
Mrs. Tara Rock, Board of Education Member
Dr. Mary O'Meara, Superintendent of Schools
Mrs. Jana Kron, President of the Plainview-Old Bethpage PTA Council
Ms. Laurie Lynn, Co-President of the Association of Administrators
Ms. Maria Carnesi, Co-President of the Association of Administrators
Mrs. Nina Melzer, President of the Plainview-Old Bethpage Congress of Teachers
Mr. Ben Carenza, Long Island Director, Teamsters Local 237