



SEAFORD UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent of Schools

November 27, 2024

Dear Seaford Community:

We wish to provide an update on the recent emergency rule initiated by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) concerning regionalization plans that would impact school districts throughout New York State. The Seaford Board of Education has expressed its opposition to the emergency rule and proposed permanent rule for the reasons set forth in its [letter to NYSED dated October 31, 2024](#), its [letter to the community dated October 31, 2024](#), and as discussed in the [November 13, 2024 Board of Education meeting](#). In sum, the rule mandates that school districts participate in the merging of resources, programs and services (something which districts can already do on a voluntary basis with no involvement from the state), and that BOCES would have a supervisory role in the process infringing upon our autonomy. To effectuate this goal, the rules requires that districts submit a "strengths and needs tool" by December 6, 2024, which provides data and analytics to the state to aid in the creation of mandated regionalization plans.

On November 22, 2024, the Board of Education held a special meeting wherein it approved a resolution authorizing the Seaford School District to commence an Article 78 legal proceeding against NYSED and the Board of Regents and retained the law firm of Rigano LLC to effectuate the litigation. This lawsuit will be brought on behalf of roughly 20 school districts plus individuals, and municipalities and will seek to annul, modify and/or amend the rule should the permanent rule be adopted by the Board of Regents.

On November 26, 2024, we received a letter from the NYSED Commissioner undoubtedly due to the wide opposition expressed during the public comment period by school district administration, parents, board associations, and legislators. The letter states that in December, NYSED will be revising the rule to state that the "regionalization planning process" is voluntary and not mandatory. Further, NYSED is extending the submission of the "strengths and needs tool" from December 6, 2024 to January 15, 2025, to allow boards of education additional time to decide whether they will continue participating in the regionalization planning process. Notably, the letter does not say that regionalization *itself* (i.e. the sharing of resources programs and service) is voluntary.

While we are eager to review the language of the revised rule when issued on or about December 10, 2024, to the extent the rule's revisions merely reflect what is stated in the letter and nothing more, the Board's concerns will not have been allayed and its opposition to the rule will remain. In the interim, the District will not submit the strengths and needs tool on December 6, 2024 given the extension and awaits the revised rule from the state. The Seaford School District will continue to oppose any regulation that is not narrowly-tailored and voluntary, that impacts the governance and autonomy of our district, and which seeks to usurp the power of the Board of Education.

Sincerely,

Seaford UFSD Board of Education

Lisa A. Herbert, President

Superintendent of Schools

Adele V. Pecora, Ed.D