

A significant concern of all taxpayers on Long Island is the admittedly large increase in property taxes. Unlike sales tax and income tax revenues which grow along with the economy, property taxes are levied upon a relatively stagnant base on Long Island since we have in many communities "built out" as much as we can without destroying our environment and squandering the little green space that is left. Needless to say, property taxes are largely the result of spending on public education which, on Long Island, is one of the most successful ventures in the state. As evidence, I attach for your information a study commissioned by the Long Island Education Coalition and the Long Island Association through Eastern Suffolk BOCES.

The problem with property taxes on Long Island is one of revenue and not of expenditure. In the district where I used to work (Harborfields) the increase in expenditures per pupil was only 2½% per year while the state aid per pupil we received was actually less. In fact, state aid per pupil in Harborfields over the period from 1990-91 to 2004-05 **decreased** by about 8%. In Roslyn (where I currently work) state aid per pupil **decreased** by almost **23%** during the same period of time. In the district where I live (Northport) state aid per pupil measured in 1990-91 dollars **decreased** by 44% during the 14 year period from 1990-91 to 2004-05 while expenditures per pupil (again adjusted for inflation) during the same period of time increased by less than 1% over 14 years! That means, for example, that Northport absorbed all of the unfunded mandates (such as the SAVE legislation which requires that all employees be fingerprinted and the requirements for the installation of AEDs and the training of staff in their use) by increasing their expenditures per pupil in 1990-91 dollars by only 1% in 14 years!! I have attached for your information the latest data available from the New York State Education Department illustrating that the situations in Harborfields and Roslyn and Northport are not unique on Long Island.

In the period from 1990-91 to 2004-05, expenditures per pupil on Long Island increased by 56.08% (about 4% per year) compared to **89.62%** (about **6.5%** per year) for the rest of New York State which, when adjusted for inflation, translates into increases of 6.42% over 14 years for Long Island (less than ½ % per year) compared to **29.28%** for the rest of New York State. During the same period of time, state aid per pupil on Long Island increased by only 16.10% (a **decrease** of 20.85% when adjusted for inflation) compared to the **increase** for the rest of New York State of 63.79% per pupil (an **increase** of 11.67% when adjusted for inflation). Even when we include STAR revenue, total state revenue per pupil increased by only 57.00% on Long Island compared to 92.10% statewide. When adjusted for inflation, the increases for Long Island compared to statewide increases in total state revenue per pupil are 7.04% and 30.98% respectively.

In other words, the increase in expenditures per pupil in 1990-91 dollars on Long Island was less than **one-fourth** of the corresponding increase in the rest of New York State while the increase in state revenues per pupil in 1990-91 dollars in all of New York State except Long Island was **four and one-half times** that of Long Island. Long Island is doing its part in controlling expenditures, but New York State is not doing its part in providing revenue! It is my hope that this continuing inequity can be addressed as part of the 2008-09 state budget.

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