

# **Sachem Legislative Committee Minutes**

**January 18, 2007**

Our Sachem Legislative Meeting met on Thursday evening 01-18-07 at Sachem North Library.

Highlights of the Meeting include:

1. Distributed and discussed the Governor Elect Eliot Spitzers, Inaugural Address.
2. New Members introduced themselves and were oriented by Chairperson on purpose of creating a Legislative Committee

New Members: J. Anklowitz, Attorney

Kim Bjorklund, Legislative Rep. Grundy Ave. PTA

[Kevin Guilfoyle](#), Member of Holbrook Civic Association

Cheryl Hager, teacher, private school,

Mrs. John Hill no card arrived after meeting had started.

Gloria C. Kruckel, Senior Citizen, Grandparent school age children

[Jeff Vinci](#), Recently moved into District.

Other members in attendance:

Sal Nicosia, Chairperson,

Deborah Slinkosky, Co Chairperson, Sachem School Board Liaison

Dianne Hettrich, Sachem Faculty Member,

Michelle Gravino, Shawn Hym,

Sandra M. Jones, Parent

Absent due to prior commitments:

Nancy Roberts, PTA Council President,

Leo R. Rutledge, Sal Tripi,

Laurie Ferrara, PTA President, Sequoya M.S.,

Lori Fontana, PTA Local, Region, State Rep.

Linda Lunger, Parent

Dana Platin, SEPTA President, Sachem Council Rec. Secy.,

Kevin Hym, PTA President, Sachem HS North, Chairperson Sachem Advisory Council.

3. Distributed Letter written by Chairperson Sal Nicosia addressed to School Board and Community on January 11, 2007.

4. Sal Nicosia related to committee

- a. We now have ALL Senior Class Students registered to Vote. Teachers in 12th Grade Participation in Government Classes, working with student leaders, completed this task just recently.\
- b. Students in Senior Class, last September, elected one member from North and East H.S. to be members of the Sachem Board of Education. They sit at Board Meetings and received all the same literature distributed to board members and are permitted to ask questions and are addressed by the President of the School Board at appropriate times to give their views on what is being discussed at that particular time.
- c. Presented an overview of the past fifty years of budget votes that ranged from a low of six percent of the eligible voters to recent vote of 22%. He pointed out that the Representatives in Albany do not pay much attention to school districts with such low voter turnouts. He hoped this committee will encourage others through their network to apprise those they interact with how important it is to VOTE. PTA, hopefully, will play a critical vote in the coming May Election to increase the number that will vote. We will reach out to other groups in the Education Community to help us achieve a significant increase in voter participation. Mr. Kevin Guilfoyle, Holbrook Chamber of Commerce Member, will inform his members of our noble quest. We hope to inform others groups, Civic Associations, Service Clubs, Private & Parochial Schools to urge them to help us increase our voter participation. It was acknowledged that we could be better heard in Albany if we diligently pursued this course of action.
- d. The slow but steady change of percentages of state aid and local property taxes was presented by the chairperson to inform them of a main reason why local taxes have increased faster than the rate of inflation.
- e. A viable discussion ensued that bodes well for the success of the committee.

Outcomes of discussion included:

Utilize all organizations in Sachem Community to help increase voter turnout. Encourage ALL the voters to vote without being told how to vote!!, Encourage Teaching Staff to help us attain this goal. Utilize PTA meetings to apprise parents on why it is importance to vote and not politicize by telling them how they should vote. Have Student Honor Society and Leadership Students organize and carry out community voter registration drive as a civic community project to fulfill their course requirements in Participation in Government Classes. Mrs. Slinkosky, School Board Liaison and Co Chairperson, apprised the committee of what the Board has been doing to review the School H.S. Courses in the Elective Area to ascertain whether it would be economically feasible to remove some courses with high cost factor and low enrolment, eg: Aviation Course. Also encouraging Business Office to find ways to purchase necessary equipment more efficiently. She also mentioned that a Coalition of Schools, Middle Country, Patchogue Medford, Longwood, Smithtown, Sachem, Miller Place, Mt. Sinai has been established to address the concern of Unfunded Mandates that the State Education Dept. has foisted on local school districts. Eg. Testing costs. This Coalition has held two meetings to date and will be meeting again in February or Early March. February 10th has been set aside by Longwood Schools to hold its annual Legislative Breakfast and invite all interested schools to attend.

Our February Meeting, to be held at Sachem East Library on Thursday, 02-15-07, will feature a guest speaker: Patricia Eddington, a member of the State Assembly who is on the State

Education Committee. We will hear her update on educational doings and answer questions from the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sal Nicosia, Chairperson 01-20-07

1. Role of PTA in Sachem Legislative Committee
2. Invite Patricia Eddington, State Assembly Person, 3rd A.D., February Meeting to discuss: Regional Cost Factor and its impact on State Aid to School Districts. (suggested by Dianne Hettrich)
3. Lobby for increase in Special Education State Aid Funding.
4. Put Minutes of Legislative Committee Meeting on Website
5. Bus Trip to Albany (Students, PTA Units, Teachers, Interested Parents, Board Members, Administrators)
6. Review State of State Address by Governor Elect Eliot Spitzer in January Joint Legislative Session and acquire copy of address and carefully peruse Educational Aspects of the Address.
7. Acquire update on CFE group re financial equity of State Aid to Local School Districts.
8. Explore No Child Left Behind Legislation to increase Federal Aid to Local School Districts.

The Sachem Legislative Committee re-read the Mission Statement and discussed its contents. As chairperson, my chief concerns are to empower our community to impress upon them that it is essential that they vote in the School Election in May in large and significant numbers. If we continue to turnout the number of voters of the past two years, even though we are getting a larger (22%) percentage than in previous school budget elections, we will not have much impact on our State Senate and Assembly Representatives. Teachers turnout for Elections are in the high 80's percentage wise. They LISTEN to their demands!

On January 11th, 2007, the Middle Country School Board is hosting a meeting of a group of School Districts in Suffolk County. Patchogue-Medford, Sachem, Miller Place, SWR, Longwood, and Smithtown attended the last meeting. They are attempting to form a large coalition of surrounding school districts and lobby our state representatives for reasonable increases in the un-funded mandate category. I am aware that this is a difficult amount to ascertain in our budget. Some of the smaller districts seem to be able to extrapolate the amount they spend in this area.

Submitted by  
Sal Nicosia  
Chairperson 12-15-06