

Business	A28
Editorials/Opinion	A24
Flash!	A16
Long Island	A10
Lottery	A51
Nation	A32
NYC	A26
Obituaries	A34
Reaching Newsday	A13
TV listings	B18
Weather	A36
World	A33

newsday.com

GET THE APP



Need the latest news? Get our Newsday app for Android, iPhone or iPad. Scan this tag to get started.



For more information, go to newsday.com/apps

ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER



www.facebook.com/newsday
www.twitter.com/newsday

NEWSDAY CUSTOMER SERVICE
1-800-NEWSDAY (800-639-7329)
TO REACH THE NEWSROOM:
631-843-2700
TO PLACE AN AD: 631-843-SOLD

SUBSCRIPTIONS
1-800-NEWSDAY

All subscriptions include digital access.
Weekly Rates:

Daily & Sunday (7 days): \$24.99
Friday, Saturday, Sunday: \$14.09
Sunday Only: \$9.99
Digital Only Access: \$8.99

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Daily & Sunday: \$1361.88 annually
Daily: \$878.80 annually
Sunday: \$559.00 annually

Premium Day Editions

All subscriptions will include Premium Day editions. Each Premium Day edition will be charged at a rate of up to \$5.49, in addition to the cost of that day's edition in the billing period when that Premium Day edition publishes. Charges to your account balance for Premium Day editions will result in shortening the length of service covered by your existing payment on account. Premium Day editions scheduled to date: February 19, 2018; May 18, 2018; August 12, 2018; October 6, 2018; November 22, 2018; December 31, 2018. Newsday will deliver a December 24/25 edition on December 24, 2018 containing additional content for December 25. Subscribers will be charged for December 24 and 25, 2018 at the current subscription rate for each day. Please see Newsday.com/service for subscription terms and conditions. The following pertains to mailed subscriptions as required by the USPS:

Newsday (USPS# 388-760) (ISSN# 0278-5587) is published daily except Sunday and Christmas Day by Newsday LLC, 235 Pinelawn Rd., Melville, N.Y. 11747. Periodicals postage paid at Huntington Station, N.Y. Postmaster: Send address changes to 235 Pinelawn Rd., Melville, N.Y. 11747.

buy&sell

Inside ExploreLI

TOP STORIES

DEADLINE LOOMING FOR SCHOOL SPENDING DATA

School outlay per student due in six LI districts Aug. 31

BY JOHN HILDEBRAND
john.hildebrand@newsday.com

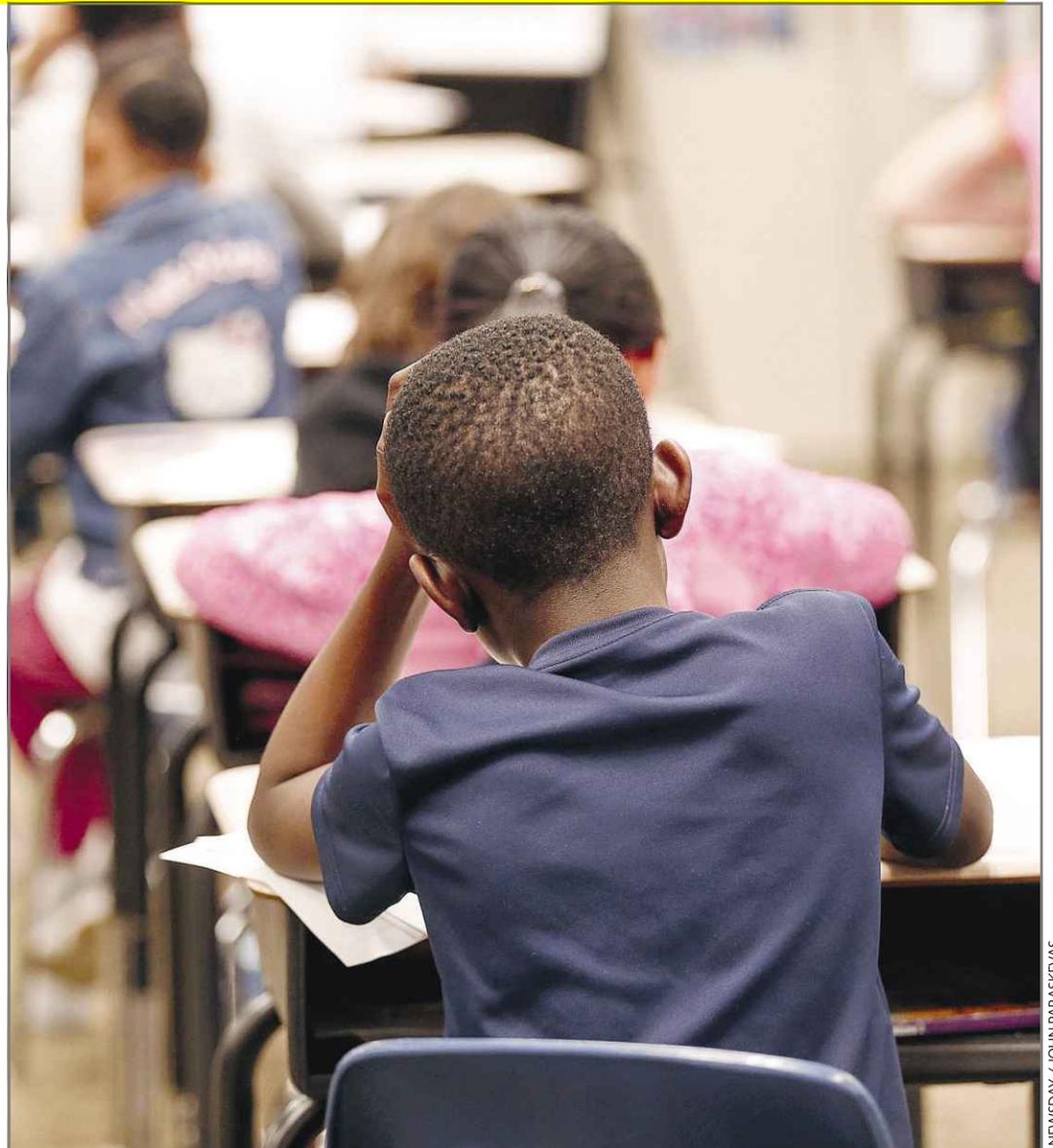
Six Long Island districts are scrambling to gather figures showing how much they spend per student in each of their school buildings, as part of what state leaders call a broad effort to shed light on education funding in the nation's highest-spending state.

The state budget office set an Aug. 31 deadline for the first round of disclosures of school-level spending in 76 districts statewide, including the half-dozen systems in Nassau and Suffolk counties and New York City. The project is to expand over the next two years, ultimately extending to more than 120 districts on the Island and more than 670 statewide.

The state's new financial reporting requirements, spelled out in a law adopted in the spring, have drawn widespread skepticism from local school administrators. Many object to the new mandates as a paperwork burden better suited to New York City, with its 1,600 school buildings, than to their own smaller suburban systems.

Local districts picked by the state for participation are Brentwood, Central Islip, Hempstead, Roosevelt, William Floyd and Wyandanch. Selection in this first round was limited to districts that depend on the state for more than half their total revenues — that is, systems where the local tax base is relatively small.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo sought adoption of the new school-funding disclosures, partly on grounds that greater public scrutiny is needed in New York because it ranks No. 1 among states in per-



NEWSDAY / JOHN PARASKEVAS

pupil spending for public schools. The statewide average is \$22,366, and most of the Island's districts top that level, according to the most recent U.S. Census figures. The national average is \$11,762.

A national movement

New York State's push for greater financial transparency is part of a national movement

supported by civil rights groups and social reformers. One idea behind the movement is that disclosure could reveal whether public schools in poor, mostly minority communities get shortchanged financially, compared with schools in wealthier neighborhoods.

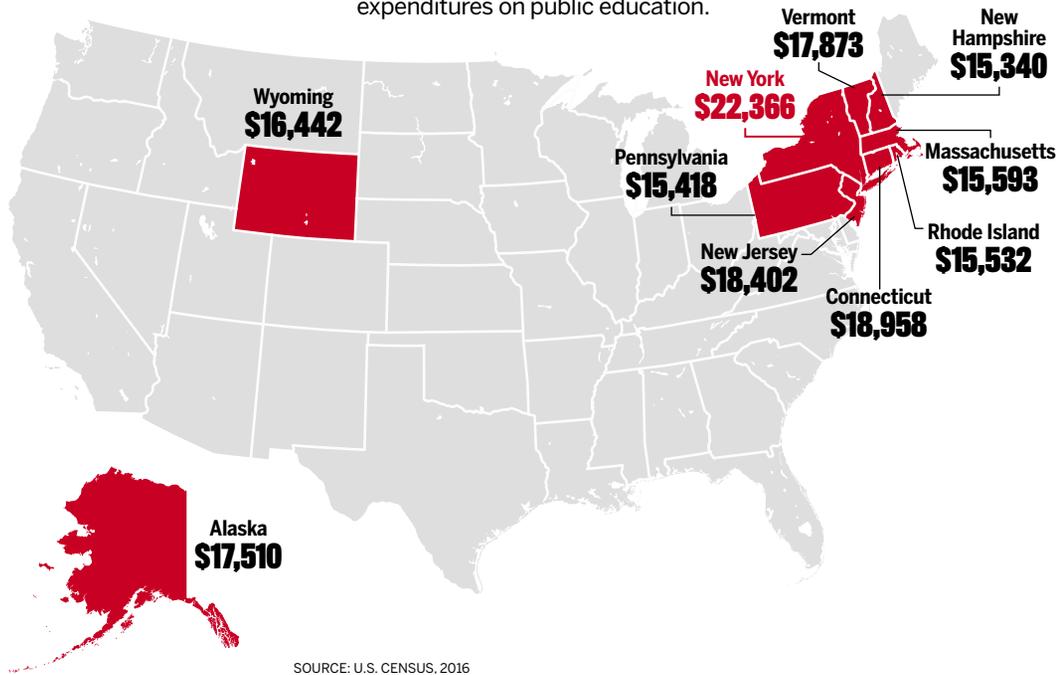
Cuomo's budget director, Robert Mujica, who is helping to spearhead the project, ad-

ressed the issue in a letter to local school administrators on July 11. The letter was accompanied by more than 40 pages of instructions on how to fill out state forms, drawing on per-pupil funding, student enrollment, teachers' years of experience, instructional salaries and other granular data.

"New York schools are funded at the highest level per

Top ten states for per-student spending

Here is average per-student spending in states with the highest expenditures on public education.



pupil of any state — 86 percent above the national average,” Mujica stated. “But spending totals alone are an imperfect metric for ensuring access to high-quality education. The more important question is whether poorer schools are funded equitably.”

New York and other states have compiled per-pupil spending figures at district levels for many years, but calculations at the school level are more rare. A federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, requires school-level financial reports nationwide starting in December 2019.

Reluctant cooperation

Representatives of the half-dozen local districts involved in the project told *Newsday* they intend to comply with the state’s requirements, though some are proceeding reluctantly. The fact the initiative is tied to an Aug. 31 deadline means that districts should be posting school spending figures on their websites right around the time classes open in early September.

Under the state law, any district failing to comply risks having a portion of its state aid temporarily withheld.

“Yes, it might be a pain in terms of all we do in getting ready for the fall, but it’s a requirement and we’re going to comply with the law,” said Howard Koenig, superintendent of Central Islip schools and a veteran administrator



Howard Koenig, Central Islip schools chief, has concerns over the new system’s effectiveness.

with more than 20 years’ experience.

Koenig voiced doubts, however, about the new reporting system’s effectiveness. He disagreed with advocates of the system who say it could help spotlight funding inequities in districts that allow teachers with the greatest seniority and highest pay to choose the schools to which they are assigned.

Those advocates say such policies provide a built-in advantage to schools that serve more affluent neighborhoods, and thus may be considered most desirable by teachers.

Koenig disputed that, saying younger teachers often prove as competent as their more experienced colleagues.

“You know, we have younger teachers who are superstars — it happens all the time,” he said.

Another concern of local school officials is that some parents and other residents may jump to the conclusion that their neighborhood school is shortchanged, simply because other schools in the district show higher levels of per-pupil spending. Officials noted there are many reasons why one school might legitimately receive more money than another building down the road.

As one example, administrators cited schools that include concentrations of special education students who require smaller classes and higher levels of service than students in regular classes. Average spending may well be higher in such schools without representing any inequity, officials said.

“It’s not so much that we fear the release of data, but rather that people will misinterpret the data,” said Richard Loeschner, superintendent of Brentwood schools.

The state’s reporting form seeks to deal with such situations by asking districts to describe “anything unique about certain schools which explain why per pupil spending at these locations may be significantly higher/lower than the district average.”



Remy Zech, 3, holds up a board with pictures of his uncle, Scott Beigel, a victim of the Florida shooting who grew up in Dix Hills.

Rally against gun violence

BY KADIA GOBA
kadia.goba@newsday.com

Since her brother, Scott Beigel, died in the Feb. 14 mass shooting at a Parkland, Florida, high school, Melissa Zech has made a point of traveling from her Connecticut home to take part in anti-gun violence rallies.

Sunday morning, Zech, who grew up with Beigel in Dix Hills, drove with her husband and two children to Breezy Park in Huntington Station where the family joined 600 others at a student-led rally to show solidarity and call for an end to gun violence.

Zech said her goal is to push the anti-gun violence movement forward by focusing on current and newly graduated high school students — the next generation of voters.

“Any way that we can support them is the way of the future,” Zech said of the students, many of whom will soon vote for the first time.

Hundreds of those potential voters attended the rally at noon Sunday that also included Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Glen Cove), relatives of victims of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and hundreds of sign-

carrying activists demanding reasonable gun laws.

The rally followed a 15-minute march along Oakwood Road in which dozens of demonstrators, many wearing orange T-shirts bearing messages in support of gun reform legislation, chanted, “Hey hey, ho ho, the NRA has got to go.”

The Long Island chapter of March for Our Lives helped organize Sunday’s rally. March for Our Lives, based in Washington, D.C., has held numerous rallies nationwide since Nikolas Cruz is alleged to have opened fire in Parkland, killing 17 students and faculty, including Beigel, a geography teacher.

Avalon Fenster, 16, of Huntington, and a co-founder of the Long Island chapter of March for Our Lives, was among those at Sunday’s rally who had harsh words for the epidemic of gun violence in the United States.

“Gun violence in America is domestic terrorism,” Fenster, a student at The Stony Brook School, told a cheering crowd as she spoke from a portable stage set up on one of the park’s athletic fields.

She said the reality of being a high school student in 2018 means learning what to do in the event of an active-shooter attack.

NEWSDAY / GUSTAVO PABÓN

JAMES CARBONE