

EDITORIALS

Working against students' needs

The union umbrella group New York State United Teachers objects to the use of student performance on state and federally mandated standardized tests to rate teacher performance.

Long Island parents in the opt-out movement — which grew from the fight against curriculum changes known as Common Core and new and tougher standardized tests for students in third through eighth grades — hate the tests, too. They object to the amount of testing, to the possibility students could be judged by the results, and fear that teachers judged by student scores would make classes test-prep factories.

Since opposition to the English and math tests and the teacher evaluations began blossoming in 2011, the two groups have worked together seamlessly. Now differing priorities are pulling them apart.

NYSUT is supporting a bill, likely to pass in this legislative session, that would make using the state tests in teacher evaluations optional and give districts latitude in which metrics to use to rate teachers. This could include other tests, like Regents exams, but is unlikely to include new exams, as critics of the bill have claimed. In this climate, it's hard to imagine a district adding optional tests and rating teachers based on them. But activist parents who have driven the Long Island opt-out rate to about 50 percent aren't going along with NYSUT because this bill wouldn't reduce standardized testing, or ban evaluating students or teachers on the results.

NYSUT's priority is protecting members from any evaluation system that would make it easier to identify and possibly fire underperforming teachers. The parents' priority is protecting children from tests or test results because of a stressful experience. Together, they've stymied the movement to make sure New York's children have effective teachers and succeed at rigorous coursework that will prepare students for careers and college.

— *The editorial board*

Give Glen Cove time to prepare ferry service

A reliable Glen Cove ferry could become a critical part of the region's public transportation puzzle — and a model for other possible commutes on the region's waterways.

But it makes no sense to force the start of the ferry service too quickly, especially when the Garvies Point project is still under construction, and parking and navigating the area remain challenging.

So, the Federal Highway Administration should extend its Jan. 1, 2019, deadline for the start of service. The city has \$16.6 million in federal grants for building the terminal and dredging Glen Cove Creek, part of the environmental improvements for the area. Glen Cove might have to repay those grants if it doesn't meet the federal deadline.

But there should be no hold on the efforts of Mayor Timothy Tenke and Glen Cove's City Council to plan and create a desirable ferry system. City officials have to choose an operator and address scheduling, pricing and logistics. And cost will be critical. Attracting commuters will require a ticket price not too different from a Long Island Rail Road fare, meaning subsidies are needed. The \$1 million, two-year subsidy promised by Garvies Point developer RXR Realty can get the city started, but a long-term financing plan is needed.

The city also should consider partnerships with ride-sharing companies, shuttle services and others to help passengers get to and from the ferry both in Glen Cove and at ports in Manhattan.

With a federal extension, and the possibility of the new residents of Garvies Point as a core group of future riders, Glen Cove could be on the way to establishing Nassau County's first successful ferry system. That could make smoother sailing for all of us. — *The editorial board*

MATT DAVIES



■ See more Matt Davies cartoons: newsday.com/matt

LETTERS

His case for doctor-aided suicide in NY

I believe many doctors want to keep patients alive because it's great money. For many patients, more money is spent on end-of-life medicine than at any other time in their lives.

When my stroke-victim father was in the hospital, there wasn't a test or procedure that was missed. When a tiny spot was found on my 88-year-old mother's chest X-ray, a doctor suggested an exploratory procedure. When I asked what the upside was beyond a painful recovery, assuming she survived, he couldn't give a good answer. The procedure wasn't done, and Mom is 96 and in decent condition.

I do not want to leave life the way I came in, in diapers and unable to care for myself. When I'm tired of living, no one should be

able to tell me I can't end my life at a time and place of my choosing ["As Albany considers doctor-aided suicide," Letters, June 3].

When the pain of any condition makes it unbearable to go through the day, why prolong the suffering? Back in the day, some family doctors came to the house of terminally ill people and did the right thing. I want that option to be available today.

Bob Cavaliere,
Port Jefferson Station

Why is Nassau waiting on bag fee?

Richard Nicoletto, the presiding officer of the Nassau County Legislature, is refusing to consider a vote on a bill proposed by Legis. Debra Mule to encourage the use of reusable bags in the county ["Charged up on bag fees," News, May 24].

Suffolk County instituted a 5-cent charge for paper and plastic bags in January, and it has succeeded. In the first three months, 40 percent more people were using reusable bags, according to a survey. In Long Beach and other places, similar laws have succeeded.

Nicoletto says the 5-cent charge will create a tax burden. This is just not true! The real tax burden is the cost of cleaning up the environmental damage of single-use plastic bags. Nicoletto also says he is waiting for Albany to act. While Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo proposed a bill, there is no guarantee that the State Legislature will pass it soon. We need to urge our Nassau County legislators to do the right thing for our communities now.

Shelley Goldman,
Merrick

■ It is time for Nassau