

SUNY OLD WESTBURY
WOMEN'S CENTER

ENVISIONING WOMEN ON LONG ISLAND:
WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE



SUNY OLD WESTBURY

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PROJECT SUMMARY

SUNY Old Westbury Women’s Center piloted *Envisioning Women on Long Island* by charting how well Long Island and New York women are represented in governance. For the *Women in Governance* project, Women’s Center student interns researched women in elected office from the local school board to the U.S. Congress, then translated their research into infographics and maps for a visual portrayal of women’s current status as political leaders.

Women’s representation in governance is a critical hallmark of democracy. It is also a global concern. The U.N. finds an intimate link between women’s involvement in governance and “deepened democracy” and a prioritization of social needs. However, around the world women constitute only 22 percent of the elected members of parliament in 2015. The U.S. ranks 76th among the world’s 190 nations for the percentage of women in Congress, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. With women serving as only 20 percent of elected officials at the congressional level, we lag behind democratic nations such as Finland or Sweden. But the U.S. also falls behind Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Columbia, and Algeria, nations hardly perceived as democratic.

How are we doing on Long Island and in New York State? *Women in Governance* finds that even at the lowest levels of government, often considered stepping stones to higher office, there is no parity between men and women. Women are elected to 45 percent of Long Island school board positions, yet ten percent of Long Island’s school districts have a lone woman representative. This is ironic, as women first gained suffrage for local school board elections in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. More than a century later parity remains elusive.

At the countywide level women’s representation in governance is worse. In the Suffolk County Legislature and in local cities and town councils women are underrepresented. Only in the Nassau County Legislature are men and women near parity. The gender divergence is stark in executive positions. Women lead less than fifteen percent of Long Island towns, cities or villages.

Similarly, at the state and national level women are poorly represented. Long Island has no women in the New York State Senate; statewide only seventeen percent of women hold positions in the Senate. The Assembly is better, as over twenty percent of Assembly members from Long Island and statewide are women—this is still thirty percent from parity however. Few women have ever held a statewide executive position. Since the state’s founding in 1777, no woman has served as New York State’s Governor, Attorney General, or Comptroller, and there have been only four women Lieutenant

Governors. Nationally, New York State has had parity in the U.S. Senate since 2000. However, in the U.S. House of Representatives only 20 percent of positions are held by women.

Women obtained the vote nearly a century ago and in their quest for equality have sought leadership positions in elected governance, from local school boards to the U.S. Presidency. Despite great strides since the 1980s as a result of the women's movement, women remain underrepresented in governance—locally, nationally, and globally.

When young women look at our political landscape, what do they see? The reasons for women's limited participation in governance are complex, but when half of our population remains largely underrepresented can we claim a representative democracy? By bringing attention to women's persistent underrepresentation in governance, the Women's Center at SUNY Old Westbury hopes that *Envisioning Women on Long Island: Women in Governance* will inspire more women to run for office and enhance support for qualified women candidates.

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SUNY Old Westbury

¹United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, *Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World*, 2004, available at [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/\(httpAuxPages\)/20BE81EC0685F6DFC1256FB1004DFC80?OpenDocument&panel=additional](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/document.nsf/(httpAuxPages)/20BE81EC0685F6DFC1256FB1004DFC80?OpenDocument&panel=additional)

²According to UN Women's Statistics, women constituted only 11% in 1995, so the 22% is a 100% increase in a decade. UN Women, "Facts and Figures: Women in Political Participation," <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>

³Women in National Parliaments, Intra-Parliamentary Union; <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

⁴Jennifer Lawless and Richard L. Fox, *The Continued Underrepresentation of Women in U.S. Politics*, Women and Politics Institute, American University, 2012; <http://www.american.edu/spa/wpi/upload/2012-Men-Rule-Report-web.pdf>

METHODOLOGY

For the *Envisioning Women on Long Island: Women in Governance* project, SUNY Old Westbury Women's Center interns collected local, state and federal data on elected officials to create a "snapshot" of women in governance in the spring of 2015. In each targeted group, students identified and recorded the number of male and female representatives.

The websites for the 114th United States Congress and the New York State Legislative branches were searched for data, along with *The New York State Red Book*. At the local level, researchers obtained information for town and city councils from the Long Island Associations's 2015 *Long Island Guide to Economic Development and Public Officials*. The websites for Long Island school districts were used as sources for data for the Boards of Education.

Interns designated as Data Coordinators, verified, organized and combined the raw data into a comprehensive record. In the final stage of the project, Data Visualization interns analyzed the findings and created infographs to display the salient points. Faculty supervised all stages of the process which took place during February 2015 to April of 2015.

WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

LONG ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

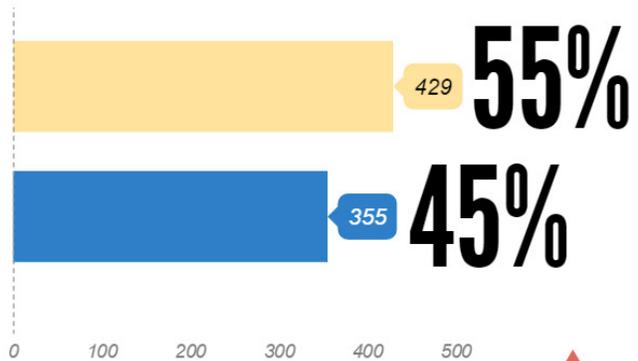


REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the 125 School Districts on Long Island, 355 of the 784 school board members are women.

4 Districts have no women.



DETAILS ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS

40%

HAVE 2 OR FEWER WOMEN

33%

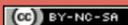
HAVE 2 OR FEWER MEN

10%

HAVE ONLY 1 WOMAN

3%

HAVE ONLY 1 MAN



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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

LONG ISLAND TOWN COUNCILS

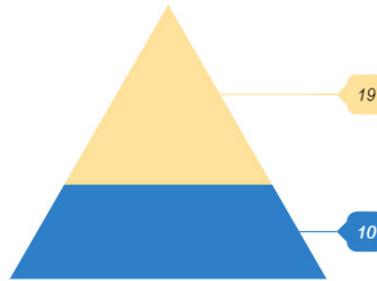


NASSAU COUNTY

TOWN & CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

There are 3 towns and 2 cities in Nassau County for a total of 5 councils with 29 members.

- 1 City has less than 25% council representation of women: Glen Cove



34%
ARE WOMEN

SUFFOLK COUNTY

TOWN & CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

There are 10 towns in Suffolk County with 43 council members.

- 4 Towns have less than 25% council representation of women: Islip, Riverhead, Shelter Island, Smithtown



40%
ARE WOMEN



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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

MAYORS & TOWN SUPERVISORS



NASSAU COUNTY



52%
 of Nassau's
 population are
 women.

15%
 of Nassau's
 Mayors
 and Town
 Supervisors are
 women.

Map Created by Old Westbury Women's Center, April 2015
 Source: 2015 Long Island Guide to Economic and Public Officials

Esri, HERE, DeLorme, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the
 GIS user community.



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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

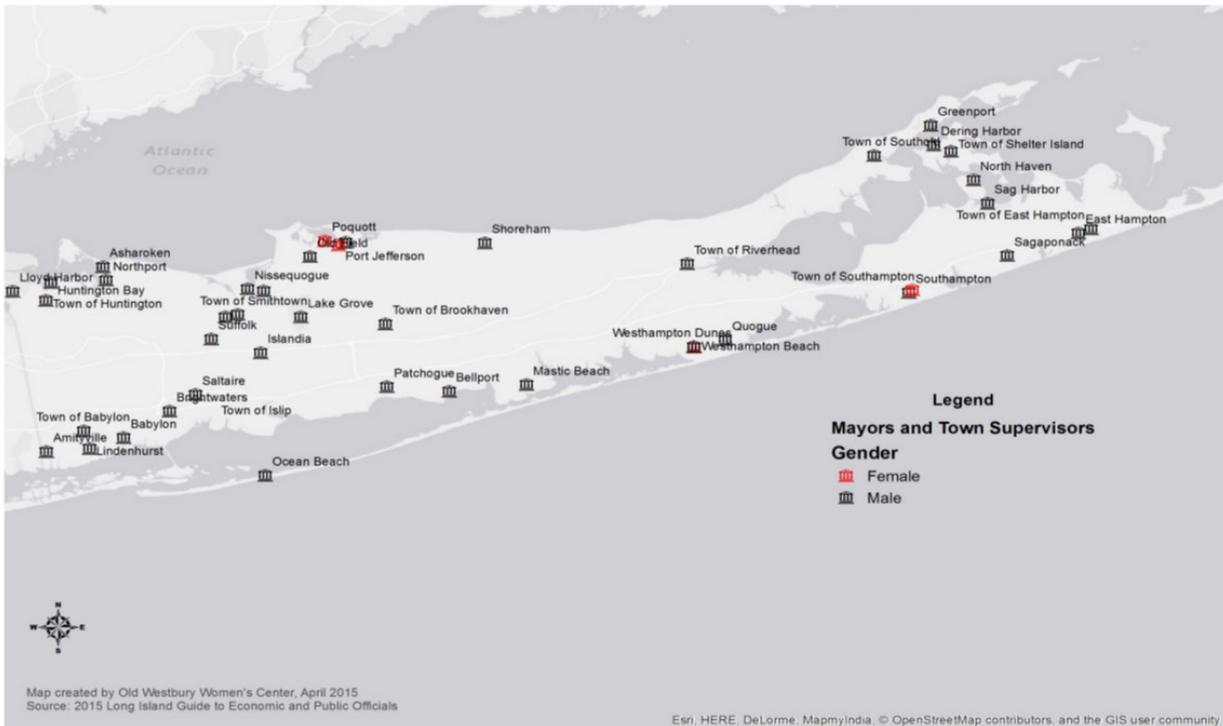
MAYORS & TOWN SUPERVISORS



SUFFOLK COUNTY

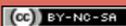
12%

of Suffolk's Mayors and Town Supervisors are women.



51%

of Suffolk's population are women.



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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

LONG ISLAND COUNTY LEGISLATORS



NASSAU COUNTY

LEGISLATURE

The Nassau County Executive position was created in 1938 and has been held by 8 men and 0 women.

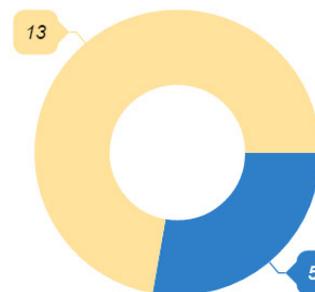


47%
ARE WOMEN

SUFFOLK COUNTY

LEGISLATURE

Beginning in 1961 the Suffolk County Executive position has been held by 8 men and 0 women.



28%
ARE WOMEN



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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

NEW YORK STATE

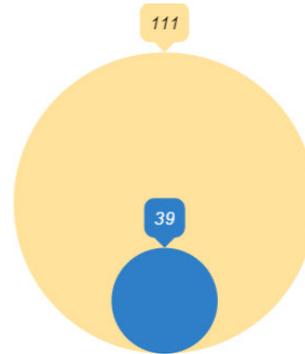


NYS ASSEMBLY

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

There are 150 members of the New York Assembly.

4 Out of the 22 Long Island districts are represented by women.



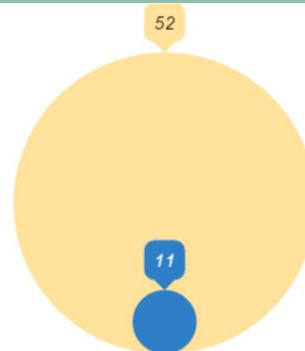
26%
ARE WOMEN

NYS SENATE

SENATE MEMBERS

There are 63 members of the New York Senate.

0 Out of 9 NYS Senators from Long Island are women.



17%
ARE WOMEN



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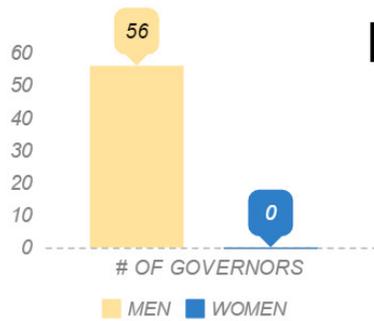
WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

NEW YORK STATE

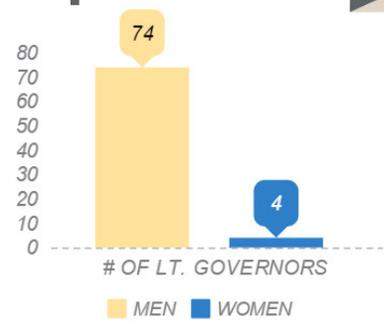


NYS EXECUTIVES SINCE 1777

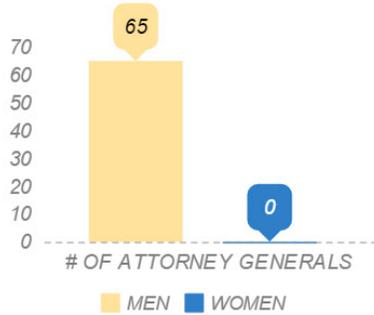
GOVERNOR



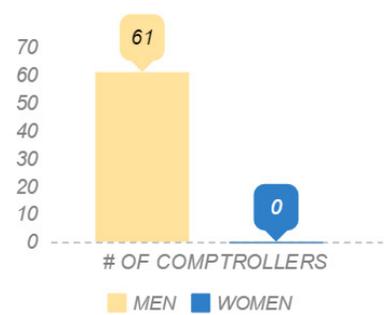
LT. GOVERNOR



ATTORNEY GENERAL



COMPTROLLERS



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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE

114th UNITED STATES CONGRESS

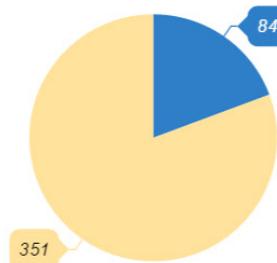


HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE MEMBERS

There are 435 members of the United States House of Representatives.

20% There are 5 members of the House from Long Island. 1 is a woman.



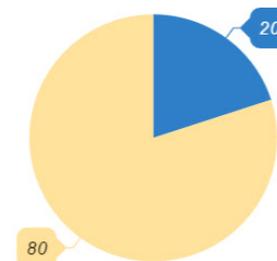
19%
ARE WOMEN

SENATE

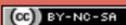
SENATE MEMBERS

There are 100 members of the United States Senate.

- 2** New York has had only 2 women Senators, the first in 2000.
- 3** California, New Hampshire & Washington have 2 women Senators.



20%
ARE WOMEN



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PROJECT RESEARCHERS

Data Visualizations: Kaciny Calixte, Computer Science, Class of 2016; Erin Cornish, Psychology, Class of 2015; Marissa Disla, American Studies, Class of 2015; Sarah Maye, Public Health, Class of 2016; Anjana Mathews, Politics, Economics and Law, Class of 2016.

Data Coordinators: Erin Cornish, Psychology, Class of 2015; Shawntasia Daughtry, Psychology, Class of 2017; Marissa Disla, American Studies, Class of 2015; Sarah Maye, Public Health, Class of 2016; Ashley Saint-Gilles, Psychology, Class of 2016.

Research: Kaciny Calixte, Computer Science, Class of 2016; Erin Cornish, Psychology, Class of 2015; Shawntasia Daughtry, Psychology, Class of 2017; Marissa Disla, American Studies, Class of 2015; Olivia Ilardi, Psychology, Class of 2016; Ashanti Loadholt, Public Health, Class of 2015; Gabrielle Luc, Sociology, Class of 2016; Anjana Mathews, Politics, Economics and Law, Class of 2016; Sarah Maye, Public Health, Class of 2016; Natalie Otero, Media and Communication, Class of 2015; Shanell Parker, Sociology Class of 2017; Ayesha Rahman, American Studies, Class of 2017; Ashley Saint-Gilles, Psychology, Class of 2016.

Faculty: Cristina Notaro, Assistant Dean, School of Arts and Sciences; Carol Quirke, Associate Professor, American Studies.

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Patrick O'Sullivan, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, SUNY Old Westbury

New York State Library

DATA

Level of Government	Source	# Reps	# Women Reps	# Men Reps	% Women Reps
U.S. Congress					
Long Island Representatives	house.gov/representatives/	5	1	4	20%
New York Representatives	house.gov/representatives/	27	8	19	30%
New York Senators	senate.gov/senators/contact/senators_cfm.cfm?State=NY	2	1	1	50%
U.S. House	house.gov/representatives/	435	84	351	19.3%
U.S. Senate	senate.gov/senators/contact/senators_cfm.cfm	100	20	80	20%
U.S. Congress	fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43869.pdf	535	104	431	19.80%
State-Level Elected Officials					
Executive Branch: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and Comptroller	<i>The New York State Red Book</i> (Albany: Williams Press, 2014).	4	1	3	25%
New York State Legislature					
Long Island Assembly Members	assembly.state.ny.us/mem/	22	4	18	18%
Long Island State Senators	nysenate.gov/senators	9	0	9	0%
New York State Senate	nysenate.gov/senators	63	11	52	17.40%
New York State Assembly	assembly.state.ny.us/mem/	150	40	110	36%
County-Level Elected Officials					
Nassau County Legislature	nassaucountyny.gov/504/Legislators	19	9	10	47%
Suffolk County Legislature	legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/legislators.html	18	5	13	28%
Long Island Towns and Cities					
Executives: Mayors or Town Supervisors					
Nassau County	LI Association, <i>Long Island Guide to... Public Officials</i> , 2015*	5	2	3	40%
Nassau County (unincorporated)	LI Association, <i>Long Island Guide to... Public Officials</i> , 2015	63	8	55	12.7%
Suffolk County	LI Association, <i>Long Island Guide to... Public Officials</i> , 2015	10	2	8	20%
Suffolk County (unincorporated)	LI Association, <i>Long Island Guide to... Public Officials</i> , 2015	33	3	30	9%

City Councils					
Nassau Town and City Councils	LI Association, <i>Long Island Guide to... Public Officials</i> , 2015	29	10	19	35%
Suffolk Town and City Councils	LI Association, <i>Long Island Guide to... Public Officials</i> , 2015	43	17	26	39.5%
School Districts					
Amagansett Union Free	aufsd.org	5	2	3	40%
Amittyville Union Free	amittyvilleschools.org	7	4	3	57%
Babylon Union Free	babylon.k12.ny.us	7	5	2	71%
Baldwin Union Free	baldwinschools.org	5	3	2	60%
Bay Shore Union Free	bayshore.k12.ny.us	5	1	4	20%
Bayport-Blue Point Union	bbpschools.org	7	2	5	29%
Bellmore Union Free	bellmore.k12.ny.us	5	3	2	60%
Bellmore-Merrick Central	bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us	8	7	1	88%
Bethpage Union Free	bethpagecommunity.com	7	3	4	43%
Brentwood Union Free	brentwood.k12.ny.us	7	5	2	71%
Bridgehampton Union	bridgehampton.k12.ny.us	7	3	4	43%
Brookhaven-Comsewogue	comsewogue.k12.ny.us	7	2	5	29%
Carle Place Union Free	cps.k12.ny.us	5	0	5	0%
Center Moriches Union	cmschool.org	5	2	3	40%
Central Islip Union Free	centralislip.k12.ny.us	7	3	4	43%
Cold Spring Harbor	http://www.csh.k12.ny.us	7	3	4	43%
Commack School District	commack.k12.ny.us	5	3	2	60%
Connetquot Central	ccsdi.org	5	3	2	60%
Copiague Union Free	copiague.k12.ny.edu	6	3	3	50%
Deer Park Union Free	deerparkschools.org	7	3	4	43%
East Hampton Union Free	easthamptonschools.org	7	4	3	57%
East Islip Union Free	eischools.org	5	0	5	0%
East Meadow Union Free	eastmeadow.k12.ny.us/emhs/index.htm	7	1	6	14%
East Moriches Union Free	emoschools.org	5	2	3	40%
East Quogue Union Free	eastquogue.k12.ny.us	5	5	0	100%
East Rockaway Union Free	eastrockawayschools.org	5	2	3	40%
East Williston Union Free	ewsonline.org	5	1	4	20%
Eastport-South Manor Union	esmonline.org	7	4	3	57%
Elmont Union Free	elmontschools.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=1	7	2	5	29%
Elwood Union Free	elwood.k12.ny.us	5	1	4	20%
Farmingdale Union Free	farmingdaleschools.org/site/default.aspx-?PageID=1	7	2	5	29%
Fire Island Union Free	fi.k12.ny.us	7	5	2	71%
Fishers Island Union Free	fischool.com	5	4	1	80%
Floral Park-Bellerose Union	floralpark.k12.ny.us/pages/Floral_Park-Belle-rose	5	3	2	60%
Franklin Square Union Free	franklinsquare.k12.ny.us	5	3	2	60%
Freeport Union Free	freeportschools.org	5	2	3	40%
Garden City Union Free	gardencity.k12.ny.us/site/default.aspx?Page-ID=1	5	3	2	60%

Glen Cove City	glencove.k12.ny.us	6	4	2	67%
Great Neck	greatneck.k12.ny.us	5	3	2	60%
Greenport Union Free	greenport.k12.ny.us	5	4	1	80%
Half Hollow Hills	halfhollowhills.k12.ny.us	7	2	5	29%
Hampton Bays	hbschools.us	5	1	4	20%
Harborfields Central	harborfieldscsd.net	6	1	5	17%
Hauppauge Union Free	hauppauge.k12.ny.us	7	2	5	29%
Hemstead Union Free	hempstedschools.org	5	3	2	60%
Herricks Union Free	herricks.org/board_members	5	3	2	60%
Hewlett-Woodmere	hewlett-woodmere.net	7	2	5	29%
Hicksville Union Free	hicksvillepublicschools.org	7	1	6	14%
Huntington Union Free	hufsd.edu	6	3	3	50%
Island Park Union Free	ips.k12.ny.us/pd/islandpark_school/index.html	5	3	2	60%
Island Trees Union Free	islandtrees.org	7	3	4	43%
Islip Union Free	islipufsd.org	7	2	5	29%
Jericho Union Free	jerichoschools.org	5	3	2	60%
Kings Park Central	schoolsites.schoolworld.com	5	2	3	40%
Lawrence Union Free	lawrence.org	7	1	6	14%
Levittown Union Free	levittownschools.com	7	2	5	29%
Lindenhurst Union Free	lindenhurstschools.org	9	5	4	56%
Little Flower Union Free	littleflower.schoolfusion.us	9	4	5	44%
Locust Valley Central	lvcsd.k12.ny.us	7	5	2	71%
Long Beach City	lbeach.org/boardofeducation	5	2	3	40%
Long Wood Central	longwood.k12.ny.us	7	2	5	29%
Lynbrook Union Free	lynbrookschools.org/schools/index.cfm?sid=1	7	4	3	57%
Malverne Union Free	malverne.k12.ny.us	6	3	3	50%
Manhasset Public Schools	manhassettschools.org/domain/69	5	3	2	60%
Massapequa Union Free	msd.k12.ny.us/index.cfm	5	2	3	40%
Mattituck-Cutchogue Union	mufsd.com	7	2	5	29%
Merrick Union Free	merrick.k12.ny.us/pages/Merrick_UFSD	7	6	1	86%
Middle Country Central	middlecountry.k12.ny.us/index.cfm	9	4	5	44%
Miller Place Union Free	millerplace.k12.ny.us	5	3	2	60%
Mineola Union Free	mineola.k12.ny.us	5	4	1	80%
Montauk Union Free	montaukschool.org/pages/Montauk_School	5	3	2	60%
Mount Sinai Union Free	mtnsinai.k12.ny.us	7	3	4	43%
New Hyde Park-Garden City	nhp-gcp.org	7	3	4	43%
New Suffolk Common	newsuffolkschool.com	5	3	2	60%
North Babylon Union Free	northbabylonschool.net	7	4	3	57%
North Bellmore Union Free	northbellmoreschool.org	5	3	2	60%
North Merrick Union Free	nmerrickschools.org	7	3	4	43%
North Shore Central School	northshore.k12.ny.us	7	5	2	71%
Northport-East Northport	northport.k12.ny.us	9	5	4	56%
Oceanside School District	oceansideschools.org	7	3	4	43%
Oyster Bay-East Norwich	obenschools.org	7	4	3	57%
Oysterponds Union Free	oysterponds.org	6	3	3	50%
Patchogue-Medford Union	pmschools.org	7	3	4	43%

Plainedge School District	plainedgeschools.org	7	4	3	57%
Plainview-Old Bethpage	pob.k12.ny.us	7	5	2	71%
Port Jefferson Union Free	portjeffschools.org	7	2	5	29%
Port Washington Union	ortent.k12.ny.us	7	3	4	43%
Quogue Union Free	teacherweb.com/ny/quogue	5	3	2	60%
Remsenburg-Speonk	rsufsd.drupalgardens.com	5	2	3	40%
Riverhead Central	riverhead.net	7	4	3	57%
Rockville Center Union Free	rvcschools.org	5	2	3	40%
Rocky Point Union Free	rockypointufsd.org	5	2	3	40%
Roosevelt Union Free	rooseveltufsd.org	5	2	3	40%
Roslyn Union Free	roslynschools.org	7	1	6	14%
Sachem School District	sachem.edu	9	2	7	22%
Sag Harbor Union Free	sagharborschools.org	7	5	2	71%
Sagaponack Common	sagaponackschool.com	3	1	2	33%
Sayville Union Free	sayville.k12.ny.us	7	2	5	29%
Seaford Union Free	seaford.k12.ny.us	5	3	2	60%
Sewanhaka Central High	sewanhaka.k12.ny.us	8	4	4	50%
Shelter Island Union Free	edline.net	7	3	4	43%
Shoreham-Wading River	swrschools.org	7	0	7	0%
Smithtown Central	smithtown.k12.ny.us	7	4	3	57%
South Country Central	southcountry.org	9	5	4	56%
South Huntington Union	shufsd.org	7	4	3	57%
Southampton Union Free	southamptonshools.org	7	3	4	43%
Southold Union Free	southoldufsd.com/boe	5	2	3	40%
Springs Union Free	springsschool.org	5	1	4	20%
Syosset Central	syossetschools.org	9	4	5	44%
Three Village Central	threevillagecsd.org	7	4	3	57%
Tuckahoe Common	tuckahoecommonsd.com	3	0	3	0%
Uniondale Union Free	district.uniondaleschools.org	5	1	4	20%
Valley Stream Union Free #13	valleystream13.com	7	3	4	43%
Valley Strem Union Free #24	valleystreamdistrict24.org/home-1.html	7	2	5	29%
Valley Stream Union Free #30	valleystream30.com	5	2	3	40%
Valley Stream Central HS District	vschsd.org	9	3	6	33%
Wainscott Common	wainscottschool.org	3	1	2	33%
Wantagh Union Free	wantaghschools.org	5	2	3	40%
West Babylon Union Free	wbschools.org	9	6	3	67%
West Hempstead Union	whufsd.com	6	3	3	50%
West Islip Union Free	wi.k12.ny.us	7	1	6	14%
Westbury Union Free	edlinesites.net/pages/WestburyPS	7	4	3	57%
Westhampton Beach Union	whbschools.org/westhamptonbeach	7	3	4	43%
William Floyd	wfsd.k12.ny.us	7	1	6	14%
Wyandanch Union Free	wyandanch.k12.ny.us/pages/Wyandanch_UFSD	7	3	4	43%
TOTAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS	125	784	355	429	45%

*Long Island Association, *Long Island Guide to Economic Development and Public Officials*, 2015 available at http://www.longislandassociation.org/pdfs/2015_li_guide_to_public_officials.pdf

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