



West Islip Public Schools

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BERNADETTE M. BURNS
Superintendent of Schools

September 2015

The Honorable Philip M. Boyle
69 W. Main Street, Suite B
Bay Shore, NY 11706

Dear Senator Boyle:

School Business Partnerships of Long Island (SBPLI) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1984 that establishes programs linking high schools and businesses throughout Long Island. Since its inception, SBPLI has partnered over 100 schools with local businesses to provide more than 20,000 students the opportunity to participate in internships and jobs, and to develop other close relationships with participating companies on Long Island.

One of SBPLI's signature programs is the *FIRST* Robotics Competition. Each year, *FIRST* provides an original challenge and a kit of parts to teams of high school students that build and program a 130 lb. robot of their own design and construction. Additionally, these high school teams organize marketing, public relations, fundraising, and management groups to compete in the regional competitions. This year, Long Island's regional event will be held at Hofstra University in April.

Some notable facts:

- Since 1999, well over 20,000 high school students have experienced STEM-based curriculum through the *FIRST* Robotics programs.
- Since 2005, 40-50 Long Island high schools have competed at Hofstra University annually, with well over 1,400 students actively involved as school team members each year.
- Long Island students who have participated in the *FIRST* Robotics Competitions have received over \$8 million in scholarships to the most prestigious colleges and universities in America.
- SBPLI brings together high schools and businesses to provide students a chance to work in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This in turn helps the Long Island business community develop its future workforce by providing internship opportunities.

Historically, grants and appropriations through Senator Owen Johnson provided some of the much-needed financial support. However, SBPLI has not received any such member item grants from the state since 2009 and has had to rely more heavily on corporate contributions (also a growing challenge). Funding is at a dangerously low point, and the SBPLI Robotics programs are at risk. **SBPLI is in critical need of your support to continue this highly successful program.**

I know how much importance you place on education and on the future of Long Island students. I appeal to you at this time to utilize whatever influence you have to marshal the resources and financial support required to continue these valuable programs. More information about this program may be obtained visiting the website at www.SBPLI.org or by contacting Mr. Joe Sicinski at SicinskiJ@aol.com or (516) 779-0015.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Bernadette M. Burns