



Monroe County School Boards Association

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DID YOU KNOW?

<p>The truth about school property tax increases</p>	<p>Over the past 3 years, the average property tax levy for school districts in Monroe County has increased only 1.7% per year. The 4-year average for local school property tax levy increases is 1.99% per year.</p>
<p>Schools have not been sheltered from state budget cuts</p>	<p>State aid for education for Monroe County school districts was cut by an average of 9.9% for the 2010-2011 budget year, a loss of almost \$63,000,000 to our local economy. In the last two budgets New York has reduced state aid for education by over \$3.5 billion. In the proposed budget, state aid cuts to Monroe County school districts average 14.9%, a reduction of \$70,795,337.</p>
<p>Schools have been making hard choices</p>	<p>For the current school year, Monroe County school districts eliminated 1,200 jobs, reducing the number of employees by 3%. Districts are considering additional layoffs, larger class sizes, and the elimination of programs as they deal with reduced revenues for the 2011-2012 budgets.</p>
<p>Only the State can control the mandates that are driving up education costs</p>	<p>20% of most school districts' spending is for Special Education. On top of the federal requirements, New York has added over 200 additional Special Education laws and regulations. If New York simply spent the average of what other states spend on Special Education, we would reduce costs by \$2 Billion per year.</p> <p>Mandatory contributions to the Teachers Retirement System are determined in Albany and are increasing disproportionately to all other costs and revenues. This school year the contribution is 39% greater than last year, next year's contribution is expected to increase 29% over the current year. The contribution rate will increase by 80% in just two years! Increased pension contributions represent a major cost for districts' 2011-12 budgets</p> <p>The state's Taylor Law requires union agreement to any change in working conditions. Calls for school districts to increase employee contributions to health insurance ignore Taylor Law restrictions on unilateral changes. Furthermore, the Triborough Amendment was interpreted in the courts to mean that when a contract expires, not only do the current provisions of a contract continue until a new contract is in place but also certain provisions for increases must be honored. As a result, despite difficult times, school district employees cannot be compelled to accept changes and can receive more salary and benefits by refusing to settle.</p>
<p>Our high school students ARE graduating at high levels</p>	<p>The statewide graduation rate from the 2009-2010 NYS School Report Cards is 74%. For all MCSBA districts the rate was 86%.</p> <p>Of the 2,691,267 students in New York's K-12 public schools, 45% of New York's public school students attend school in a Big Five district which collectively have a graduation rate of 55.7% 55% of New York's public school students attend schools outside the major cities; collectively those districts have an average graduation rate of 88.9%</p> <p>Sweeping generalizations that ignore the social and economic differences between the Big Five districts and the rest of the state will not improve education in New York. Attention and resources need to be focused on the specific needs of communities. One size fits all "solutions" are often counter-productive when district needs differ so widely.</p>
<p>The public supports funding public education</p>	<p>School budgets are the only governmental budgets that require a public vote. Last May New York's communities voted to approve 92% of school budgets. Despite deeply felt frustration with the state government, over the past four years the budget passage rate has averaged 94%.</p>