



Wayne Teachers' Association
415 Canal Drive East
Macedon, NY 14502
(Webpage: www.wayneta.org)

I am Jason Carter, President of the Wayne Teachers' Association. I work as a fourth grade teacher in the Wayne Central School District, located in the rural upstate New York county of Wayne. I also serve as President of the Wayne County Education Federation, which is comprised of 16 NYSUT locals, representing all 11 school districts of Wayne County New York.

The school district I work in is the largest in Wayne County with a student enrollment of more than 2400. Of the 2400 students, 24% receive free and reduced price lunches. This means one in four of our students live in poverty and qualify for financial assistance in purchasing their school lunch. Children living in poverty often require additional services in order to maintain academic progress. Unfortunately, some of these services in my district like our Summer Reading Program for K-5 students have been eliminated due to budget constraints courtesy of reductions in school aid and an unfair tax cap. While I bare witness to the negative impact this sobering statistic has on my classroom of students every day, Wayne Central's 24%, a number all too high as it is, pales in comparison to other school districts in Wayne County.

School Districts of Wayne County	Percent of Students Receiving Free and Reduced Lunch
Clyde-Savannah CSD	61%
Gananda CSD	20%
Lyons CSD	61%
Marion CSD	43%
Newark CSD	51%
North Rose-Wolcott CSD	54%
Pal-Mac CSD	33%
Red-Creek CSD	52%
Sodus CSD	45%
Wayne CSD	24%
Williamson CSD	32%



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We have at Wayne CSD invested in early childhood programs such as Universal Pre-k and serve over 75 children in our Pre-k program. While this is a great start more funding is needed to reach our near 200 students who yearly enter kindergarten in our district.

One of the largest issues our school district faces is loss of funding, particularly in the form of state aid. For the current school year of 2012-2013 Wayne CSD received a mere \$27,826 increase in state aid from the previous year. This is less than 1 percent increase and when coupled with a 2% tax cap has a devastating impact on our ability to provide a high quality education. State Aid has been reduced from \$15.44 million in 2009-10 to \$12.9 million in 2012-13. This is a 16.45% reduction over four years. These deep cuts are not only hitting my school district, but devastating the entire county of Wayne.

District	2010-2011 Gap Elimination Adjustment	2010-2011 FMAP Reduction	2010-2011 Gap Elimination Adjustment	2012-2013 Gap Elimination Adjustment	Federal State Fiscal Stabilization Fund	2010-2011 GEA Restoration Fed Ed Jobs Fund	Total Loss of All Funds
Newark	-\$2,041,660	-\$168,824	-\$2,562,774	-\$2,233,890	\$693,186	\$580,194	-\$8,280,528
Clyde-Savannah	-\$894,845	-\$78,259	-\$1,124,886	-\$874,617	\$303,818	\$254,295	-\$3,530,720
Lyons	-\$937,372	-\$76,836	-\$1,157,506	-\$950,967	\$318,257	\$266,380	-\$3,707,318
Marion	-\$1,283,324	-\$71,121	-\$1,624,656	-\$1,510,822	\$435,715	\$364,692	-\$5,290,330
Wayne	-\$2,395,731	-\$89,949	-\$2,845,141	-\$2,660,955	\$813,400	\$680,813	-\$9,485,989
Pal-Mac	-\$2,652,415	-\$97,068	-\$3,225,635	-\$2,963,896	\$900,550	\$753,757	-\$10,593,321
Gananda	-\$1,165,826	-\$64,389	-\$1,429,908	-\$1,315,900	\$395,822	\$331,301	-\$4,703,146
Sodus	-\$1,262,542	-\$99,091	-\$1,589,249	-\$1,412,065	\$428,659	\$358,786	-\$5,150,392
Williamson	-\$1,682,600	-\$64,430	-\$2,013,053	-\$1,858,943	\$571,278	\$478,157	-\$6,668,461
N. Rose-Wolcott	-\$1,347,839	-\$106,157	-\$1,745,223	-\$1,434,870	\$457,619	\$383,025	-\$5,474,733
Red Creek	-\$858,750	-\$89,997	-\$1,118,946	-\$892,861	\$291,563	\$244,037	-\$3,496,154



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The total loss of funding to Wayne County school districts over just the last few years is a staggering \$66,381,092.

The State uses the Combine Wealth Ratio to measure community wealth for the purposes of calculating state aid. This ratio is comprised equally of an income per pupil and the full value of property per pupil. An average district has a Combined Wealth Ratio of 1.0. In Wayne, our CWR is 0.686. This means we have two thirds of the wealth of an average school district in New York. This is another category Wayne CSD is higher than the other school districts of Wayne County, but still disparagingly low compared to state average of Wealth Ratio of 1.0.

School Districts of Wayne County	Combine Wealth Ratio
Clyde-Savannah CSD	0.381
Gananda CSD	0.515
Lyons CSD	0.415
Marion CSD	0.506
Newark CSD	0.499
North Rose-Wolcott CSD	0.496
Pal-Mac CSD	0.527
Red-Creek CSD	0.439
Sodus CSD	0.516
Wayne CSD	0.686
Williamson CSD	0.529

Wayne County is unique from most other counties in New York State in that it receives funding through a sales tax sharing agreement with the county government.

A brief bit of background history on the matter. In 1966 a law was created and passed by voters that set the Wayne County sales tax rate at 3%. The law called for 2% to be allocated to the county government and 1% to go to the component school districts of Wayne County. In 1991 the Board of Supervisor modified this agreement to cap the total amount received by schools at \$5.4 million. The amount of money that is shared is divided up amongst the school district based on total student enrollment.



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School Districts of Wayne County	Sales Tax Sharing Revenue
Clyde-Savannah CSD	\$300,000
Gananda CSD	\$400,000
Lyons CSD	\$330,000
Marion CSD	\$350,000
Newark CSD	\$780,000
North Rose-Wolcott CSD	\$470,000
Pal-Mac CSD	\$690,000
Red-Creek CSD	\$140,000
Sodus CSD	\$410,000
Wayne CSD	\$880,000
Williamson CSD	\$405,000
* Others	\$235,000

** Districts that are primarily geographically located in another county other than Wayne, but have district borders that slightly cross into Wayne County.*

There have been several attempts since 1991 by several supervisors to either eliminate or reduce the sharing of this sales tax revenue with school districts. If this were to happen now, under the new Tax Cap law, school districts would have no practical way to raise funds to replace any potential loss of this revenue. This would devastate the school districts of Wayne County by eliminating \$5.4 million in funds that are used to provide a quality education for the students of Wayne County. The Wayne Central School District loss of \$880,000, would force the district to raise class sizes, eliminate a large number of clubs and sports, and reduce services to our most needy students. While we are certainly thankful for receiving this funding, and recognize the devastating effect it would create by losing it, the fact that the funding level has stayed flat since 1991 with no increases has not kept pace with the size in cost due to inflation over this time period.

The bottom line is that Wayne Central, along with all of the other school districts across Wayne County, who are classified as low wealth, high poverty, and high tax communities have been significantly impacted by recent State Aid cuts. Given the State Aid cap that will limit growth in State aid, it is not clear if we will ever fully



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recover from the effects of the cuts.

The lack of resources is having a direct impact on our educational program. Since 31% of our revenues come in the form of State Aid, these reductions have had a significant impact on programs for our students. The loss of funding has directly impacted the Wayne Central School District and the programs that we can offer our students.

- Class sizes have increased at every level. Since the recent state aid reductions began in 2009, the size of my class at fourth grade has increased by 25%, while the amount of money available in the district budget for classroom supplies for my class has decreased by 60%.
- Our overall staff size has also significantly decreased over the past few years. We totaled 275 teachers in 2008 and are now down to 250. A similar ratio in reduction has occurred with our support staff. These reductions have led to decreased student services, increased class sizes, and reductions in programs.
- Art and Music have been hit particularly hard at the K-5 level. Due to a reduction of staff in these areas at this level, students now have 33% less seat time. This occurs because students used to go to the combination of art and music specials 3 times in a week cycle and now only go twice.

In short, while Wayne has taken significant steps to balance the budget during a time of fiscal austerity, we have reached a point where the problem cannot be solved at the local level. We need additional state aid to continue to provide a high quality education to our needy students.

In the 2012-13 school year, teachers are expected to teach lessons based on the common core. The state has not completed the process of developing the curriculum modules and teachers will need to develop lessons because state assessments will be based on the common core. School districts will need funding to provide professional development to teachers.



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Funding for these professional development programs will have a direct effect on student learning. The state needs to step up and provide this investment. Our school district houses its own Teacher Resource Center, in which I serve as a policy board member. Our TRC is a valuable resource in the professional development of our staff. But despite its significance, every year it faces the grim reality that it will have its funding cut or eliminated from the state budget. Our current grant total for the 2012-2013 of \$20,000 is a mere fraction of what it was when the Wayne TRC was first created in 2003. Facing the implementation of common core and new APPR, now more than ever, this critical funding is needed for the continued success of our school district.

The current fixation with standardized tests is causing problems throughout the school system. Prior to No Child Left Behind, New York limited testing to just two grades for ELA and math. The new requirements forced an expansion into grades 3 to 8.

The current focus on standardized testing has caused us to lose track of the most fundamental goal of public education: preparing students for success. Assessments should measure what students need to know. The fixation on standardized testing has caused us to lose track of the most fundamental goals of public education. We must provide students the capacity to learn more on their own and help them develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills that are essential to our democracy.

We must restore a balance to public education by prioritizing high-quality instruction informed by appropriate and useful assessments. We need a new system that is balanced and relies on authentic performance assessments developed by teachers to measure the learning of all students.

Furthermore, the cost associated with the new APPR regulations, both in actual dollars amount and in instructional time and resources, has hurt both staff and students. For example our high school students in chemistry recently completed a pre-assessment as required by the Student Learning Objective (SLO) component of the state portion of our APPR. This assessment, which served no instructional diagnostic purpose in regards to the teacher improving instruction in chemistry, is a



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measure to be used to label a teacher's supposed effectiveness. Since the students in these chemistry classes had not previously taking chemistry before given them an assessment at the start of the year resulted in only 22% of them managing to even score in the double digits with no of them coming close to passing. The students were frustrated by both the concept of taking such a test in which they had no chance of passing, but the complete waste of an instructional class period. This assessment also proceeded to waste valuable planning time for the teacher who required to score all of assessments. Since many of our students require special testing accommodations, and our school district simply does not have the funding to create, implement, or score this assessment, services to other students had to be cancelled as staff was called away from their regular duties to provide testing accommodations. In talking with the staff of Wayne Central it is clear that the negative impacts generated through implementation of these SLO assessments, unfortunately are consistent throughout our academic programs, classes, and grade levels.

In my discussions with teachers across Wayne County similar feelings regarding concerns about these SLO assessments have been expressed. The SLO assessments, covering non-reading/writing and math classes, were created by a WFL BOCES and Monroe BOCES consortium for use by their component school districts. This consortium was created due to individual school districts lack of financial resources to create assessments on their own and a general feeling that if they attempted such a task the assessments would be rejected by the state education department as part of the APPR approval process. The comments I have heard range from questioning the reliability and validity of these unproven measures of assessment that were never field tested. Vague assessment administration directions and scoring rubrics have caused confusion and potential inconsistency. This increased reliance on high stakes testing has done nothing to improve student achievement, but has successfully managed to frustrate students, waste valuable school resources, and create declining moral amongst staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I applaud the commission's decision to hold regional hearings in order to hear from more people.