

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON  
UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
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**Be it resolved by the Hastings-on-Hudson School District that mandate relief must be addressed by the New York State Legislature as school districts implement the property tax levy limit.**

**WHEREAS**, New York State leads the nation in local property taxes, in large part because New York leads the nation in imposing unfunded state mandates upon our local municipalities and school districts; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to New York's property tax crisis, the Governor and members of the New York State Legislature enacted legislation imposing a limit on the annual growth of the local school tax levy; and

**WHEREAS**, New York State school districts are under unprecedented funding shortfalls due to three years of frozen Foundation Aid, last year's \$1.2 billion aid cut, expiration of federal stimulus aid and revenue restrictions under the tax levy limit, which goes into effect for the 2012-13 school year, and

**WHEREAS**, unfunded and underfunded state mandates continually increase the obligations and expenditures of local public school districts, and a property tax levy limit without significant mandate reform will inescapably lead to drastic cuts in essential local school district programs and services, as well as significant layoffs of school district employees, and in some cases outright insolvency, in New York State school districts; and

**WHEREAS**, the cumulative impact of satisfying unfunded and underfunded mandates diverts local money from our school district's top priority of student learning,

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we the members of the Board of Education of the Hastings-on-Hudson School District join fellow school board members in Westchester and Putnam Counties in affirming the obligation of the Governor of the State of New York and the members of the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly, to reform mandates that are unsound, unduly burdensome or costly, and thereby lead to high property taxes in New York.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Article 24, Executive Law §666, which establishes a Mandate Relief Council, the Hastings-on-Hudson School District asks, by resolution of its governing body, that the Mandate Relief Council review the following mandate to determine whether the specific statute, regulation, rule or order of state government is an unfunded mandate or is otherwise unsound, unduly burdensome or costly so as to require that it be eliminated or reformed:

**Amend Section 209-a(1)(e) of the Civil Service Law to provide a freeze on step, lane, and longevity increases if a contract expires.**

Salaries account for approximately 55% of our school district budget. Currently, the expected annual step, lane, and longevity changes represent a 1.0% increase in our district budget. When step, lane, and longevity increases remain in effect after a contract expires, the unions have little incentive to settle or consider provisions in subsequent contracts that are less costly to the District. This is particularly burdensome with the 2% tax levy cap. Automatic schedule increases drastically hamper our district's ability to effectively negotiate changes in contract terms in response to economic hardship.

Pension and health benefits add another 1.7%, so that even if we negotiate freezes in cost of living salary adjustments, we will regularly exceed the cap. To live within the 2% property tax levy cap, the district needs greater flexibility to reduce the impact of automatic pay increases and an enhanced capacity to restructure the most costly aspects of our collective bargaining agreements.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Governor, Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, Assembly Speaker and Minority Leader, and the members of the State Senate and Assembly representing Westchester and Putnam Counties.

**DATED: March 23, 2012**