

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON
UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**
27 Farragut Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson, New York 10706
Tel: (914) 478-2900
www.hastings.k12.ny.us

Phone: (914) 295-3099

Fax: (914) 478-6208

Eileen Baecher, President
Jodie Meyer, Vice President

Trustees: Caryn Campbell
Lindsey Hicks
Donna Laing
Gabrielle Lesser
Wendy B. Naidich

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 521 of Education Law to allow School Districts to establish TRS Reserve Fund.

NYS allows school districts to establish Employee Retirement System (ERS) reserve funds in which to set aside monies for unexpected or significant increase in their annual pension contribution. Likewise, municipalities are permitted to establish similar funds for their annual pension contribution. However, school districts are unable to establish a Teachers Retirement System (TRS) reserve fund for this same purpose.

The S4067A-2011 bill vetoed by the Governor was different from the amendment we are requesting here. S4067A-2011 sought to allow school boards to borrow money to pay retirement costs. We are simply seeking an amendment that allows us to set aside money in a reserve fund. Pension contribution rates have varied dramatically over the past two decades, from almost zero to over 20%. Our district's teacher pension contribution for the 2011-12 school year represents just over \$2 million or 4.9% of our total budget. With such volatility in an expense obligation, and the limitation imposed by the tax levy cap for raising revenue in any particular year, we think it makes sense to allow for holding a reserve whenever possible. It will cost nothing to allow and will provide some help in our efforts to maintain programs that benefit the students.

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 20, 2012