



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR RELEASE:  
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## School Superintendents React to Leaders' Meeting on Property Tax Relief

**Albany, NY – May 6, 2009** – “New York school superintendents welcome consideration by Governor Paterson and Legislators of actions the state could take to help us reduce property tax pressures.

“During today’s leaders’ meeting, the Governor said that state actions might bring about a change in culture in school districts that would lead to more spending restraint and lower revenue expectations.

“We want to make clear – no institution is more accountable to the public than New York’s school districts. School district leaders don’t need public opinion surveys to know about property tax fatigue. We live with a poll that has real, bottom-line consequences – the annual school district budget vote that will take place two weeks from now. Along with libraries, schools are alone in facing this requirement.

“School district leaders have worked hard to respond to voter concerns over property taxes. Statewide, the proposed tax increases average 2.1 percent in the school budgets that voters will consider in two weeks. That is down from 3.7 percent and down from over 6 percent three years ago. Proposed spending increases this year average 2.3 percent.

“School leaders were able to hold down local taxes despite a relatively small state aid increase (1.9 percent) and a freeze on Foundation Aid. Most of the aid increase comes from expense reimbursement aids for construction, transportation and shared services. The Foundation Aid freeze means that most districts are receiving no additional help from the state in paying for increases in teacher salaries, health insurance premiums, utility bills or general costs.

“Our position on a school property tax cap is simple: *A property tax cap will hurt our schools. There are better options.*

“As we have in the past, we will continue to put forward better options which can reduce costs for taxpayers without harming services for schoolchildren. They include recommendations to promote more sharing of services across school districts, to reduce health insurance and purchasing costs, and streamline special education mandates.”

**Thomas L. Rogers, Ed. D.  
Executive Director**

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