



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 21, 2014

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Possible record approval rate for school budgets Superintendents grateful for voter support

Based on unofficial results, voters may have approved a record percentage of school budgets yesterday. With results from nearly all districts counted, it appears that voters have approved over 98 percent of school district budgets. The record pass rate to date is 97.3 percent, in 2009.

“Superintendents, school boards and their business officials had to make difficult choices in assembling budget proposals this year. We are grateful for the confidence in their judgments expressed by so many voters yesterday,” said Robert J. Reidy, Jr., Executive Director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents.

Reidy added, “Many district leaders still have grave concerns about long-term prospects for their schools, but we do recognize that this year’s state budget provided a significant overall increase in aid to education. Our state legislators delivered help that gave many district leaders and voters better options for their school budgets this year.”

This year’s statewide average proposed tax increase of 1.9 percent is the lowest in at least ten years.

Of the 24 districts which sought voter approval to over-ride the state’s property tax cap, 58 percent gained the necessary 60 percent super-majority. Several of these district proposals were supported by a majority of their voters.

A year ago, only 25 percent of the 28 districts attempting over-rides were successful in May votes.

Approximately 99 percent of districts proposing tax increases within their levy limit won support from the simple majority needed for approval, similar to results from the prior two years, the first governed by the tax cap law.

Districts which did not obtain approval yesterday may try again on June 17th, asking voters to consider either the same budget or a revised proposal. If districts do not gain voter approval, they must adopt a contingency budget with no increase in local tax levy over the prior year.

Once State Education Department releases official results, the Council will develop and publish an analysis of the results, including trends in pass rates and voter turnout.

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