

Take Action

Long Island!

The State of Long Island

How Long Island Compares to the
Rest of the State and the Nation

*Presented by members of the TALI Steering
Committee*

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- Welcome West Hempstead PTA, PTSA, SEPTA, staff, and community members

- Introductions
- Brief background on TALI

Something to think about

- If Long Island were a state...we would be ranked #1 in the nation in *High School Completion Rate*:
1. Long Island 2. Wisconsin 3. Vermont 4. N. Dakota/Minnesota 5. Iowa
- If Long Island were a state...we would be ranked #1 in the nation in *Intel Semifinalists*
- 54 Long Island high schools ranked in the top 7% of high schools in the nation by *The Washington Post*

More to think about

- 21 Long Island high schools rank among the Top 300 Best Schools in America
- 50% of Long Island graduates earn a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation compared to 27% for the rest of New York State
- Long Island's elementary and middle school students outperform every other region of New York State by every measure maintained by the State Education Department

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The Effect of the 2% Tax Cap

PART I

Tax Levy Cap facts

- Took effect in 2012. Remains in effect until June 15, 2016. (Fate is tied to law regulating rent control in NYC)
- Maximum tax levy increase of previous year's tax levy with a few exceptions. Allowable exemptions in the law can also increase the Maximum tax levy cap
- Example: If the cost of living goes up 1.4%, then the tax levy can only increase by 1.4%
- The 5 big cities are exempt from the law:
NYC/Buffalo/Rochester/Syracuse/Yonkers
(funding not tied to property tax)

Tax Levy Cap facts, continued

- Voter approval is still needed on school budgets. Any budget that is defeated results in a 0% tax freeze
- The Max Cap Levy (including exemptions) last year for West Hempstead was 3.55% which would just need a simple majority to pass
- The 2% cap can be increased only with a **60%** voter approval
- State aid may not exceed 4% even in good economic times when the state is flush

Tax Cap Comparison, NY vs MA

Element/Condition	Massachusetts	New York
CAP FUNCTIONS		
Failed Vote/No Vote	2.5% Increase	0.0% Increase
Simple Majority	Can Exceed Cap	2.0% Increase
Supermajority override (=60%)	None Needed	Can Exceed Cap
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS		
10 Year Enrollment Trend	-21%	-3.6%
State Aid History	CPI +8.6%/Year	CPI-Only
State Economic Growth	"Massachusetts Miracle"	Uncertain
STUDENT CONDITIONS		
Students in Poverty	28%	44%

Gov. Cuomo's Current Proposals

- Universal Pre-K
- \$20,000 teacher merit bonuses
- \$2 billion tax relief proposal — a “grab bag of cuts” for renters, property and business owners and upstate manufacturers

How Districts Will Be Affected

- While called a 2% tax cap, without voter approval it is a 0% tax cap
- How many more millions will have to be cut? Gives more incentive for people to vote “No”
- Most costs beyond local control (with limited exceptions) must fall under the 2% tax cap
- Increased school enrollments must fall under the cap.
 - e.g. If 2 or 3 more 4th graders move into district and class size is maxed, will district be able to add a new class?

Effects on Students

- Unfunded Mandates – bullying prevention, APPR, High-Stakes Testing, PARCC
- In-fighting within districts when programs are eliminated:
 - (Art club argues to save art. Music parents demand cuts in sports. Athletic boosters focus on saving sports...)
- Class sizes increase, electives will be cut, extra curricular activities will be harmed, specialized programs will be in jeopardy, and school closings will occur
 - How big can a class get before it's too many?
 - Can we expect to see anything previously cut to return?

Questions to Ask

- What happens when inflation goes up 3, 4, or 5%?
- Will there be a nurse in each school?
- If employee compensation packages are decimated, what effect will that have on morale? How will that impact the ability to attract top-notch professionals?
- What impact and what help is there for students if test scores go down?
- If dozens of employees are cut, are others trained to provide specialized programs?

More Questions

- If tragedies occur, will there be support staff to help students?
- If after school activities are curtailed, what will the kids be doing?
- What effect will these devastating cuts have on college admissions?
- How many scholarship opportunities will be lost?
 - Music, art and sports all contribute to those opportunities.
- With so many cutbacks, how will the quality of education continue to improve?

Times Have Changed

- Pre-Tax Cap:
 - If enrollment went up there was a budget line that handled this increase so that a teacher could be pulled off the PEL (Preferred Eligibility List) or a new teacher was hired. All services remained intact as they were and class size did not suffer.
- Tax Cap Era:
 - When enrollment goes up a district must decide whether to increase class size OR reduce elective classes or specialized skill classes to fill the need in core subject areas.

Most Objectionable

- Takes away local control.
- Prevents your elected officials, your neighbors, whom you trusted with your vote, from proposing a budget they believe meets the needs of your community.
- Assumes Albany knows better what your community's needs and wishes are. Albany ties your hands and those of your elected officials!
- Albany now says that 41% is worth more than 59%
 - This is the loss of the democratic principle of one person, one vote

Statewide Tax Cap Impact

- Two LI school districts -- Bay Shore and Sachem -- are among a statewide group grappling with significant financial pressures, the state comptroller's office recently reported
- Statewide, 87 districts, out of a total of 674 evaluated, facing larger-than-average problems.
- Edward Fale, Superintendent in Valley Stream District 24 said his district -- included in the "moderate stress" category with six other Island systems -- was short of reserve funds because it has spent reserves in past years to keep tax increases low. One result, he said, is that class sizes in kindergarten through second grade are creeping up.
- School leaders in Sachem and East Quogue said their districts also had depleted reserves in an effort to hold down tax increases, forcing layoffs.
- Like many colleagues, Les Black, the East Quogue schools chief, cited state caps on property taxes as a driving force behind efforts to economize
- "It's killing us," Black said. His district also is in the "moderate stress" category.

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Local Impact on Your District

PART II

What has West Hempstead Lost?

- 6th Grade Language Survey
- Gifted and Talented Program
- MS/HS Reduced to an 8 period day
- Loss of Elementary Science Specialist
- MS Clubs Cut
- Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES)
- Many Elective Classes in HS (eg. Arts, Business)
- Athletic Teams and Assistant Coaches
- Reduction in MS Athletics Teams and Intramurals
- Permanent Substitutes
- Department Chairs
- Teachers, Aides, Custodians, Grounds, Secretaries

West Hempstead State Aid since 2007

School Year	Aid Expected by Law	Aid Actually Received	Shortage
2007-08	\$6,638,860	\$4,565,784	\$2,073,076
2008-09	\$7,423,661	\$5,250,949	\$2,172,712
2009-10	\$8,125,257	\$5,250,949	\$2,874,308
2010-11	\$8,246,466	\$5,250,949	\$2,995,517
2011-12	\$8,216,470	\$5,250,949	\$2,965,521
2012-13	\$8,312,103	\$5,302,988	\$3,009,115
2013-14	\$8,031,209	\$5,318,946	\$2,712,263
Total	\$54,994,026	\$36,191,514	\$18,802,512



Since 2007-2008, NYS has withheld **\$18,802,512** in Foundation Aid from West Hempstead

Loss of State Funds Continued

- Since 2011-2012, West Hempstead has missed an additional \$4,928,524 in State Aid due to the Gap Elimination Adjustment.
- TOTAL STATE AID LOST BY WEST HEMPSTEAD because it wasn't delivered by NYS equals

\$23,731,036

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Tax Cap Structure

PART III

SUNSHINE, NEW YORK HAS 1000 HOMES

Total Amount Needed in Property Taxes to Operate Schools = \$10,000,000

HOMES REASSESSED

- TOTAL LOSS = \$1,000,000
- 100 HOMES,
 - TAXES CUT 2K= LOSS OF 200K
- 20 BUSINESSES,
 - TAXES CUT 40K= LOSS OF 800K

HOMES NOT REASSESSED

- 900 HOMES NOT REASSESSED
- TO RAISE \$10,000,000 These houses must be assessed an additional \$1,000,000
- $\$1,000,000/900$
Each HOUSE = \$1,111
TAX INCREASE PER HOME

Tax Cap “Sticker Shock”

- Last May, many voters approved a school budget that resulted in a tax levy increase somewhere in the 2% range. Many homeowners were “shocked” to see the tax bill increase by far more than they voted on...

- **EXAMPLE**

	Tax levy %	Tax rate %	“Sticker Shock”
● W. Hempstead:	3.55%	8.09%	+4.54%
● Hempstead:	1.98%	5.97%	+3.99%
● Syosset:	2.84%	9.13%	+6.29%

New Budget Won't Help

- **Governor Cuomo's New Proposals:**
 - Tax relief would be given to property owners who live in localities which stay under the tax cap – encourages districts to cut programs that they normally wouldn't consider cutting
 - Additional rebates would go to districts that consolidate services (eg. Consolidation with Hempstead or Malverne)

2014-15 Senate Budget

- **Make the tax cap worse!** It would require a district to stay below the 1.46 percent tax cap.
- Provide \$161 million less in funding for K-12 school aid than the Assembly budget

- Not address any testing, APPR, or common core issues
- The Senate actually adds as much money for tuition tax credits, charter schools, and for non-public schools as they do for K-12 public school aid.
- **The Senate would also make permanent the existing tax cap law that is set to sunset in 2016**

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What Can We DO?

Resolutions

Part IV

You can Take Action!

- Attend your local BOE meetings to learn what is being cut and ask if it is because of the Tax Cap;
- Ask your District to provide a list of what has been cut out or cut back due to the tax cap and high stakes testing;
- Share this information with neighbors, family, organizations of which you are a member including health clubs, house of worship, book clubs, community organizations;
- Contact your local representative and tell them that the tax cap needs modifications. We need to see:
 - simple majority vote
 - exempt costs that are beyond a school district's control
 - Allow for reserves to be created for NYSTRS (Pension Fund) costs
 - Allowance for increased enrollment
 - Safety & Security Upgrades

You can Take Action!

- JOIN *TALI*: info@TakeActionLI.org
- CALL/WRITE to the Governor and your legislators – Find contact info on our website:
www.TakeActionLI.org
- TALK with your neighbors/friends/colleagues!
- First-to-Worst video: [Click here!](#)