

Mid-Hudson School Study Council
Mount St. Mary College, Newburgh, New York
School District Finances and Program in
New York State 2015

Report prepared for:

Mid-Hudson School Study Council

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Researcher:

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**Mid-Hudson School Study Council
Mount St. Mary College, Newburgh, New York**

TO: Executive Committee, Mid-Hudson School Study Council

FROM: Dr. Robert Dillon, Former, Executive Director

DATE: January 2016

RE: Report on school district finances and program in New York State

In July 2015, the officers of the executive committee requested that the MHSSC Executive Director commence a research initiative to study school district finances and program in New York State. Several emails were sent to superintendents and leaders of educational organizations throughout the state inviting their participation in the study and requesting that they circulate the survey to their respective stakeholders.

The support of superintendents, boards of education and cooperating educational advocacy organizations such as Statewide School Finance Consortium and R.E.F.I.T. (Reform Educational Financing Inequities Today) is greatly appreciated. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the participation of all the school districts that completed the survey.

It is anticipated that the results of our study will inform the implications of school district finances and program in New York State, encourage further dialogue, and provide analysis of stakeholder perceptions of school district finances and program in New York State.

Enclosed is a report of the initial findings and related documents from the survey.

Again, thank you for your support.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

A study by Dillon (2015) on behalf of the Mid-Hudson School Study Council compared the data of districts about school district finances and program in New York State. Major questions examined in the study are:

1. What are the current fiscal realities of your district and how do you project the fiscal health of your district?
 - Based solely on the existence of the GEA, how would you characterize your district's fiscal condition?
 - With regard to your restricted (reserves) fund balance and unrestricted (cash on hand) fund balance, how would you characterize your district's fiscal experience over the last four years?
 - With regard to your district's cash flow (the ability to continuously pay your expenses), how would you characterize your district fiscal experience over the last four years?
 - As you project out your budget (revenues and expenses) for the next three years, how would you characterize your districts condition?
 - Which of the following do you consider to be the greatest fiscal threat to your school district for 2015-16 and beyond?
 - With regard to state aid, how would you characterize the state aid your district currently receives? The amount of time spent on a library of\media instruction?
 - Based on the fiscal/educational needs of your district, how well would you say the State government has responded?
 - Based on the fiscal/special education needs of your district, how well would you say the Federal government has responded?
 - Based on the fiscal/special education needs of your district, how well would you say the State government has responded?
2. Based on your current educational program and fiscal condition which best describes the future of your district in terms of the attainment of greater efficiencies, economies of scale or consolidation of services?
3. How would you characterize the current relationship between your district's fiscal condition and educational mission?

- For 2014-15, the number of positions eliminated in your district. (Positions eliminated regardless of reason)
- For 2014-15, the number of positions restored in your district.
- For 2014-15, how would you characterize general class size in your district?
- If current fiscal and educational trends continue, will educational opportunities be reduced in your next district's budget?

- For 2014-15, please indicate the approximate percentage of program reduction/elimination for each item.
 - A. BOCES Career and Technical Education (CTE)
 - B. BOCES Special Education
 - C. District operated Special Education
 - D. Art classes
 - E. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - F. Student assistance Services (SAS)
 - G. Health mentors
 - H. AP classes
 - I. Field trips
 - J. IB program
 - K. High School electives
 - L. Alternative Education

- For 2014-15, indicate the approximate percentage of reduction/elimination for each item.
 - A. Reduction/elimination middle school/junior high athletic teams
 - B. Related staff reductions for middle school/junior high athletics.
 - A. Reduction/elimination junior varsity/varsity athletic teams.
 - B. Related staff reductions for junior varsity/varsity athletic teams.
 - A. Reduction/elimination middle school/junior high athletic teams
 - B. Related staff reductions for middle school/junior high athletics.
 - A. Reduction/elimination junior varsity/varsity athletic teams.
 - B. Related staff reductions for junior varsity/varsity athletic teams.

- For 2014-15, indicate the approximate percentage of reduction/elimination for each item.

Elementary

Before/after school programs
 Clubs
 Performance music groups
 Performance theater groups
 Other activities

Middle

Before/after school programs
 Clubs
 Performance music groups

Performance theater groups
Other activities

Secondary

Before/after school programs
Clubs
Performance music groups
Performance theater groups
Other activities

- For 2014-15, indicate the approximate percentage of professional development activity that has been reduced or eliminated for instructional and administrative staff.
- For 2014-15, indicate the approximate percentage of professional development activity that has been reduced or eliminated for your Board of Education

Survey Monkey was used as the survey instrument for collecting data. The survey questions were developed collaboratively by Dr. Robert Dillon, Executive Director, Mid-Hudson School Study Council and Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director, Statewide School Finance Consortium, based upon the recent interest and concerns regarding the financial health of every school district, the state's current practices and responsibility towards funding public education. The Statewide School Finance Consortium and R.E.F.I.T. provided endorsements for the study. There are 674 school districts and BOCES in New York located in 57 counties. Completed surveys were submitted from August 4th through December 1st, 2015, by 296 school districts. **80.4% (238) of the respondents have a combined wealth ratio under 1.0.** Responses were received from 44% of all districts (296 of the 674) and 97% (55 of the 57) of the counties in New York State.

FINDINGS

1. What are the current fiscal realities of your district and how do you project the fiscal health of your district?

- **72% of respondents assert that state government has not understood our needs and has not delivered the fiscal support needed by public school districts.**
- **The actual amount of state aid was considered the greatest threat for public school districts in 2016-17 and beyond by 59% of respondents. Additionally, over a third of the respondents (34%) suggest the property tax cap is a significant threat to their fiscal health.**
- **The current level of State aid is insufficient to our current mission when coupled with the fiscal capacity and demographics of public school districts according to 54% of the respondents and barely sufficient by another 23%. Additionally, another 19% of respondents claim that while the state understands the needs of school districts, they still have not delivered the financial support districts need.**

- **80% of respondents believe the Federal government has not understood the needs of public school districts and has not delivered an appropriate level of fiscal support.**
- There has been a notable erosion of reserves and cash on hand (69% of respondents) during the last four years.
- **90% of the responding districts reported that the Federal monetary support for special education expenses is insufficient.**
- **92% of the responding districts reported that the state monetary support for special education expenses is insufficient.**
- **92% assert that the monetary expenses of special education services have increased significantly/moderately over the past 4 years.**
- **86% responded that as a portion of the entire budget, special education costs have increased significantly/moderately over the past 4 years.**
- **With regard to the cash flow of public schools, reports of “steady deterioration”, “barely holding our own”, or a status of “stable but undesirable” were reported by 43% of the respondents. Another 55% of respondents referred to their district cash flows as just “stable” or “holding their own”.**

2. Based on your current educational program and fiscal condition which best describes the future of your district in terms of the attainment of greater efficiencies, economies of scale or consolidation of services?

- Of the respondents, 49% reported that they could come up with a few meaningful combinations of greater efficiencies, economies of scale or consolidation of services and 25 % believed that their initiatives would yield only modest but not particularly meaningful results.

3. How would you characterize the current relationship between your district’s fiscal condition and educational mission?

- **Respondents are divided that alignment between fiscal condition and educational mission may or may not exist but there is some probability for success in both arenas.**
- **Of all respondents, 59% believed that if current fiscal and educational trends continue educational opportunities for students will be reduced in the school district’s next fiscal year budget.**
- **Additionally 38% of the respondents say the fiscal condition of their district and its educational mission are aligned with the probability for some success in both arenas, while 25% report there is no alignment yet there is still some possibility for success in both arenas.**

INSTRUCTIONAL and SUPPORT PERSONNEL REDUCTION for 2015-16

TEACHERS (Certificated Staff)

26% of the respondents eliminated up to 10 teaching positions.

Nearly 1% of respondents eliminated up to 15 teaching positions.

Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 20 teaching positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 25 teaching positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated more > 25 teaching positions.

- **ADMINISTRATION**

10% of the respondents eliminated up to 5 administrative positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 15 administrative positions.

- **TEACHING ASSISTANT POSITIONS**

16% of the respondents eliminated up to 5 teaching assistant positions.
1.8% of the respondents eliminated up to 10 teaching assistant positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 15 teaching assistant positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 20 teaching assistant positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated >25 teaching assistant positions.

- **TEACHER AIDE POSITIONS**

18% of the respondents eliminated up to 5 teacher aide positions.
2.23% of the respondents eliminated up to 10 teacher aide positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondent eliminated up to 15 teacher aide positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondent eliminated up to 20 teacher aide positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondent eliminated >25 teacher aide positions.

- **CLERICAL POSITIONS**

16% of the respondents eliminated up to 5 clerical positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 10 clerical positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 15 clerical positions.

- **CUSTODIAL POSITIONS**

14.4% of the respondents eliminated up to 5 custodial positions.
.5% of respondents eliminated up to 10 custodial positions.
.5% of respondents eliminated up to 15 custodial positions.

- **MAINTENANCE POSITIONS**

10% of the respondents eliminated up to 5 maintenance positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 10 maintenance positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents eliminated up to 20 maintenance positions.

INSTRUCTIONAL and SUPPORT PERSONNEL RESTORATION for 2015-16

TEACHERS (Certificated Staff)

52% of the respondents restored up to 5 teaching positions.
7% of the respondents restored up to 10 teaching positions.
2% of the respondents restored up to 15 teaching positions.
Nearly 2% of the respondents restored >25 teaching positions.

- **ADMINISTRATION**
15% of the respondents restored up to 5 administrative positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents restored up to 15 administrative positions.
- **TEACHING ASSISTANT POSITIONS**
26% of the respondents restored up to 5 teaching assistant positions.
3.27% of the respondents restored up to 10 teaching assistant positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents restored up to 20 teaching assistant positions.
- **TEACHER AIDE POSITIONS**
29% of the respondents restored up to 5 teacher aide positions.
3.24% of the respondents restored up to 10 teacher aide positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondent restored up to 15 teacher aide positions.
- **CLERICAL POSITIONS**
13.2% of the respondents restored up to 5 clerical positions.
- **CUSTODIAL POSITIONS**
11.3% of the respondents restored up to 5 custodial positions.
- **MAINTENANCE POSITIONS**
7% of the respondents restored up to 5 maintenance positions.
Nearly 1% of the respondents restored up to 15 maintenance positions.
- **CLASS SIZE**
2015-16:
26% of the 236 responding districts reported that their elementary programs sustained an increase in class-size.
16% of the 234 responding districts reported that their middle school programs sustained an increase in class-size.
15% of the 234 responding districts reported that their secondary programs sustained an increase in class-size.

PROGRAM AND OTHER STAFF REDUCTIONS for 2015-16

- **BOCES CAREER and TECHNICAL EDUCATION**
For 2014-15:
15% of the respondents reduced/eliminated BOCES career and technical education placements up to 10%.
1.5% of the respondents reduced/eliminated BOCES career and technical education placements from 11% to 20%.
1% of the respondents reduced/eliminated BOCES career and technical education placements more than 50%.

- **BOCES SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**
 15% of respondents reduced BOCES special-education services up to 10%.
 1.5% of the respondents reduced BOCES special education services from 11% to 20%.
 .5% of respondents reduced BOCES special-education services more than 50%.
- **DISTRICT OPERATED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**
 4.5% of the respondents reduced their district operated special education programs up to 10%.
 3% of the respondents reduced their district operated special education programs from 11% to 20%.
 .5% of a percent of the respondents reduced their district operated special education programs by more than 50%.
- **ART PROGRAM**
 8.5% of the respondents reduced their art program up to 10%.
 2% of the respondents reduced their art program from 11% to 20%.
 .5% of the respondents reduced their art program from 21% to 50%.
- **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
 3.5% of the respondents reduced their employee assistance program by no more than 10%.
 .5% of the respondents reduced employee assistance program from 11% to 20%.
 2.0% of the respondents reduced their employee assistance program by more than 50%.
- **STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES**
 7% of the respondents reduced this student assistance services by no more than 10%.
 2.0% of the respondents reduced their student assistance services from 11% to 20%.
 .5% of the respondents reduced their student assistance services by more than 50%.
- **HEALTH MENTORS**
 3.6% of the respondents reduced their health mentors by no more than 10%.
 .5% of respondents reduced their health mentors from 11% to 20%.
 1% of the respondents reduced their health mentors by more than 50%.
- **ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) CLASSES**
 9.6% of the respondents reduced their A P classes by no more than 10%.
 1.5% of the respondents reduced their A P classes from 11% to 20%.
 .5% of the respondents reduced their A P classes from 21% to 50%.
 1.5% of the respondents reduced their A P classes by more than 50%.
- **FIELD TRIPS**
 14.6% of the respondents reduced their field trips by no more than 10%.
 6% of the respondents reduced their field trips from 11% to 20%.
 3% of the respondents reduced their field trips from 21% to percent to 50%.
 2% of the respondents reduced their field trips by more than 50%.

- **INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) PROGRAM**
3.6% of the respondents reduced their I B program by no more than 10%.
- **HIGH SCHOOL ELECTIVES**
20% of the respondents reduced to high school electives by no more than 10%.
6% of the respondents reduced their high school electives from 11% to 20%.
1% of the respondents reduced their high school electives from 21% to 50%.
- **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**
7.5% of the respondents reduced their alternative education by no more than 10%.
1.5% of the respondents reduced or alternative education program from 11% to 20%.
2.0% of the respondents reduced their alternative education program from 21% to 50%.
1% of the respondents reduced their alternative education program by more than 50%.

RESTORATIONS for 2015-16

- **BOCES CAREER and TECHNICAL EDUCATION**
For 2014-15:
24% of the respondents restored BOCES career and technical education placements up to 10%.
4% of the respondents restored BOCES career and technical education placements from 11% to 20%.
.5% of the respondents restored BOCES career and technical education placements from 21% to 50%.
.5% of the respondents restored BOCES career and technical education placements >50%.
- **BOCES SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**
29% of respondents restored BOCES special-education services up to 10%.
17% of the respondents restored BOCES special education services from 11% to 20%.
2% of the respondents restored BOCES special education services from 21% to 50%.
.5% of respondents restored BOCES special-education services > 50%.
- **DISTRICT OPERATED SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**
40% of the respondents restored their district operated special education programs up to 10%.
14% of the respondents restored their district operated special education programs from 11% to 20%.
2% of the respondents restored their district operated special education programs from 21% to 50%.
.5% of a percent of the respondents restored their district operated special education programs by more than 50%.
- **ART PROGRAM**
9% of the respondents restored their art program up to 10%.
2% of the respondents restored their art program from 11% to 20%.

- **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**
3.1% of the respondents restored their employee assistance program by no more than 10%.
- **STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES**
No data collected for 2014-15
- **HEALTH MENTORS**
2.6% of the respondents restored their health mentors by no more than 10%.
1.5% of respondents restored their health mentors from 11% to 20%.
- **ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) CLASSES**
17% of the respondents restored their A P classes by no more than 10%.
1% of the respondents restored their A P classes from 11% to 20%.
.5% of the respondents restored their A P classes from 21% to 50%.
- **FIELD TRIPS**
8.25% of the respondents restored their field trips by no more than 10%.
3% of the respondents restored their field trips from 11% to 20%.
1% of the respondents restored their field trips by more than 50%.
- **INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) PROGRAM**
3% of the respondents restored their I B program by no more than 10%.
1% of the respondents restored their I B program from 11% to 20%.
- **HIGH SCHOOL ELECTIVES**
22% of the respondents restored to high school electives by no more than 10%.
4% of the respondents restored their high school electives from 11% to 20%.
- **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**
13% of the respondents restored their alternative education by no more than 10%.
2% of the respondents restored or alternative education program from 11% to 20%.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC REDUCTIONS for 2015-16

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH ATHLETICS**
For 2014-15:
6% of the respondents reduced their middle school/junior high teams by no more than 10%.
1% of the respondents reduced their middle school/junior high teams from 11% to 20%.
4.2% of the respondents reduced their middle school/junior high teams from 21% to 30%.
1% of the respondents reduced their middle school/junior high teams from 41% to 50%.
1% of the respondents reduced their middle school junior high teams by more than 50%.

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH ATHLETIC STAFF**
5% of the respondents reduce their middle school/junior high school staff by no more than 10%.
1% of the respondents reduced their middle school/junior high staff from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents reduced their middle school/junior high staff from 41% to 50%.
1% of respondents reduced their middle school/junior high staff by more than 50%.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC RESTORATIONS for 2015-16

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH ATHLETICS**
For 2014-15:
11% of the respondents restored their middle school/junior high teams by no more than 10%.
1.5% of the respondents restored their middle school/junior high teams from 11% to 20%.
.5% of the respondents reduced their middle school junior high teams by more than 50%.
- **JUNIOR VARSITY/VARSITY ATHLETIC ATHLETICS**
9% of the respondents restored their junior varsity/varsity staff by no more than 10%.

OTHER PROGRAM REDUCTIONS

- **Elementary**
1.6% of respondents reduced before and after school elementary programs by less than 10%.
1% of respondents reduced before and after elementary school programs from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents reduced before and after school elementary programs by more than 50%.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM REDUCTIONS for 2015-16

- **ELEMENTARY CLUBS**
3.2% of respondents reduced elementary clubs by less than 10%.
1% of respondents reduced elementary clubs from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents reduced elementary clubs by more than 50%.
- **ELEMENTARY MUSIC GROUPS**
1.6% of respondents reduced elementary performance music groups by less than 10%.
- **ELEMENTARY PERFORMANCE THEATER GROUPS**
1% of respondents reduced elementary performance theater groups by less than 10%.
- **OTHER ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES**
2.73% of respondents reduced other elementary activities less than 10%.

Nearly 1% of respondents reduced other elementary activities by more than 50%.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM REDUCTIONS for 2015-16

- **BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

For 2014-15:

1.6% of respondents after school reduced before and middle school programs by less than 10%.

Nearly 1% of respondents reduced before and after school middle school programs from 11% to 20%.

Nearly 1% of respondents reduced before and after school middle school programs by more than 50%.

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL CLUBS**

6% of respondents reduced middle school clubs less than 10%.

Nearly 1% of respondents reduced middle school clubs from 11% to 20%.

.5% of respondents reduced middle school clubs by more than 50%.

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MUSIC GROUPS**

13.7% of respondents reduced middle school performance music groups by less than 10%.

7.1% of respondents reduced middle school performance music groups from 11% to 20%.

.5% of respondents reduced middle school performance music groups from 21% to 50%.

0.9% of respondents reduced middle school performance music groups by more than 50%.

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THEATER GROUPS**

1% of respondents reduced middle school performance theater groups by less than 10%.

.5% of respondents reduced middle school performance theater groups by more than 50%.

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL OTHER ACTIVITIES**

3% of respondents reduced other middle school activities by less than 10%.

.5% of respondents reduced other middle school activities from 11% to 20%.

.5% of respondents reduced other middle school activities >50%

- **SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM REDUCTIONS for 2015-16**

BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL SECONDARY PROGRAMS

2% of respondents reduced before and after school secondary programs by less than 10%.

.5% of respondents reduced before and after school secondary programs from 11% to 20%.

.5% of respondents reduced before and after school secondary programs by more than 50%.

- **SECONDARY CLUBS**

6.35% of respondents reduced secondary clubs by less than 10%.

.5% of respondents reduced secondary clubs from 11% to 20%.

1% of respondents reduced secondary clubs by more than 50%.

- **SECONDARY PERFORMANCE MUSIC GROUPS**

3.7% of respondents reduced secondary performance music groups by less than 10%.

1% of respondents reduced secondary performance music groups from 11% to 20%.

1% of respondents reduced secondary performance music groups by more than 50%.

- **SECONDARY PERFORMANCE THEATER GROUPS**

2% of respondents reduced secondary performance theater groups by less than 10%.

1% of respondents reduced secondary performance theater groups by more than 50%.

- **SECONDARY OTHER ACTIVITIES**

3% of respondents reduced secondary other activities by less than 10%.

1% of respondents reduced secondary other activities from 11% to 20%.

.6% of a percent of respondents reduced secondary other activities by more than 50%.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM RESTORATIONS for 2015-16

- **ELEMENTARY BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

9% of respondents restored before and after school elementary programs by less than 10%.

5% of respondents restored before and after elementary school programs from 11% to 20%.

- **ELEMENTARY CLUBS**

9.19% of respondents restored elementary clubs by less than 10%.

1% of respondents restored elementary clubs from 11% to 20%.

1% of respondents restored elementary clubs from 21% to 50%.

- **ELEMENTARY MUSIC GROUPS**

4% of respondents restored elementary performance music groups by less than 10%.

- **ELEMENTARY PERFORMANCE THEATER GROUPS**

4% of respondents restored elementary performance theater groups by less than 10%.

- **OTHER ELEMENTARY ACTIVITIES**

6% of respondents restored other elementary activities less than 10%.

- **MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM RESTORATIONS for 2015-16**
- **BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS**
For 2014-15:
9% of respondents restored after school before and middle school programs by less than 10%.
2% of respondents restored before and after school middle school programs from 11% to 20%.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL CLUBS**
11.35% of respondents restored middle school clubs less than 10%.
1% of respondents restored middle school clubs from 21% to 50%.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MUSIC GROUPS**
13.7% of respondents restored middle school performance music groups by less than 10%.
4% of respondents restored middle school performance music groups from 11% to 20%.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE THEATER GROUPS**
4% of respondents restored middle school performance theater groups by less than 10%.
.5% of respondents restored middle school performance theater groups from 11% to 20%.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL OTHER ACTIVITIES**
6% of respondents restored other middle school activities by less than 10%.
.6% of respondents restored other middle school activities from 11% to 20%.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM RESTORATIONS for 2015-16

BEFORE and AFTER SCHOOL SECONDARY PROGRAMS

9% of respondents restored before and after school secondary programs by less than 10%.
1.64% of respondents restored before and after school secondary programs from 11% to 20%.
.5% of respondents restored before and after school secondary programs from 21% to 50%.

- **SECONDARY CLUBS**
14.75% of respondents restored secondary clubs by less than 10%.
1.64% of respondents restored secondary clubs from 11% to 20%.
Nearly 1% of respondents restored secondary clubs from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents restored secondary clubs by more than 50%.
- **SECONDARY PERFORMANCE MUSIC GROUPS**
3.85% of respondents restored secondary performance music groups by less than 10%.
1% of respondents restored secondary performance music groups from 11% to 20%.

- **SECONDARY PERFORMANCE THEATER GROUPS**
2.75% of respondents restored secondary performance theater groups by less than 10%.
Nearly 1% of respondents restored secondary performance theater groups from 11% to 20%.
- **SECONDARY OTHER ACTIVITIES**
5.6% of respondents restored secondary other activities by less than 10%.
1% of respondents restored secondary other activities from 11% to 20%.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REDUCTIONS for 2015-16

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
15% of respondents reduced professional development by less than 10%.
3% of respondents reduced professional development from 11% to 20%.
3% of respondents reduced professional development from 21% to 50%.
- **BOCES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
8% of respondents reduced BOCES professional development offerings by less than 10%.
3% of respondents reduced BOCES professional development offerings from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents reduced BOCES professional development offerings from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents reduced BOCES professional development offerings by more than 50%.
- **OTHER CONFERENCE/WORKSHOPS**
13.7% of respondents reduced other conference/workshops by less than 10%.
5% of respondents reduced other conferences/workshops from 11% to 20%.
3% of respondents reduced other conferences/workshops from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents reduced other conferences/workshops by more than 50%.
- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
5% of respondents reduced their professional development plan by less than 10%.
3% of respondents reduced their professional development plan from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents reduced their professional development plan from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents reduced their professional development plan by more than 50%.
- **BOARD OF EDUCATION**
5% of respondents have reduced their Board of Education professional development by less than 10%.
3% of respondents reduced their Board of Education professional development from 11% to 20%.
2% of responders reduced their Board of Education professional development from 21% to 50%.

3% of respondents reduced their Board of Education professional development by more than 50%.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESTORATIONS for 2015-16

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

31% of respondents restored professional development by less than 10%.
10.36% of respondents restored professional development from 11% to 20%.
4% of respondents restored professional development from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents restored professional development >50%.

- **BOCES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

18.42% of respondents restored BOCES professional development offerings by less than 10%.
5.26% of respondents restored BOCES professional development offerings from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents restored BOCES professional development offerings from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents reduced BOCES professional development offerings by more than 50%.

- **OTHER CONFERENCE/WORKSHOPS**

24% of respondents restored other conference/workshops by less than 10%.
7.4% of respondents restored other conferences/workshops from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents restored other conferences/workshops from 21% to 50%.

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

20% of respondents restored their professional development plan by less than 10%.
5.3% of respondents reduced their professional development plan from 11% to 20%.
1% of respondents reduced their professional development plan from 21% to 50%.
1% of respondents reduced their professional development plan by more than 50%.

- **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

13% of respondents have restored their Board of Education professional development by less than 10%.
3.11% of respondents restored their Board of Education professional development from 11% to 20%.
1.6% of responders restored their Board of Education professional development from 21% to 50%.

CONCLUSIONS and IMPLICATIONS

Survey results have received an initial analysis. Based upon this analysis, preliminary conclusions gleaned from respondents reveal their belief that:

1. School District financial data provided in the survey suggest that there is considerable agreement statewide that the vast majority of responding districts continue to be in a weakened state of fiscal health.
 - a) The GEA has severely compromised fiscal health of public school districts commonly referred to as “poor”, “needy”, “below average wealth”, “average or below average fiscal capacity” or with “significant levels of poverty” regardless of their location as designated as “upstate” or “downstate”.
 - b) It is clear from the survey and all of the data on school district finances that the more in need, poorest and severely fiscally delicate public school districts continue to borne the brunt of the significant GEA cuts and thus, require much greater State financial support overall.
 - c) Due to the shifted burden from constitutionally required state fiscal support for public school districts, to local communities and the desire of school leaders to minimize local fiscal impact of this shift, the loss of fund balance to support even the diminished resources provided by public school districts has served to only further weaken the ability of these district to perform, with any measure, their state and local missions.
 - d) Some district have also experienced cash flow issues that hinder day to day operations to the extent that districts have resorted to borrowing funds to operate in some diminished fashion with the use of tax anticipation notes and revenue anticipation notes to fill cash flow holes.
 - e) With the loss of a major source of revenue, state aid, districts could not mitigate their own impact on local taxpayers, a goal articulated by many school leaders when the Foundation Aid formula was introduced.
2. School District financial data provided in the survey suggest that there is considerable agreement statewide that the vast majority of responding districts are in a weakened state of educational health.
 - a) These districts have experienced enormous loss of programs for children including but not limited to remediation, dedicated time, electives and advanced course work.
 - b) Although somewhat stabilized, there exists class size increases to the point as to be counter –productive to a healthy learning environment.

- c) Further, lack of state support has produced fiscal conditions that have debilitated the ability of public schools to meet not just the State’s basic constitutional obligation of a “sound basic education” but the new higher standards demanded of them such as college and career preparation or even the ability of students to possess robust transcripts to use for competitive application to colleges.
 - d) Due to critical program cuts, in many fiscally struggling public school districts, teaching, learning and inquiry have been transformed into more mind numbing study halls, early release of students to empty homes or low wage jobs and the dead ending of their promised educational involvement.
3. School District anecdotal comments as data provided in the survey suggest that there is considerable agreement statewide that the vast majority of responding districts are in a weakened state of professional health.
- a) Teachers once focused on the acquisition and development on new pedagogy, skills sets and proficiencies new to meet new standards paramount to the infusion of aspirational rigor and vigor into the educational experience of students are now, due to program offering cuts, monitoring a study hall or re-examining their professional future.
 - b) Program cuts coupled with substantial diminishment to staff have resulted in the loss of comprehensive educational opportunities in support and enrichment opportunities for not only students, but the loss of some of the brightest and dedicated educators NYS has been able to offer. This represents the loss of meaningful investments in the staff development and mentoring of talented teachers.
4. The blow to local community economies is clear, as staff members were laid-off.

It would appear that school leaders have done a masterful job to make sure that at least the most basic services for students are provided and present the visual belief that the lights are on and school is open. However, this has masked the lost ability of schools to actually articulate a more robust and complete educational experience demanded by the economy today and into the future.

In sum, what has been lost by these struggling public school communities and their children cannot be retrieved, made whole or otherwise recouped. Without significantly greater state support new instructional and reform initiatives will not take hold in average and below average wealth school districts.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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