

WTA

Webster Teachers Association
Affiliated with NYSUT, AFT/AFL-CIO
www.wta1972.com

How can the Governor's proposals harm public education?



Governor Cuomo's proposal for a 2% property tax cap seems to be initially supported by taxpayers here in New York. But, NYS cannot entertain capping property taxes - taxes that are not even collected by the state but rather the local governments - without simultaneously providing mandate relief. The fundamental flaw of a tax cap is that non-funded mandates must be funded locally. Programs and services that are not mandated would simply be cut.

To do so locally, the New York State School Boards Association, The Rochester Business Alliance and other groups have proposed that the state follow a property tax cap with laws that will directly impact us all as public employees. These include:

Implement a Salary Freeze on all NYS Public Employees

Although we negotiated a contract in good faith, made a large number of concessions, and took on extra work, this action would leave all of our concessions in place and permanently deprive us of the salary increase that was part of the agreement. In other words, it would allow management to simply seize that which they did not negotiate.

Revise or completely remove the Triborough Amendment

The Triborough Amendment (1982) to the Taylor Law (1967) provides that all terms and conditions of an expired public employee contract remain in effect until a new contract is ratified. Our current Webster Teachers' contract includes negotiated levels of health care coverage and various compensation and additions to base salary that are protected by this amendment. We also have a salary schedule for coaching and all other auxiliary assignments. Our contract does not include negotiated salary steps that would automatically increase our salaries. Without the protections of the Triborough Amendment, management could institute unilateral reduction in salaries and would not have any incentive to reach a new bargaining agreement with us.

Set mandatory employee contributions for health insurance

Right now, our negotiated contract sets our contribution rates. This cannot be changed unless our membership votes to do so. A law like this would strip us of our collective bargaining rights, allow management to raise contribution rates, and transfer more costs to us.

What YOU can do NOW:

Contact your elected representatives and make YOUR voice heard on these budget issues. The link to *NYSUT's Legislative Action Center* is on our <http://www.wta1972.com> website. You can write your own letter to your elected officials. Or, select NYSUT's letter, *Oppose an Ill-Conceived Property Tax Cap*, to fax.



Creating the Future of Public Education: Graduation Requirements in New York State

During the month of January, NYSED Commissioner David Steiner and members of the NYS Board of Regents are conducting a “listening tour” to determine revisions to the NYS High School graduation requirements. Their local stop was at BOCES #2 in Spencerport on January 19th from 5:30-7pm. Primarily district-level administrators, building-level administrators, and Board of Education members plus a handful of teachers from Sodus to Oakfield-Alabama to Brockport and many districts in between +attended. The impetus of revising graduation requirements is based on the assumption that **college readiness is equivalent to career readiness.*

The policies that are under consideration include:

- Increasing graduation requirements
- Allowing for more flexibility in the ways students can meet requirements
- Offering alternative or supplemental credentials
- Rethinking the “safety net” for students with disabilities



Increasing graduation requirements could mean:

- Extending the school day and/or the school year
- 4 years of math and 4 years of science
- “College & career ready” credit
- Increasing the required passing scores on the English to 75% and Math to 80% (levels associated with “college-readiness”)

Allowing for more flexibility in the ways students can meet requirements could mean:

- Student choice in 1 or more of their 5 required Regents exams
- A Career & Technical Education (CTE) program technical assessment substituting for 1 of the 5 Regents Exams
- Increase the maximum number of academic credits that students can earn through integrated CTE programs (Eastern Monroe Career Center) – not simply earning these as elective credits
- Flexibility in courses that students may take in middle school
- Students demonstrating competency rather than seat time (independent study, on-the-job training, visual arts, international study...)

+WCSD attendees: Superintendent A. Bovard, Assistant Superintendent J. Lutterbein, BOE President L. Smith, Thomas Principal G. Widor, and German Teacher C. Dunne

**Included in the forum materials which based this claim on research by Achieve, ACT, et al.*

What YOU can do NOW:

Please take the online NYSED survey before its **February 18th deadline**. It offers you the opportunity to make your teacher’s voice heard and your educated, classroom-experienced opinion counted. The 20 minutes you invest will influence change to NYS graduation requirements. You will find a direct link to this *NYSED survey* on our WTA website <http://www.wta1972.com>.

