

Getting a *ZERO* is a *Beautiful Thing*

When NY State Report Ranks Fiscal Stress of School Districts

On a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being no fiscal distress and 100 being the most fiscal distress, Sayville School District ranked 0 in the New York State report.*

The report examined financial indicators and environmental factors in determining the fiscal health of local governments (counties, cities, towns, villages, and school districts) statewide. Everything from fund balances, operating deficits, student enrollments, cash position, and property values were reviewed by auditors.

This news about Sayville is significant. It demonstrates that Sayville School District has been using prudent fiscal strategies for years to earn this ranking. While these strategies are complex, they have yielded a conservative, but forward-thinking approach to spending and saving which has created fiscal stability in our district.

It is a team effort.

Fiscal stability starts with a spirit of cooperation between Administrators, the Board of Education, Faculty, and Staff. It continues with supportive residents and local businesses who understand that the health of their school district brings health to the community. However, it is mostly the result of long-range planning that must navigate the intricate and perpetually challenging funding options required of school districts, such as unfunded and underfunded mandates, skyrocketing testing costs, loss of state aid, unfair distribution of aid, the Gap Elimination Adjustment, and increasing expenditures from legislated policy.

One size does not fit all.

The solutions to these challenges are unique for each community. Proactive initiatives in Sayville included passing proposed budgets, especially those within the Tax Levy Cap, as well as utilizing smaller Bond Referendums—the most cost-effective vehicles that have no impact on the tax rate—for updating old or failing infrastructures. The repeal of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA)** would also help by restoring approximately \$1,015/student/year back to Sayville.

With the support of the Sayville community, which has valued our school system, this fiscal health can continue. The Board of Education and Sayville Administration are also very aware of the fiscal difficulties many families face and will continue to strive to provide fiscally responsible budgets in these difficult economic times.

Despite the turbulence expected during the 2014-2015 Budget Process caused by continued State shortfalls (like the GEA) in funding school programs, this NYS Fiscal Stress report demonstrates that Sayville School District has been doing its best to control costs, to refinance its debt service with lower interest rates (saving over \$740,000 last year), while still maintaining excellent and affordable educational programs and opportunities that ensure our students will be college/job-ready.

***** Over the past three years, the GEA has cost the Sayville Taxpayer \$12,444,516. Sayville School District and students need your support to fight for the repeal of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) starting in the 2014-2015 school year.***

CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS:
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* Click on the link to view the summary:

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/fiscalmonitoring/pdf/FiscalStressSummaryResultsSchoolDistricts.pdf>

* Copy of Report full listing:

http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/fiscalmonitoring/pdf/schools/schools_summary_lists.pdf