



# Chappaqua Central School District

Christine Ackerman, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Hilary S. Grasso, President  
Board of Education

October 23, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

Given the ongoing challenges we face concerning individual and community security, particularly in relation to the safety of New York public school students, staff and faculty, we are writing to respectfully request the inclusion of a security personnel and services exemption in the provisions of Education Law Section 2023-a.

Specifically, we write to request an exemption for security personnel expenditures from the Tax Levy Limit Law calculation. We anticipate a substantial increase in our security personnel costs for the 2024-2025 school year based on community feedback and our current national and global security climate. As it stands, it may be necessary to allocate as much as 27% of our allowable tax levy limit increase toward these essential security personnel expenses.

It is important to note the considerable disparities in the support that school districts receive in the form of School Resource Officers (SROs) from local municipalities. Some municipalities offer School Resource Officers at no cost to the school district, while others impose a substantial financial burden on the local school district. In other words, school districts who are not required to provide funding for the SRO program to their local municipalities could have robust support in their schools, while other districts must make decisions based on budgetary constraints. Security should not come at the expense of instruction.

**We are asking you to consider adding the following language to 2023-a (i)(v) as highlighted below and indicated as NEW before school budgets are finalized for the 2024/2025 school year this coming March:**

- i. "Tax levy limit" means the amount of taxes a school district is authorized to levy pursuant to this section, provided, however, that the tax levy limit shall not include the following:
- (i) a tax levy necessary for expenditures resulting from court orders or judgments against the school district arising out of tort actions for any amount that exceeds five percent of the total tax levied in the prior school year;
  - (ii) in years in which the system average actuarial contribution rate of the New York state and local employees' retirement system, as defined by paragraph ten of subdivision a of section nineteen-a of the retirement and social security law, increases by more than two percentage

points from the previous year, a tax levy necessary for expenditures for the coming fiscal year for school district employer contributions to the New York state and local employees' retirement system caused by growth in the system average actuarial contribution rate minus two percentage points;

(iii) in years in which the normal contribution rate of the New York state teachers' retirement system, as defined by paragraph a of subdivision two of section five hundred seventeen of this chapter, increases by more than two percentage points from the previous year, a tax levy necessary for expenditures for the coming fiscal year for school district employer contributions to the New York state teachers' retirement system caused by growth in the normal contribution rate minus two percentage points; and

(iv) a capital tax levy; and

NEW: (v) costs for school district security personnel, school district security vendors, school district security consultants, and school resource officers.

Our request does not seek additional New York State funding to support our security efforts. Rather, this change seeks the inclusion of specific language that enables school districts to budget for these security costs without adversely affecting the instructional program.

This exemption would provide us with the necessary flexibility to address security concerns while safeguarding the integrity of our educational programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Hilary S. Grasso, Esq.  
Board of Education President



Christine Ackerman, PhD  
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Dr. Betty A. Rosa – New York State Commissioner of Education  
Dominick L. Chiumento – New York State Police Acting Superintendent