



For Immediate Release  
May 6, 2015

Contact: Michael Borges, Executive Director  
mborges@nysasbo.org / 518-434-2281 ext. 231

### **NYSASBO Releases Analysis of 2015-16 Property Tax Report Cards**

The New York State Association of School Business Officials (NYSASBO), released today its analysis of the 2015-16 Property Tax Report Cards submitted by school districts to the State Education Department, which details school spending, tax levy and enrollment data.

The Property Tax Report Card data submitted by the 669 independent school districts this week showed that school districts continue to contain spending, a trend that started during the Great Recession and before the tax cap went into effect in 2012.

- The statewide average increase in proposed spending for 2015-16 is 1.9 percent, which is less than the previous year (2.5 percent) and less than the average over the past six years (2.1 percent).
- The statewide average increase in the proposed levy for 2015-16 was 1.6 percent, which is the smallest increase in the past six years and in tandem with the Consumer Price Index (1.62 percent) for 2014.
- Statewide student enrollment declined 0.6 percent from 2014-15 and has declined about one percent each year for the past six years. The report notes that student enrollment has actually increased in 222 of the 674 school districts (or one-third), mostly in high need urban/suburban districts.
- Since the tax cap went into effect in 2012, school districts have not levied up to their allowable levy limits, levying approximately \$577 million less than what is allowed under the law.
- School districts continued to draw down their savings or Unassigned Fund Balance to maintain programs and balance their books, reaching the lowest level in six years of just under \$1.4 billion statewide. This represents four percent of projected spending for these districts.
- Low need school districts proposed the highest levy increases (1.8 percent) and high need rural districts the smallest (1.0 percent).
- Only 18 school districts have proposed to exceed their tax caps and therefore will require a supermajority of 60 percent to pass their budgets. Eleven of these districts are designated high need urban or rural. In 2014-15, 23 districts proposed levies that exceeded their tax caps.

“School district leaders, particularly school business officials, have done a tremendous job in curtailing expenses and finding savings that have enabled them to present budgets that can garner community support. The state has helped the process by providing a substantial aid increase, but more needs to be done to relieve school districts of costly mandates that continue to drive up spending that are outside the control of local leaders,” stated Michael J. Borges, NYSASBO Executive Director.