

99% of School Budgets Pass

Voter Approval Rising, Turnout Falling



New York State
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Advancing the Business of Education

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Voters Overwhelmingly Approve Proposed Budgets

On May 16, New York voters approved 671 out of the 676 school budgets and 352 out of 356 propositions put forth by their local boards of education. Of the five defeated budgets, three sought to override the Tax Cap. Two of the unsuccessful attempts to override the Tax Cap received majority support, but were unable to clear the required 60 percent threshold. This year continues the trend of growing community support for approving school budgets under the Tax Cap. Five defeated budgets are the fewest ever and the last few years haven't seen more than two Tax Cap compliant budget proposals defeated.

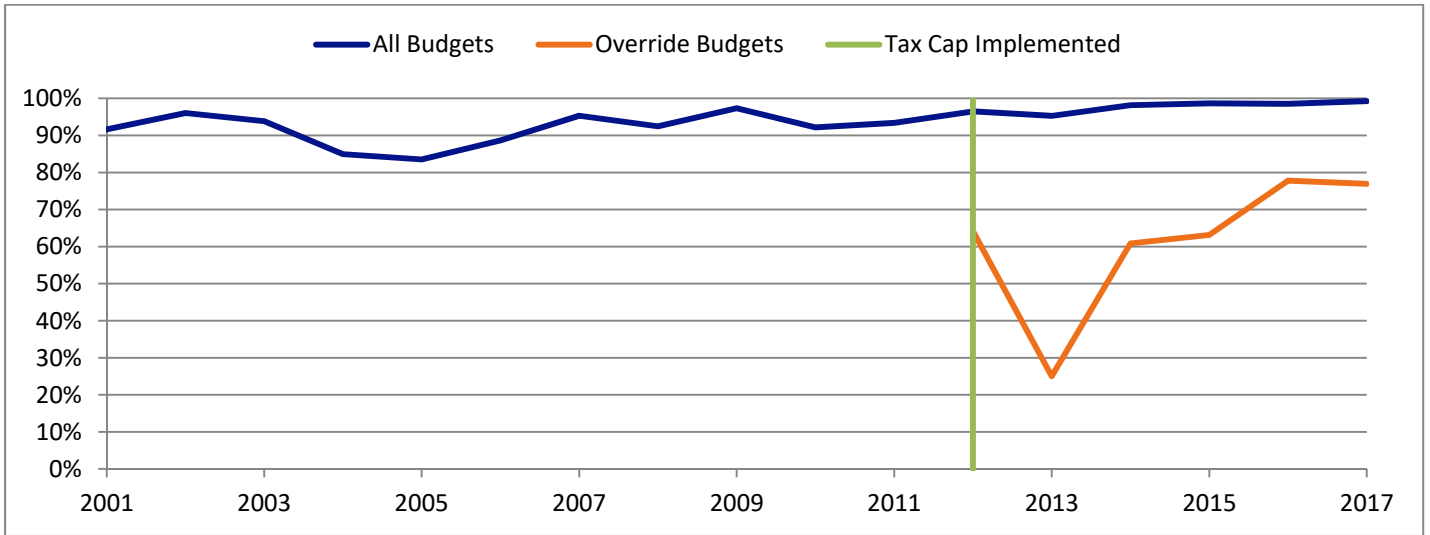
Figure 1. Statewide Outcomes

	Passed	Defeated	Success Rate
Budgets	671	5	99.3%
Override Budgets	10	3	76.9%
Propositions	352	4	98.9%

Figure 2. Defeated Budgets

School District *Proposed Overriding the Tax Cap	Yes	No	Approval Rate
DeRuyter*	202	156	56.4%
East Ramapo*	1441	9986	12.6%
Hinsdale	93	97	48.9%
Pittsford*	3687	3207	53.5%
Putnam	90	92	49.5%

Figure 3. Passage Rate Over Time



Turnout Trends

Other than a significant spike in 2010, when voter turnout for May school budget votes grew 33 percent over the previous year, there has been a clear decline in voter participation. In last month’s vote, 43 percent fewer voters came to the polls than had in 2010. Figure 4 shows the magnitude of this decline. Figures 5 and 6 break down the changes in voter support. While voter turnout is declining, voters who do turn out are more likely to support proposed budgets.

Figure 4. Voter Turnout for May Elections

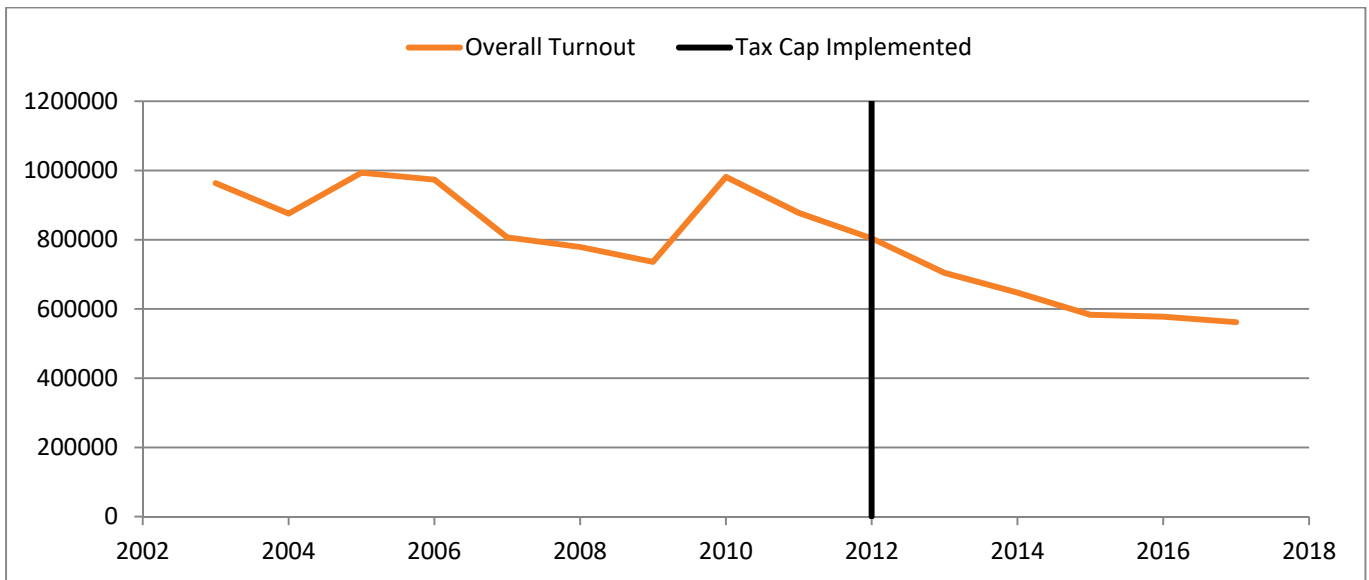


Figure 5. Yes and No Votes in May Elections

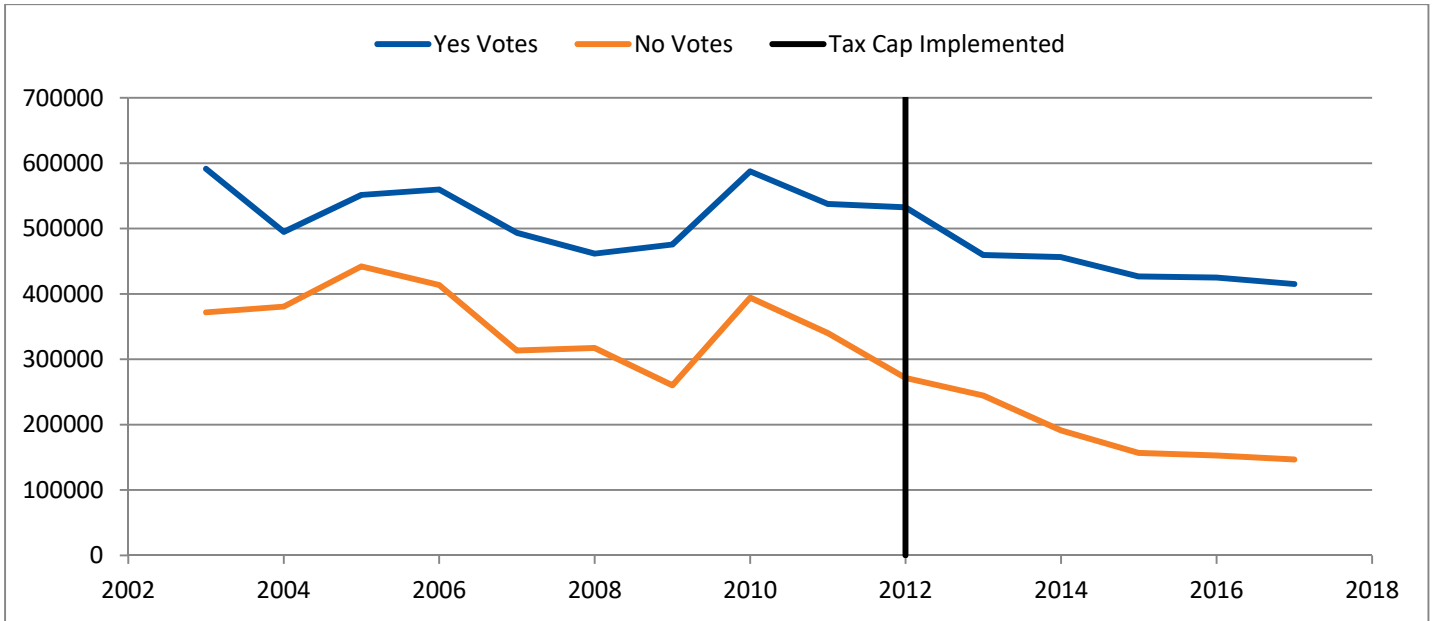
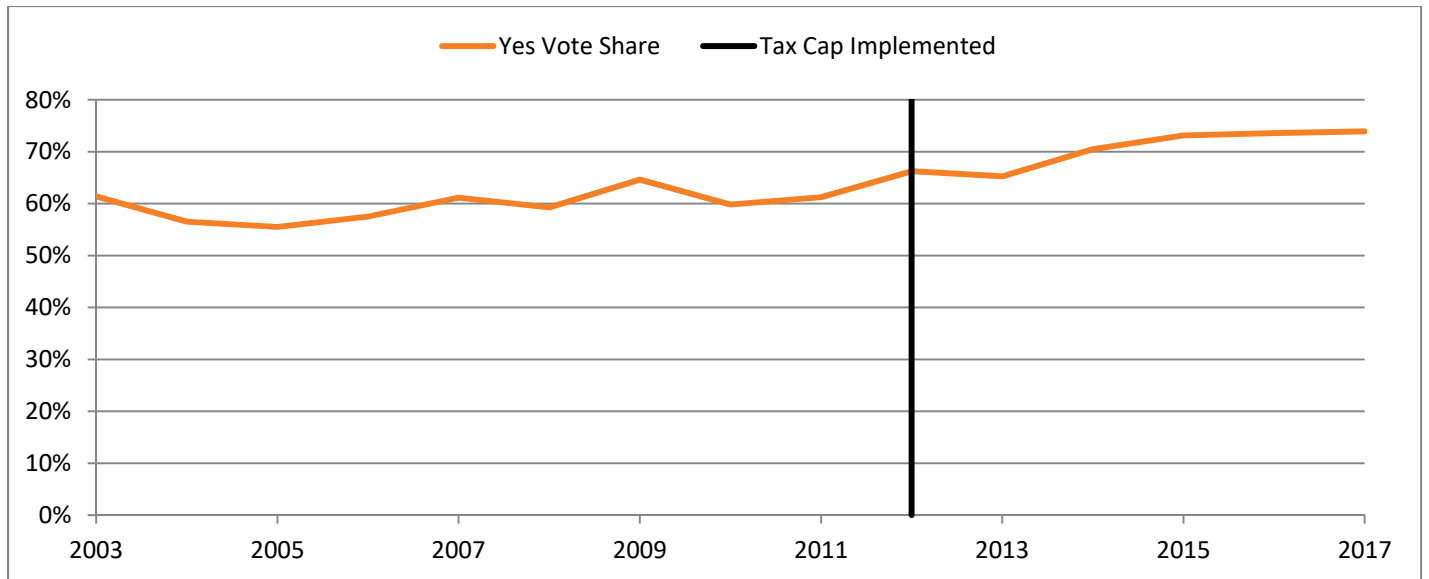


Figure 6. Share of Yes Vote



Overriding the Tax Cap

In 2017, only 13 districts attempted to override the Tax Cap and 10 were successful. Two of the other districts received majority support, but were unable to meet the required 60 percent. The 13 override attempts were by far the fewest since the start of the Tax Cap. Turnout in districts with budgets seeking to override the Tax Cap was 61.9 percent higher than in 2016, even as overall turnout declined 2.74 percent.

Figure 7. Tax Cap Override Attempts

School District	Yes	No	Percentage	Passed
Beaver River	224	53	80.9%	Yes
Cheektowaga-Maryvale	762	201	79.1%	Yes
De Ruyter	202	156	56.4%	No
East Aurora	1462	910	61.6%	Yes
East Ramapo (Spring Valley)	1441	9986	12.6%	No
Ellicottville	264	57	82.2%	Yes
Franklin	128	36	78.0%	Yes
Mamaroneck	1634	491	76.9%	Yes
New Paltz	1561	667	70.1%	Yes
New Suffolk Common School District *Non-Major District	52	14	78.8%	Yes
Niagara Falls City Sd	1165	338	77.5%	Yes
Pittsford	3687	3207	53.5%	No
Rhinebeck	577	374	60.7%	Yes

Figure 8. Tax Cap Override Attempts and Outcomes

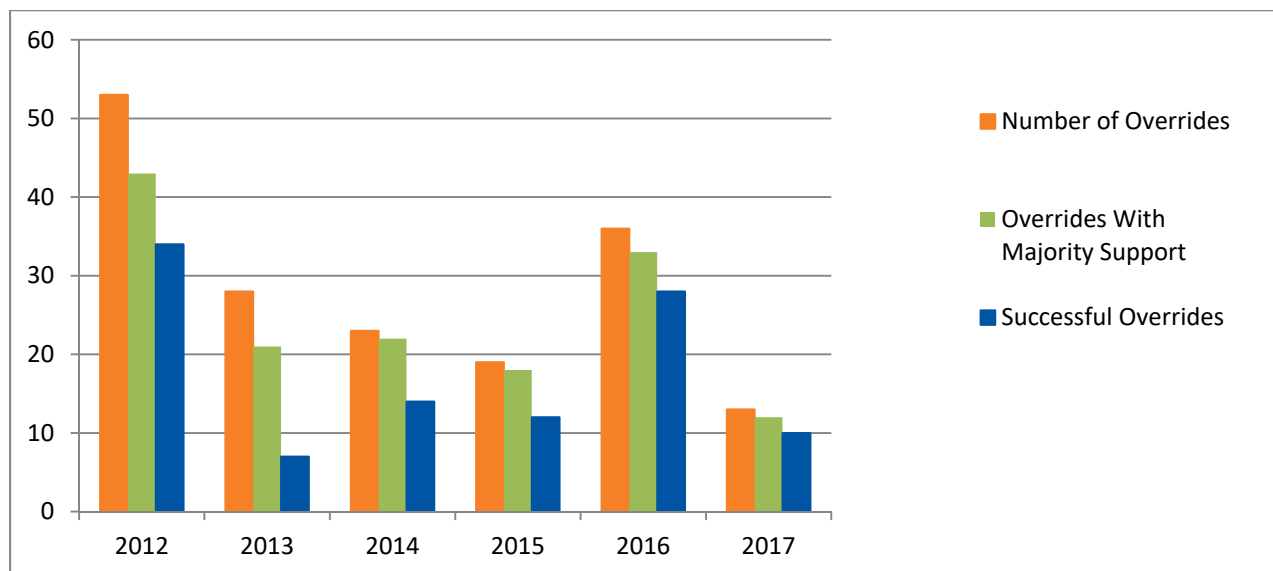
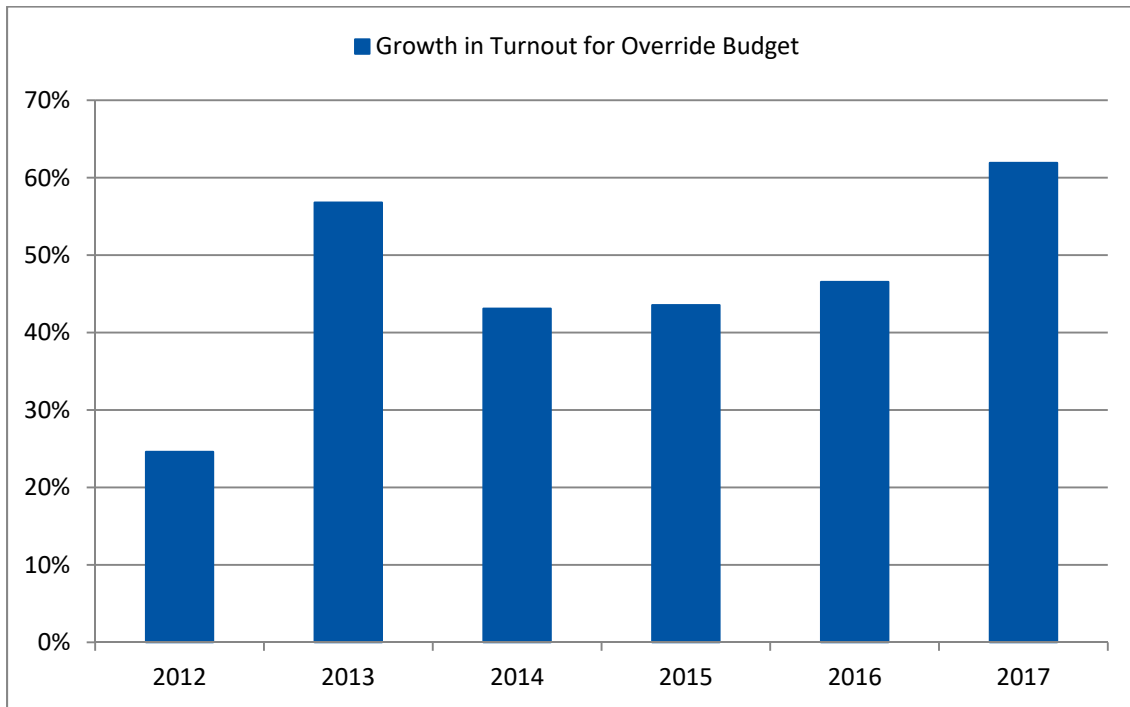


Figure 9. Change in Turnout for Override Votes



Negative Tax Caps

The two percent Tax Cap isn't really two percent as each school district calculates its own Tax Cap based on the lesser of two percent or the annual change in the Consumer Price Index. Factors like changes in capital exclusions, the local property base, or local payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) can leave districts with a negative Tax Cap.

This year's statewide allowable growth factor is 1.26 percent and 18 districts faced negative Tax Caps. In recent years, one quarter to one third of districts with negative Tax Caps proposed override budgets. This year, only one district attempted an override, which was successful.

Figure 10. School Districts With Negative Tax Caps

School District	Tax Cap	Attempted an Override	Budget Approval Rate
Bethpage Union Free School District	-0.11%	No	85.2%
Chateaugay Central School District	-2.61%	No	87.9%
Clymer Central School District	-0.11%	No	80.6%
Cortland City School District	-0.002%	No	82.6%
Dover Union Free School District	-1.38%	No	80.3%
Fort Edward School District	-2.40%	No	76.4%
Fulton School District	-1.34%	No	76.7%
Hamburg School District	-1.07%	No	80.9%
Hermon-De Kalb School District	-0.35%	No	85.2%
Honeoye School District	-1.53%	No	81.9%
Marlboro School District	-0.81%	No	69.7%
Niagara Falls School District	-1.09%	Yes	77.5%
North Shore School District	-0.01%	No	78.7%
Queensbury School District	-3.79%	No	77.1%
Rensselaer School District	-11.01%	No	88.4%
Valley Stream Thirty School District	-15.17%	No	66.2%
Wellsville School District	-0.22%	No	75.9%
Wyandanch School District	-1.48%	No	79.5%

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