
36 NYS school districts poised to exceed tax cap including 4 in CNY: no rebates



A school bus (*jorgeantonio*)



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Four Central New York school districts are among the 36 projected to exceed the tax cap in their upcoming proposed budgets, according to the New York State Association of School Business Officials.

Jamesville-DeWitt is the largest CNY school district projected to exceed the cap. DeRuyter, Morrisville-Eaton and Pulaski school districts also are among those expected to exceed the tax cap based on current figures submitted to the state.

The state pays rebates to taxpayers in school districts which keep tax increases below a state-set tax cap. If the district goes above that cap, taxes go up and taxpayers don't receive a rebate.

Typically, school rebate checks are about \$40 for a \$100,000 home, based on a past survey of local school districts. The amount varies based on the districts tax rate and the value of the house.

J-D has a maximum tax levy of \$37,865,525 and a proposed levy of \$38,857,710, meaning it's about \$1 million over the allowable limit.

Alice Kendrick, J-D superintendent, said the district this year is allowed a zero percent increase in its tax levy under the state tax cap formula.

If the district wants to maintain its current programs, it will likely have to exceed the tax cap, which will require the proposed school budget to be approved by 60 percent of the voters, she said.

Going over the tax cap would also mean J-D property owners would not receive a state-issued tax rebate.

Kendrick said the district is keeping its options open, and will see what happens with state aid before making any decisions.

This zero percent increase is calculated according to the law which specifies that the growth in taxes will be the lesser of two percent or inflation.

A tax levy limit determines what level of support is needed for a school budget to pass. Each district is required to calculate its own tax levy limit by following a complicated, eight-step formula established by the state.

If the proposed tax levy increase is above the tax levy limit — after accounting for exemptions — the support of a supermajority (60 percent) of voters would be required for budget passage. If the levy is within the limit, a simple majority is needed for budget approval.

The statewide group this week released an analysis of tax cap data submitted by 601 school districts to the state comptroller March 1. The districts propose an average increase of 0.9 percent in their tax levy.

Tax cap changes reported by individual school districts ranged from -7.7 percent to 24.6 percent

The report also shows low need (high wealth) school districts with an average 0.7 percent increase, average need school districts with an average 1.0 percent increase, and high need (low wealth) school districts with a 0.9 percent increase.

The 36 districts is the highest number of potential overrides since the first year of the tax cap in 2012, when 52 districts proposed an override.

Also, 76 districts have calculated they will have negative tax levies for the coming year, meaning those districts are restricted to raising less taxes than the year before unless they seek an override.

"This year dramatically demonstrates fundamental flaws in the tax cap," said Michael J. Borges, the group's executive director. "A tax cap that is tied to an inflationary number that does not reflect school district costs and which results in negative levies should raise concerns with both state policymakers and the general public that want a quality education for our students."

36 districts expected to go over state tax cap

Out of 601 school districts, 36, or 6 percent, currently expect to propose budgets that exceed the tax cap at the May vote, according to the New York state Association of School Business Officials. Eligible taxpayers in these districts would lose their STAR tax rebate for school property taxes and the budgets would require approval by 60 percent or more of the voters.

District	Diistrict's need level	Region	Tax cap	Proposed tax level	Amount over cap
Central New York					
Jamesville-Dewitt	Average	Central	\$37,856,525	\$38,875,710	\$1,019,185
Morrisville-Eaton	High-Rural	Central	\$4,443,408	\$4,550,000	\$106,592
Pulaski	High-Rural	Central	\$6,261,344	\$6,399,144	\$137,800
Rest of state					
Albany	High-Urban	Capital	\$112,722,109	\$113,999,102	\$1,276,993
Amagansett	Low	Long Island	\$8,779,148	\$9,069,398	\$290,250
Beekmantown	Average	North Country	\$19,444,589	\$20,013,238	\$568,649

Bradford	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$2,252,468	\$2,297,958	\$45,490
Bridgehampton	Low	Long Island	\$11,337,147	\$12,247,003	\$909,856
Canaseraga	High-Rural	Western	\$1,925,233	\$1,978,289	\$53,056
Canisteo-Greenwood	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$5,167,667	\$5,321,677	\$154,010
Central Valley	High-Urban	Mohawk Valley	\$7,777,972	\$8,380,000	\$602,028
Charlotte Valley	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$3,016,344	\$3,171,472	\$155,128
Copenhagen	High-Rural	North Country	\$1,310,180	\$1,685,477	\$375,297
DeRuyter	High-Rural	Central	\$3,513,538	\$3,743,538	\$230,000
East Greenbush	Average	Capital	\$52,569,233	\$53,926,578	\$1,357,345
Fort Edward	Average	Capital	\$3,476,638	\$3,625,000	\$148,362
Franklin	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$2,558,116	\$2,608,926	\$50,810
Gloversville	High-Rural	Mohawk Valley	\$13,329,404	\$14,199,834	\$870,430
Greenport	Average	Long Island	\$12,796,819	\$13,488,498	\$691,679
Greenville	Average	Capital	\$16,186,365	\$16,186,410	\$45
Hammondsport	Average	Southern Tier	\$8,349,932	\$8,401,805	\$51,873
Hancock	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$3,804,791	\$3,862,113	\$57,322
Heuvelton	High-Rural	North Country	\$3,222,419	\$3,300,671	\$78,252
Hornell	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$7,096,277	\$8,553,198	\$1,456,921
Jasper-Troupsburg	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$2,574,547	\$2,620,839	\$46,292
Mt. Pleasant	Low	Hudson Valley	\$50,537,839	\$57,907,509	\$7,369,670
New Paltz	Average	Hudson Valley	\$39,210,000	\$39,635,000	\$425,000
Newcomb	Low	North Country	\$4,465,679	\$4,601,710	\$136,031
Niagara-Wheatfield	Average	Western	\$31,860,121	\$32,069,386	\$209,265
Poughkeepsie	High-Urban	Hudson Valley	\$27,205,747	\$27,800,000	\$594,253
Sachem	Average	Long Island	\$171,070,970	\$173,161,969	\$2,090,999
Sayville	Low	Long Island	\$58,313,837	\$58,687,136	\$373,299
Seneca Falls	Average	Finger Lakes	\$12,206,248	\$12,543,936	\$337,688
Shelter Island	Low	Long Island	\$9,696,245	\$10,654,832	\$958,587
Victor	Average	Finger Lakes	\$40,396,930	\$41,267,411	\$870,481
Waverly	High-Rural	Southern Tier	\$6,419,088	\$6,974,654	\$555,566

Source: New York state Association of School Business Officials

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