



Smithtown Central School District

26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, New York 11787

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
(631) 382-2006

February 11, 2025

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

Dear Governor Hochul,

As we are sure you are aware, our schools are the cornerstone of our communities, and their success depends on many factors. For generations, strong school districts have been a major draw for first-time homebuyers who seek to raise a family in a community that values and invests in public education. Our schools have never been asked to do more, and we gladly accept that responsibility. Whether it be the provision of an education to students before and beyond the traditional ages of students in grades K-12, the need for increased school security and mental health supports, technological needs, etc., we have stood ready to accept the challenge knowing that it would help our school community.

That said, in order to sustain New York's rich legacy of quality public education, we need your immediate assistance. Increasing costs and continued, unfunded mandates in a flat revenue environment are unsustainable. As you know, the flat revenue environment is caused by uncertain levels of school aid and the 2% Tax Levy Cap. For the 2025-2026 school year, we anticipate that the cost of health care premiums will rise 15%, transportation 11% and special services (mandated) 6%. Simply put, our expenditures are rapidly outpacing our revenue. These cost drivers (and others) coupled with inflationary pressure will force districts to over utilize their reserves to a degree that significantly endangers their long term fiscal stability.

As a policymaker, you have the opportunity to advocate for sensible initiatives to address these concerns in a manner that will better ensure a sustainable future for our district and the other districts you represent. Your leadership and our partnership will be essential so that every one of our students has the opportunity to thrive. We look forward to working with you to see to it that our school systems remain strong and New York continues to be a great place to live and raise a family.

Sincerely,

Mark Secaur, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Michael Catalanotto
BOE President

Michael Saidens
BOE Vice President

Matthew Gribbin
BOE Trustee

Kevin Craine
BOE Trustee

Emily Cianci
BOE Trustee

Dana Fritch
BOE Trustee