

LUMBERJACK LEDGER



PRELIMINARY BUDGET INFORMATION 2024-2025

DCS Community, I wanted to provide you with some notes about the planning for the 2024-2025 school budget. In a typical year, it's difficult to balance inflationary increases, stay within the tax cap, and maintain high-quality programming. Budget preparation for the following school year begins in October of the current school year. As we plan for next year, things have taken a drastic turn in Albany. The Governor's proposed budget includes major cuts to funding for public schools. If the budget is passed as proposed, Deposit CSD stands to lose \$882,413 in foundation aid over the next couple of years. This is equivalent to -7.75% of our foundation aid. Other small schools such as Harpursville, Chenango Forks, and Hancock CSD could lose millions of dollars in necessary funding.

WHAT IS DRIVING THE CUTS?

In her executive budget proposal, the Governor proposed the following harmful actions:

- Removing the "Hold Harmless" agreement which historically guaranteed that districts would never receive less aid than the year before. *This is the proposal that affects Deposit CSD the most.
- Removing the annual minimal increase in aid which provided for at least a 1-3% increase in aid each year for districts who were not eligible for more based on enrollment and other factors.
- Changing the formula which calculates inflation in school aid. Instead of taking the average inflation for the year (4.1% for past 12 months), the Governor has proposed averaging the last 10 years and dropping the highest and lowest amounts. This results in an inflationary rate of just 2.4% which is well below current levels.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DEPOSIT CSD?

Although the Governor's proposal is only the first step in a 3 part process, we must plan for the budget based on the worst case scenario. With a loss as big as the amounts proposed, that means making adjustments to valuable programs and services offered by the district. In the end, we hope that the Hold Harmless and minimum increase are reinstated in the budget. We also hope that a reasonable inflationary rate is included in the calculation. The state legislature will propose changes to the budget before it is adopted on 4/1/24. You can help by reaching out to our representatives to tell them to restore the funding of public schools to the budget. Use this quick link to reach out!

Click the "Take Action" section on NYS United Teachers' page: <https://www.nysut.org/>

I'll continue to provide updates regarding all things budget as we prepare for the May vote.

FUND PUBLIC SCHOOLS. EVERY STUDENT. EVERY ZIPCODE.