GARDEN CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Journey Into The Future

Board of Education

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February 2011

New York State Mandate Relief Team
c/o Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Members of the Mandate Relief Team:

Long Island is justifiably proud of its schools. Without mandate reform, however, the tax cap proposed by Governor Cuomo will destroy our schools and with them the quality of life in our communities. We know from the experience of California with Proposition 13 that blind imposition of a tax cap can result in great damage to our schools, our children, and our communities.

As taxpayers, we of course favor reductions in taxes. But lasting and responsible tax relief will only occur if costly mandates are removed or reformed before any tax cap is instituted, because a tax cap fails to address the root causes of property tax increases. This should include:

- Reforming the state pension system to make it more self-sustaining, by having Tiers 3 and 4 contribute as they were originally intended, and creating a Tier 6 with a defined contribution plan;
- Rewriting the Taylor Law and Triborough Amendment to give school districts the power to negotiate fiscally responsible agreements, and truly control these costs;
- Enabling school districts to reserve funds for mandated Teachers' Retirement System pension contributions;
- Repealing the Wicks Law so that schools can bid out capital projects at competitive rates;
- Reforming tenure so school districts have the ability to assemble a workforce based on talent, effectiveness and a strong work ethic, rather than one that is dictated by seniority or the existence of a civil service list;
- Enabling school districts to assess local needs for transportation by amending section 3635 of the Education Law as was proposed in 2009 by Assembly Bill Number: A 01244 and Senate Bill Number S 1597-A.

Continued…

With these legislative changes, school districts would be better able to control costs, thereby offering real and sustainable tax relief to our and all New York communities.

Please support these comprehensive reforms now. New York's students and future depend on it.

Very Truly Yours,

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cc: The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York
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Albany, New York 12224

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