

Dear Editor,

Our villages of Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings on Hudson, and Irvington, are in large part defined by the high quality education provided by our public schools. As many are aware, the education landscape in our state has shifted dramatically over the last five years. Underfunded state mandates, over-testing and a redirection of our state taxes dedicated to education have had huge impacts on our local public school system.

As the presidents of our four villages' Parent Teacher Associations, we want to draw your attention to two major concerns occurring at the state level and ask you to join our letter writing campaign to address these critical issues.

The first issue has to do with fully restoring state aid to NY public schools. **In the midst of the recent recession and a gap in New York State budget, millions of dollars of tax money that was previously dedicated to education was instead redirected to the state overall budget.** This maneuver, called the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), was used to avoid a budget shortfall. Now as the Governor prepares a new state budget to be announced in January, **the state has a projected \$5 billion surplus.** Many interest groups will lay claim to **that money, but it should be restored to our students.** Furthermore, in light of the budget surplus, the GEA should be eliminated in future budget considerations.

The second issue is about over-testing our kids. Currently, our students face many hours of state tests. Now the state wants to add more. **The state is considering mandated stand-alone tests for our students with the sole purpose of trying out potential questions for future state tests.** We do not believe that Pearson, the test development company already paid over \$30 million by New York state, should shift the company's research and development onto the backs of our students. **We want to send a strong message to the NY State Regents to vote against mandating NY school districts to give unnecessary field tests to students.**

We believe that collectively we can make a strong impact, but we need your help. Please go to irvptsa.org to sign a letter to Governor Cuomo and our state legislators or email him at gov.cuomo@chamber.state.ny.us

Thank you,

Allison Waguespack & Shari Wels, Co-Presidents, Irvington PTSA
Christine Ginsberg & Deborah Pence, Co-Presidents Ardsley PTA
Shannon Johnson Dobbs Ferry PTSA President
Mary McNamara Dobbs Ferry PTSA President Elect
Lisa Eggert Litvin & Jacqueline Weitzman, Co-Presidents, Hastings-on-Hudson PTSA