

NY SUPERINTENDENTS SHOW A BLEAK FORCAST FOR SCHOOLS



Numerous studies have shown that having teachers in the classroom makes a big difference in the quality of education that the students in that school district receive, and while teacher quality is a factor numbers do matter. A recent survey, sent out to the superintendents of schools in New York State, have shown some startling results. Roughly 80% of the superintendents who chose to respond to the survey, which was put out by the state Council of School Superintendents, said that they has plans to cut out teaching positions for the current school year. 63 percent of the superintendents also said they were going to have to increase class sizes in the district. One the whole these numbers line up well with the 75% of district superintendents who report that their school district is currently in a worse finical positions than it was at this time last year. Of the 283 superintendents who choose to respond to the survey, most of them agreed with the idea that the current budget issues would have a directly negative affect on the in-classroom experience of pupils. Other areas where they agreed that there would be a negative impact included after school activities and giving lagging students the help that they need in order to get back on track with difficult subjects. The superintendents who were surveyed represented schools that served 42 percent of the state of New York's overall students outside the Big 5 New York city school districts. "New York State's schools absorbed one of the largest aid cuts in state history this year, but the reduction in state support has been going on for three years now and it is clearly taking a toll on school districts across the state," Robert Reidy, executive director of the Council of School Superintendents, said in a statement, "Now schools are being asked to meet higher standards and adapt to a property tax cap. School district leaders across the state are deeply concerned about the ability to continue to meet the educational needs of all students." Some other interesting results from the survey have to do not with the effects of layoffs, but with the actual numbers of staff being cut from the schools. On average school districts were forced to lay off an average of almost five percent of workers this school year. Districts in rural and urban areas took more of a hit than their suburban counterparts. In addition Sixty-six percent of superintendents who responded said that they had to cut teaching jobs during the 2010-11, while 44 percent said they also had to cut teaching jobs in 2009-10. These positions lost do not include support positions, such as teacher's aides, who may also be in the classroom. Other results of interest found during the survey, which was conducted in August and September of this year, found that two-thirds of superintendents took a salary freeze, or made another kind of reduction in benefits, in order to make the budget work for the school this year. Also, almost 90 percent of superintendents are worried about the use of reserve funding for basic, recurring costs.

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