



LOWER  
HUDSON  
EDUCATION  
COALITION

## **LHEC Supports “Municipal Model” for School Budget Approvals**

Given the current state of emergency in NYS, the Lower Hudson Education Coalition urges State legislators to permit school district Boards of Education to approve 2020-2021 school district budgets in the same manner as municipalities do every year in the State of New York. **Boards of Education should be permitted to approve a tax cap compliant school district budget with a 50% roll call vote; or a supermajority (60%) roll call vote to approve a budget that overrides the tax cap.**

We propose that school board elections be cancelled for the spring of 2020. Current Boards of Education may choose to deal with open seats in a manner currently permitted under law:

- **Current Board members may be re-appointed at the July 1<sup>st</sup> re-organization meeting until the next board election.**
- Boards of Education may choose to hold a special election in the fall or wait until the next regularly scheduled election in May of 2021.
- If current Board members are unable or unwilling to serve, the Board may appoint a new candidate, choose to leave the seat open until the next election, or ask the BOCES Superintendent to appoint a new Board member.

### **RATIONALE:**

- In a time of uncertainty, when schools are closed throughout the state, district administrators require the certainty of an approved school budget well before the July 1<sup>st</sup> start of the new school year.
- Delaying school budget votes creates longer uncertainty and will not permit the potential for re-votes for unsuccessful budget votes, forcing districts to move immediately to a contingency budget. A contingency budget is undesirable not only due to the required 0% increase, but also due to the reduced flexibility in how district funds can be used in the coming year.
- Planning for school budget votes and school board elections has already begun. Districts will begin expending money for the first published legal notices that must appear in local newspapers between March 31<sup>st</sup> and April 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Board candidates should be instructed to discontinue collecting signatures. Any signatures collected to date will be considered valid for the next election.

### **LHEC Sponsoring Organizations:**

Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents  
Rockland County School Boards Association

Dutchess County School Boards Association  
Westchester Putnam School Boards Association