



Office of the NEW YORK STATE

COMPTROLLER

Fiscal Stress Monitoring System

NYS Comptroller

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Introduction

Since the onset of the economic recession in December 2007, local governments and school districts throughout the State and country faced new challenges that threatened their fiscal health. A growing number of local officials, outside researchers and other interested parties have been sounding the alarm over the financial threats to local governments. We have seen in other states, such as California, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, where local governments have filed for bankruptcy or radically reduced or eliminated the services they provide. These challenges will continue to threaten the fiscal health of local governments and school districts as the economy continues to recover from the Great Recession.

A first step in helping New York State local officials deal with these fiscal challenges is to identify clearly those local governments and school districts that are moving towards, or are already in, fiscal stress. Such monitoring of the fiscal health of local governments and school districts should allow for early actions to prevent these entities from ending up in severe fiscal stress. The preventive actions – ideally developed with active participation from citizens who will be affected – should result in less cost and less disruption to vital services.

The State Comptroller has a constitutional and statutory function to examine and report on the financial affairs and condition of local governments. As part of this function, OSC has developed a public fiscal stress monitoring system that will identify local governments and school districts that are in fiscal stress, as well as those showing susceptibility to fiscal stress. It is hoped that this Fiscal Stress Monitoring System will identify for local officials the need to take actions in a timely manner that change their financial trends for the better, with the least disruption and pain to citizens.

The data for monitoring system measures will be drawn from the information local governments and school districts already submit to OSC. Therefore, this system does not impose any additional reporting requirements. Before these measures were adopted and became final, the proposed Fiscal Stress Monitoring System was shared with all of the State's local governments and school districts for review and comment during a 60-day comment period. Over 85 local government and school district officials, as well as three affiliated organizations, provided a wide variety of feedback on the proposed system during this time. The comments were evaluated and considered in finalizing the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System. A summary of the public comments and OSC's responses, including the resulting changes that were made, is contained in Appendix I.

OSC has developed a public fiscal stress monitoring system that will identify local governments and school districts that are in fiscal stress, as well as those showing susceptibility to fiscal stress.

Fiscal Stress Monitoring System

Overview

Fiscal stress is a judgment about the financial condition of an individual entity that must take into consideration its unique circumstances, but can be generally defined as a local government's or school district's inability to generate enough revenues within its current fiscal period to meet its expenditures (budget solvency). In contrast, a fiscally healthy local government or school district is able to finance services on an ongoing basis—meaning that the local government or school district can endure short-term financial pressures (such as revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenditures). Any attempt to identify or predict fiscal stress must recognize that changes in behavior, the specific financial decisions made in a locality, or unforeseen external events, can quickly change ongoing financial trends. These local actions can impact the financial health of a locality or school district suddenly, either for better or worse.

The Fiscal Stress Monitoring System evaluates local governments (counties, cities, towns and villages) and school districts based on both financial and environmental indicators.¹ The financial indicators will be calculated using financial data that is filed in annual update documents (AUDs) by each local government and in annual financial reports (ST-3s) for school districts. A score will be calculated for each financial indicator to arrive at an overall score for each local government and school district, which will then be used to classify whether the unit is in “significant fiscal stress,” “moderate fiscal stress,” “susceptible to fiscal stress,” or “no designation.” The classifications of “significant fiscal stress” and “moderate fiscal stress” were developed so that a differentiation could be made between units that were experiencing fiscal stress with differing levels of severity. The classification “susceptible to fiscal stress” was developed to denote entities that are exhibiting some signs of fiscal stress, but to a lesser degree than those entities classified in the “moderate” or “significant” stress categories.

While there is no immediate cause for alarm, in the short-term, some of these entities could be vulnerable to movement into the “moderate” or “significant” categories should their financial situation deteriorate. Alternatively, some entities in this category could move into the “no designation” category should their financial situation improve.

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evaluates local governments
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¹ Routine maintenance (e.g., incorporation of new account codes into relevant indicators) of indicator components may be necessary periodically to reflect changing reporting standards or codes. These changes will only be made to keep FSMS up-to-date, and will not change the basis of the indicators.

Entities that do not accumulate the number of points that would place them in a stress category will still receive a financial score but will be classified in a category of "no designation." This classification should not be interpreted to imply that the entity is completely free of fiscal stress conditions. Rather, the entity's financial information, when objectively scored according to the System criteria, did not generate sufficient points to place them in one of the three established stress categories.

In addition to the stress and no designation categories there are two additional categories in the System. In cases where a local government did not file its financial data for any of the most recent three fiscal years ended as of the specified snapshot date, that entity will be classified as "Not filed." In cases where an entity did file its financial data but still has unresolved issues associated with that data as of the snapshot date, such entity will be classified as "Inconclusive."

The environmental indicators will be calculated using an array of sources, including data from the United States Census Bureau, the New York State Departments of Labor, Taxation and Finance, and Education, as well as financial data that is filed with the Office of the State Comptroller in AUDs. A score will be calculated for each environmental indicator to arrive at a current overall score for each local government and school district, which will be used to identify the units with negative environmental conditions. Those units that have been found to have negative environmental conditions will be notated in order of magnitude, as follows:

- "###" - (comparable to the "significant" category in the financial indicator component)
- "##" - (comparable to the "moderate" category in the financial indicator component)
- "#" - (comparable to the "susceptible" category in the financial indicator component)

Once a local government or school district is evaluated based on both financial and environmental indicators, it will result in the unit having a financial indicator classification and a separate environmental indicator notation.

Over time, as entities continue to be scored on an annual basis, the System will allow interested parties to track stress condition trends and get a better sense of where an entity is headed, so that decision makers are not merely responding to a crisis. Instead, they are able to take a deliberate, long-term and strategic approach to managing the affairs of their local government.

Particular attention should be paid to the fiscal score, how that score moves along the entire continuum, and where it is in relation to the various stress categories. And, since local leaders will be able to ascertain exactly how their score is generated and which indicator calculations are driving the accumulation of points from one year to the next, they can direct their efforts towards fixing the problem with much greater precision. Additionally, they can better explain their specific challenges to taxpayers.

Local Government Financial Indicators

The Fiscal Stress Monitoring System for local governments consists of nine financial indicators within five categories, outlined in the table below, including the calculation and purpose for each financial indicator. An in-depth explanation of each financial indicator calculation has been included in Appendix A.

Local Government Financial Indicators		
Category	Financial Indicator	Purpose
1. Year-End Fund Balance	1. Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balance	To identify the amount of fund balance that is available in the general, special revenue, and/or enterprise funds to provide a cushion for revenue shortfalls or expenditure overruns.
	2. Total Fund Balance	To identify the amount of fund balance that is available to be used to fund operations, provide a cushion for revenue shortfalls or expenditure overruns, and/or is reserved for specific future purposes.
2. Operating Deficits	3. Operating Deficit	To identify local governments that are incurring operating deficits.
3. Cash Position	4. Cash Ratio	To identify the ability of the local government to liquidate current liabilities.
	5. Cash % of Monthly Expenditures	To identify the ability of the local government to fund the ensuing fiscal year's operations from available cash.
4. Use of Short-Term Debt	6. Short-Term Debt Issuance	To identify the amount of short-term debt that is issued to meet obligations (cash flow).
	7. Short-Term Debt Issuance Trend	To identify the trend in the issuance of short-term debt.
5. Fixed Costs	8. Personal Services and Employee Benefits % Revenues	To identify the amount that revenues are restricted to be used for salaries and benefits.
	9. Debt Service % Revenues	To identify the amount that revenues are restricted to be used for debt service expenditures.

Year-End Fund Balance – The level of a local government’s year-end fund balance can affect its ability to deal with revenue shortfalls and expenditure overruns. A negative or low level of fund balance can affect the local government’s ability to provide services at current levels. In addition, since fund balance is the accumulated result of the local government’s financial operations over time, it is a strong measure of financial condition and is not usually affected by short-term circumstances. Two financial indicators were chosen in this category to evaluate the local government’s assigned and unassigned fund balance level, and its total fund balance.

Operating Deficits – Annual operating results are a good measure of the local government’s recent financial operations and the direction that its finances are headed. Local governments that have multiple years of operating deficits or a significant operating deficit in one fiscal year can face financial hardship. Additionally, multiple years of operating deficits are a reliable sign that the local government’s budget is not structurally balanced – that its current revenues are not sufficient to support current expenditures. One financial indicator was selected in this category to evaluate the trend of operating deficits and determine whether the local government incurred a significant operating deficit in its most recently completed fiscal year.

Cash Position – Another way to evaluate fiscal health is to determine whether an entity has enough cash to pay its bills on time. A local government with a low level of cash and short-term investments may not be able to pay its current obligations (insolvency). The two financial indicators in this category evaluate the local government’s ability to liquidate current liabilities and its ability to fund the ensuing fiscal year’s operations from available cash.

Use of Short-Term Debt – Local governments in fiscal stress are more likely to issue short-term debt in order to meet obligations. Increasing reliance on the issuance of short-term debt indicates that the local government has cash-flow issues that are not being resolved. The two financial indicators in this category evaluate the amount of short-term debt that was issued in the last fiscal year and the trend in the issuance of short-term debt.

Fixed Costs – This category was selected because the level of a local government’s fixed costs determines the local government’s flexibility in responding to economic changes. A local government with a high level of fixed costs has more difficulty adjusting service levels if resources decline. These two financial indicators determine the amount that revenues are restricted to be used for personal services and employee benefits, and for debt service (both are of a fixed nature).

An explanation of the scoring of each financial indicator and the overall scoring has been included in Appendix B. When calculating the financial indicators for local governments, the general fund² and combined funds will be used for indicators one and two (two results for each indicator), the combined funds for indicators three through five (one result for each indicator), and all funds, except the capital projects fund, for indicators six through nine (one result for each indicator). The combined funds³ that will be used for each class of local government for indicators one through five are outlined in the table below.

Class	Combined Funds
Cities	General, All Water and All Sewer Funds
Big 4 Cities (Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, & Yonkers)	General, Dependent School District General, All Water and All Sewer Funds
Counties	General, County Road, Road Machinery, Water, Sewer and All Enterprise Funds
Villages	General, All Water and All Sewer Funds
Towns	General Town-Wide, General Part-Town, Highway Town-Wide, Highway Part-Town, All Water and All Sewer Funds

For indicators one and two, a result will be calculated for the general fund and a result will be calculated for the combined funds, less the general fund result. For indicators three through five, one result will be calculated for the combined funds. For indicators six through nine, one result will be calculated for all funds, except the capital projects fund. The scores for each of the nine financial indicators will be used to arrive at a current overall score for each local government.

² The general fund calculation for indicators one and two for towns will consist of the general town-wide and highway town-wide funds together (one combined result for each indicator), and will only consist of the general fund for cities, counties, and villages.

³ We selected the combined funds for each class of local government by including the funds that are the most common for each class and also the funds that generally account for the largest percentage of each class’s financial activity.

Local Government Environmental Indicators

An in-depth explanation of each of the environmental indicator calculations has been included in Appendix C. Eight categories including 14 environmental indicators⁴ will be used for evaluating demographic and economic factors affecting local governments. These indicators are outlined in the following table, which includes the calculation and the purpose for each of the environmental indicators.

Local Government Environmental Indicators		
Category	Environmental Indicator	Purpose
1. Population	1. Change in Population 1990 to 2010	To identify local governments where total population has declined over the last two decades or significantly declined over the last decade.
2. Age	2. Change in Median Age of Population 2000 to 2010	To identify local governments where the median age of their residents has increased.
	3. Median Age of Population 2010	To identify the median age of the residents of a local government.
3. Poverty	4. Child Poverty Rate 2010	To identify the child poverty rate of the local government.
	5. Change in Child Poverty Rate 2000 to 2010	To identify local governments where the child poverty rate has increased.
4. Property Value	6. Change in Property Value	To identify local governments where property values have declined.
	7. Property Value Per Capita	To identify the property wealth of the local government.
5. Employment Base	8. Change in Unemployment Rate	To identify local governments where the unemployment rate has increased.
	9. Unemployment Rate	To identify the unemployment rate of the local government.
	10. Change in Total Employment in County	To identify local governments that are within counties in which the total employment in the county has declined.
6. Intergovernmental Revenues	11. Reliance on State and Federal Aid	To identify the dependence of the local government on State and federal funding.
	12. Change in State and Federal Aid	To identify local governments where State and federal aid revenues have declined.
7. Constitutional Tax Limit	13. Constitutional Tax Limit Exhausted	To determine the extent to which a city or village has exhausted its tax limit.
8. Sales Tax Receipts	14. Change in Local Sales Tax Receipts	To identify counties where local sales tax receipts have declined.

Population – Changes in population can provide insight into the health of the local economy and can pose challenges to a local government’s finances. Declining population in a local government may affect property values and the associated tax base, which affects a local government’s revenues. Additionally, despite the fact that population is declining, local government officials are often unable to cut the associated costs since many expenditures, including debt service, personal services and employee benefits, are fixed in the short term.

⁴ All 14 environmental indicators will not be used to evaluate each class of local government. Appendix D contains a table outlining the environmental indicators that will be used to evaluate each class of local government.

Age – The age of the population provides important insight into the service needs within a community. A local government with an increasing or already high median age may require additional services (i.e., public transportation and healthcare), resulting in additional expenditures. The two indicators in this category are the current median age of the population and the trend in the age (whether the population is trending older or younger).

Poverty – The level of poverty within a local government provides important insight into the service needs within a community. The two indicators in this category are the current poverty rate – as measured by the child poverty rate – and the trend in the level of child poverty. We specifically selected the child poverty rate because this rate is a more accurate indicator of the actual poverty level in a community.

Property Value – Property value is a useful sign of the health of a local economy and also may affect real property taxes, which is one of the local government’s major revenue sources. A local government with declining property values needs to increase its tax rate(s) in order to raise the same amount of real property tax revenues. The two indicators in this category evaluate property wealth and the trend in a local government’s property value.

Employment Base – The level of unemployment and the change in available employment provides information on the economic activity of an area and also may affect a local government’s revenues. A local government with an increasing unemployment rate, high unemployment rate, and/or declining available employment indicates that its residents are experiencing reductions in personal income. Therefore, the residents’ ability to support the local economy is diminished. This may result in a significant decline in the local government’s revenues that are based on economic activity (i.e., sales tax receipts). The three indicators in this category evaluate the unemployment rate, the trend in the unemployment rate and the trend in the total employment in the county in which the local government is located.

Intergovernmental Revenues – The extent to which a local government’s operations are supported by intergovernmental revenues from State and federal sources can pose challenges to a local government’s finances. A local government with a large dependence on State and federal funding can have a greater revenue risk (vulnerability to reductions of such revenues) because the local government does not control most intergovernmental revenues. The two indicators in this category evaluate the local government’s current level of dependence on intergovernmental revenues and the trend in intergovernmental revenues.

Constitutional Tax Limit – For purposes of the monitoring system, this category is applied to cities and villages only. The extent to which a city or village has exhausted its constitutional tax limit reduces its financing options. A city or village that has exhausted a significant amount of its constitutional tax limit loses flexibility in its revenue structure and may not be able to sustain the current level of services provided to its residents.

Sales Tax Receipts – This category is applied to counties only, as this revenue source is not allocated in a uniform manner to cities, towns and villages. The change in sales tax receipts (as an indicator of consumer spending) can provide insight into the health of the local economy. Adverse changes can pose challenges to a county’s finances. A county with declining sales tax receipts will need to generate additional revenues to sustain the current level of services provided to its residents. The effects of such change will vary according to the significance of sales tax as a portion of the total revenues realized by a county.

A score will be calculated for each of the applicable environmental indicators to arrive at an overall score for each local government. An explanation of the scoring of each environmental indicator and the overall scoring has been included in Appendix D.

School District Financial Indicators

The financial indicators for schools are slightly different than for local governments, reflecting the different operating environment for schools. Seven financial indicators within four categories were developed for evaluating school districts, which are outlined in the table below. An in-depth explanation of each of the financial indicator calculations has been included in Appendix E.

The Fiscal Stress Monitoring System does not evaluate/score districts created by special act or non-operational districts. Special act schools are public schools created by special action of the State Legislature, for the purpose of providing special education services to students who reside in child care institutions. Non-operational school districts most often include districts that raise property taxes as a mechanism to pay tuition in order to send students to other area schools.

School District Financial Indicators		
Category	Financial Indicator	Purpose
1. Year-End Fund Balance	1. Unassigned Fund Balance	To identify the amount of fund balance that is available in the general fund to provide a cushion for revenue shortfalls or expenditure overruns.
	2. Total Fund Balance	To identify the amount of fund balance that is available to be used to fund operations, provide a cushion for revenue shortfalls or expenditure overruns, and/or is reserved for specific future purposes.
2. Operating Deficits	3. Operating Deficit	To identify school districts that are incurring operating deficits.
3. Cash Position	4. Cash Ratio	To identify the ability of the school district to liquidate current liabilities.
	5. Cash % of Monthly Expenditures	To identify the ability of the school district to fund the ensuing fiscal year’s operations from available cash.
4. Use of Short-Term Debt	6. Short-Term Debt Issuance	To identify the amount of short-term debt that was issued to meet obligations (cash flow).
	7. Short-Term Debt Issuance Trend	To identify the trend in the issuance of short-term debt.

Year-End Fund Balance – The level of a school district’s year-end fund balance can affect its ability to deal with revenue shortfalls and expenditure overruns. A negative or low level of fund balance can affect the school district’s ability to provide services at current levels. In addition, since fund balance is the accumulated results of the school district’s financial operations over time, it is a strong measure of financial condition and is not usually affected by short-term circumstances. Two financial indicators were chosen in this category to evaluate a school district’s unassigned fund balance level and total fund balance.

Operating Deficits – Annual operating results are a good measure of the recent financial operations and the direction that a school district’s finances are headed. School districts that have multiple years of operating deficits or a significant operating deficit in one fiscal year can face financial hardship. Additionally, multiple years of operating deficits are a reliable sign that a school district’s budget is not structurally balanced – that its current revenues are not sufficient to support current expenditures. One financial indicator was selected in this category to evaluate the trend of operating deficits and determine whether the school district incurred a significant operating deficit in its most recently completed fiscal year.

Cash Position – Another way to evaluate fiscal health is to determine whether an entity has enough cash to pay its bills on time. A school district with a low level of cash and short-term investments may not be able to pay its current obligations (insolvency). The two financial indicators in this category evaluate the ability to liquidate current liabilities and the ability to fund the ensuing fiscal year’s operations from available cash.

Use of Short-Term Debt – School districts in fiscal stress are more likely to issue short-term debt in order to meet obligations. A school district that increasingly relies on the issuance of short-term debt indicates that the school district has cash-flow issues that are not being resolved. The two financial indicators in this category evaluate the amount of short-term debt that was issued in the last fiscal year as well as the trend in the issuance of short-term debt.

When calculating the financial indicators for school districts, only the district’s general fund will be used. A score will be calculated for each of the seven financial indicators to arrive at a current overall score for each school district. An explanation of the scoring of each financial indicator and the overall scoring has been included in Appendix F.

School District Environmental Indicators

Six environmental indicators within five categories will be used for evaluating other factors affecting school district finances, which are outlined in the table below. An in-depth explanation of each of the environmental indicator calculations has been included in Appendix G.

School District Environmental Indicators		
Category	Environmental Indicator	Purpose
1. Property Value	1. Change in Property Value	To identify school districts where property values have declined.
2. Enrollment	2. Change in Enrollment	To identify school districts where enrollment has declined.
3. Budget Votes	3. Trend in First Budget Vote Being Defeated	To identify school districts where their budget was defeated during the first vote multiple times.
	4. Change in Approval % First Budget Vote	To identify school districts where the approval percentage of their budget during the first budget vote has declined.
4. Graduation Rate	5. Graduation Rate %	To identify the graduation rate of the school district.
5. Free or Reduced Priced Lunch	6. Free or Reduced Priced Lunch %	To identify an indicator of the poverty rate of the school district.

Property Value – Property value is a useful sign of the health of the local economy and also may affect one of the school district’s major revenue sources (real property taxes). A school district with declining property values needs to increase its tax rate(s) in order to raise the same amount of real property tax revenues. This indicator evaluates the trend in a school district’s property value.

Enrollment – Changes in school district enrollment can provide insight into the health of the local economy and can pose challenges to a school district’s finances. A school district with declining enrollment may experience a decline in property values and the associated tax base, which may affect a school district’s revenues. Additionally, despite the fact that enrollment is declining, school districts are often unable to cut the associated costs since many expenditures, including debt service, personal services, and employee benefits, are fixed in the short term.

Budget Votes – The level of community support for a school district’s budget directly affects the school district’s ability to incur the expenditures that are anticipated. Additionally, because of the onset of the tax cap starting with the 2012-13 fiscal year, the level of community support for a school district’s budget will directly affect the school district’s ability to raise real property taxes, its major source of revenue. The two indicators in this category identify school districts that had their budgets defeated during the first vote multiple times, and school districts that have had a declining approval percentage for the first budget vote.

Graduation Rate – Graduation rates may affect the school district’s expenditures. A low graduation rate may indicate a school district has students with higher needs that require additional academic services, resulting in additional expenditures for the district.

Free or Reduced Price Lunch – The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch is directly correlated with the poverty rate. A high percentage of students that are eligible for free or reduced price lunch indicates a school district has students with higher needs that require additional services, resulting in additional expenditures for the district.

A score will be calculated for each of the six environmental indicators to arrive at an overall score for each school district. An explanation of the scoring of each environmental indicator and the overall scoring has been included in Appendix H.

Internal Verification

There will be several steps of internal verification performed by OSC prior to finalizing a list of local governments and school districts that will be classified as in “significant fiscal stress,” “moderate fiscal stress,” or “susceptible to fiscal stress.” Specifically, for each unit initially identified, the data and calculations that were used to determine these units’ classification (significant fiscal stress, moderate fiscal stress, or susceptible to fiscal stress) will be reviewed and verified. The internal verification process will also consist of verification of the data and calculations for a sample of units classified as “no designation.”

Should a local government or school district fail to file its Annual Update Document (AUD) and/or ST-3, it will be classified as “Not filed” when scores for its peer group are released publicly. Should a local government or school district fail to satisfactorily resolve any data issues uncovered during the verification process, such entity will not receive a fiscal stress score and will be classified under the category of “Inconclusive” when scores for its peer group are released publicly. A peer group, for purpose of score releases, is defined according to entity class and/or fiscal year end date.

Dependent School Districts

School district information for the fiscally dependent districts (Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers) will be incorporated into the scoring of their respective cities. See pages 4-8 for discussion of local government indicators.

Assistance Provided to Local Governments

Once the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System has identified local governments and school districts experiencing some level of fiscal stress, there is an array of services that OSC can provide to these units. The services will be provided through the OSC regional office that has oversight responsibility for the identified unit(s).

Budget Reviews – Review the unit’s budget prior to adoption by the governing board to ensure that the significant revenue and expenditure projections are reasonable, and that the budget is structurally balanced.

Technical Assistance – Contact each unit to discuss the indicators that resulted in the fiscal stress designation. Provide additional guidance to the unit via on-site technical assistance.

Multi-Year Financial Planning – Provide each unit with the information to access OSC’s on-line multi-year financial planning tool. Provide any hands-on assistance the unit needs to fully utilize the tool and develop a multi-year plan, identify its fiscal issues and develop a corrective action plan.

Publications and Resources – Provide units with a predetermined set of local government management guides and other publications related to financial management (e.g., financial condition analysis, multi-year financial and capital planning, etc.). Provide units with a five-year financial comparison of the data filed in their annual update document/ST-3 in an Excel spreadsheet.

Training – Advise each unit about the full menu of training that OSC offers, including online training, regional training, and association and conference trainings.

Appendix A

Local Government Financial Indicator Calculations

The following contains an in-depth explanation of each of the financial indicator calculations:

Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balance – The general fund’s assigned fund balance, except for assigned appropriated fund balance (account code 915 only), plus unassigned fund balance (account code 917) divided by the general fund’s gross expenditures⁵ (EOU) during the same fiscal year. A result will be calculated for the general fund. The combined funds’ assigned fund balance, except for assigned appropriated fund balance (account code 915 only), plus unassigned fund balance (account code 917 and account code 924 for enterprise funds) divided by the combined funds’ gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year. A result will be calculated for the combined funds, less the general fund result.

Total Fund Balance – The general fund’s total fund balance at fiscal year end divided by the general fund’s gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year. A result will be calculated for the general fund. The combined funds’ total fund balance at fiscal year end divided by the combined funds’ gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year. A result will be calculated for the combined funds, less the general fund result.

Operating Deficits – The combined funds’ gross revenues⁶ (ROS) minus gross expenditures (EOU) at fiscal year end divided by the combined funds’ gross expenditures during the same fiscal year (EOU). One result will be calculated for the combined funds.

Cash Ratio – The total of the combined funds’ cash and investments (account codes 200-223, 450, and 451) at fiscal year end divided by the combined funds’ current liabilities (account codes 600-626, 631-637, and 639-668 minus account codes 280, 290, and 295) during the same fiscal year. One result will be calculated for the combined funds.

Cash as a Percentage of Monthly Expenditures – The total of the combined funds’ cash and investments (account codes 200, 201, 450, and 451) at fiscal year end divided by the combined funds’ average monthly gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year. One result will be calculated for the combined funds.

Short-Term Debt Issuance – The total of short-term debt (revenue anticipation notes (RANs), tax anticipation notes (TANs), deficiency notes, and budget notes) that was issued during the fiscal year divided by the general fund’s total revenues⁷ during the same fiscal year.

⁵ “Gross Expenditures” consist of expenditures plus other uses (transfer activity) for any of the calculations in which they are included.

⁶ “Gross Revenues” consist of revenues plus other sources (transfer activity) for any of the calculations in which they are included.

⁷ “Total Revenues” only consist of revenues and not other sources (no transfer activity) for any of the calculations in which they are included. For Big 4 Cities (Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers) “Total Revenues” includes city as well as school district general fund revenues.

Appendix A

Local Government Financial Indicator Calculations

Short-Term Debt Issuance Trend – Starting with the most recent completed fiscal year, the number of consecutive years that short-term debt (RANs, TANs, deficiency notes, and budget notes) was issued over the last three fiscal years.

Personal Service and Employee Benefits as a Percentage of Revenues – The total of all funds’ (except the capital projects fund) personal services expenditures and employee benefits expenditures (expenditure object codes .1 and .8) at fiscal year end divided by all funds’ (except the capital projects fund) total revenues during the same fiscal year. One result will be calculated for all funds (except the capital projects fund).

Debt Service as a Percentage of Revenues – The total of all funds’ (except the capital projects fund) debt service expenditures (expenditure object codes .6 and .7) net of current refunding bonds (code V5792) at fiscal year end divided by all funds’ (except the capital projects fund) total revenues during the same fiscal year. One result will be calculated for all funds (except the capital projects fund). For the Big 4 Cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers, the denominator (“Total Revenues”) includes General Fund Revenues of the city as well as its dependent school district.

Appendix B

Local Government Financial Indicators Scoring

Local Government Financial Indicators Scoring			
Financial Indicator	Scoring - Points	Max. Points	Scoring - Weighted Average
1. Assigned and Unassigned Fund Balance	General Fund Result 3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 3.33% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 3.33% But Less Than or Equal to 6.67% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 6.67% But Less Than or Equal to 10% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 10% Last Fiscal Year Combined Funds Result Minus General Fund Result 1 Point = Negative % When the General Fund % is Subtracted from the Combined Funds % for the Last Fiscal Year	4	50%
	General Fund Result 3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 10% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 10% But Less Than or Equal to 15% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 15% But Less Than or Equal to 20% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 20% Last Fiscal Year Combined Funds Result Minus General Fund Result 1 Point = Negative % When the General Fund % is Subtracted from the Combined Funds % for the Last Fiscal Year		
3. Operating Deficit	Combined Funds Result 3 Points = Deficits in Three of Last Three Fiscal Years or a Deficit in the Last Fiscal Year Less Than or Equal to -10% 2 Points = Deficits in Two of Last Three Fiscal Years 1 Point = Deficit in One of Last Three Fiscal Years 0 Points = No Deficits in Last Three Fiscal Years	3	10%
4. Cash Ratio	Combined Funds Result 3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 50% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 50% But Less Than or Equal to 75% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 75% But Less Than or Equal to 100% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 100% Last Fiscal Year	3	
5. Cash % of Monthly Expenditures	Combined Funds Result (Villages and Towns) 3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 33.3% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 33.3% But Less Than or Equal to 66.7% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 66.7% But Less Than or Equal to 100% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 100% Last Fiscal Year Combined Funds Result (Cities and Counties) 3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 50% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 50% But Less Than or Equal to 100% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 100% But Less Than or Equal to 150% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 150% Last Fiscal Year	3	20%
	All Funds Result 3 Points = Greater Than 15% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 5% But Less Than or Equal to 15% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 0% But Less Than or Equal to 5% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = 0% Last Fiscal Year		
7. Short-Term Debt Issuance Trend	All Funds Result 3 Points = Issuance in Each of Last Three Fiscal Years or Issued a Budget Note in Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Issuance in Each of Last Two Fiscal Years 1 Point = Issuance in Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = No Issuance	3	10%
8. Personal Services and Employee Benefits % Revenues	All Funds Result 3 Points = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 75% 2 Points = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 70% But Less Than 75% 1 Point = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 65% But Less Than 70% 0 Points = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Less Than 65%	3	10%
9. Debt Service % Revenues	All Funds Result 3 Points = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 20% 2 Points = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 15% But Less Than 20% 1 Point = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 10% But Less Than 15% 0 Points = Last Three Fiscal Years Average Less Than 10%	3	
Total		29	100%

Appendix B

Local Government Financial Indicators Scoring

The categories will be given different weights to reflect their relative importance in measuring financial stress. The total maximum number of points that a local government can receive is 29 points. If a local government receives an overall score greater than or equal to 65 percent of the total points, it will be considered in significant fiscal stress; if a local government receives an overall score greater than or equal to 55 percent of the total points, but less than 65 percent of the total points, it will be considered in moderate fiscal stress; if a local government receives an overall score greater than or equal to 45 percent of the total points, but less than 55 percent of the total points, it will be considered susceptible to fiscal stress; and if a local government receives an overall score less than 45 percent of the total points, it will be identified as "no designation."

Local Government Classifications of Fiscal Stress	
Percentage of Total Points	Classification of Fiscal Stress
65% – 100%	Significant Fiscal Stress
55% – 64.9%	Moderate Fiscal Stress
45% – 54.9%	Susceptible to Fiscal Stress
0% – 44.9%	No Designation

Appendix C

Local Government Environmental Indicator Calculations⁸

The following contains an in-depth explanation of each of the environmental indicator calculations:

Changes in Population 1990 to 2010 – The local government's total population from the 2000 Census minus the local government's total population from the 1990 Census divided by the local government's total population from the 1990 Census. Additionally, the local government's total population from the 2010 Census minus the local government's total population from the 2000 Census divided by the local government's total population from the 2000 Census.

Change in Median Age of Population 2000 to 2010 – The local government's total population median age from the 2010 Census minus the local government's total population median age from the 2000 Census divided by the local government's total population median age from the 2000 Census.

Median Age of Population 2010 – The median age of the residents of a local government based on the 2010 Census.

Child Poverty Rate 2010 – The child poverty rate of the local government based on the 2010 Census. The statewide average poverty rate was 19.90 percent based on the 2010 Census.

Change in Child Poverty Rate 2000 to 2010 – The local government's child poverty rate from the 2010 Census minus the local government's child poverty rate from the 2000 Census.

Change in Property Value – The local government's full value of its real property minus the full value for the prior fiscal year divided by the full value for the prior fiscal year.

Property Value Per Capita – The local government's full value of its real property divided by the local government's total population as of the 2010 Census.

Change in Unemployment Rate – The unemployment rate for the local government minus the prior year's unemployment rate. For local governments for which an individual unemployment rate is not available, the unemployment rate for the county that the local government primarily resides in is used.

Unemployment Rate – The unemployment rate for the local government. We compare the change in the Statewide unemployment rate with the change in the local government's unemployment rate for the same time period. For local governments for which an individual unemployment rate is not available, the unemployment rate for the county that the local government primarily resides in is used.

⁸ All local government environmental data is obtained internally unless otherwise noted below:

Census data is obtained from the United States Census Bureau.

Employment data is obtained from the New York State Department of Labor.

Sales tax data is obtained from the New York State Department of Tax and Finance.

Consumer price index is obtained from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics

Appendix C

Local Government Environmental Indicator Calculations

Change in Total Employment in County – The total employment in the county minus the total employment in the county for the prior year. For each local government, we used the data for the county that the local government most resides in.

Reliance on State and Federal Aid – All funds' (except the capital projects fund) State and federal aid revenues (revenue account codes 3000 through 4999 minus account codes 3960 and 4960) at fiscal year end for the current fiscal year divided by all funds' (except the capital projects fund) total revenues at fiscal year end for the current fiscal year. One result will be calculated for all funds (except the capital projects fund).

Change in State and Federal Aid – All funds' (except the capital projects fund) State and federal aid revenues (revenue account codes 3000 through 4999 minus account codes 3960 and 4960) at fiscal year end for the current fiscal year minus all funds' (except the capital projects fund) State and federal aid revenues (revenue account codes 3000 through 4999 minus account codes 3960 and 4960) at fiscal year end for the prior fiscal year divided by all funds' (except the capital projects fund) State and federal aid revenues (revenue account codes 3000 through 4999 minus account codes 3960 and 4960) at fiscal year end for the prior fiscal year. One result will be calculated for all funds (except the capital projects fund).

Constitutional Tax Limit – The city or village tax levy subject to the tax levy limit divided by its tax limit. The tax limit is computed by multiplying taxable real property by a certain percentage enumerated in the State Constitution.

Change in Local Sales Tax Receipts – The rate of change for local sales tax receipts for the most recently completed calendar year minus the local sales tax receipts for the prior calendar year divided by the local sales tax receipts for the prior calendar year. The local sales tax receipts represent the amount that is distributed to counties on a monthly basis from OSC. The measure is calculated as the local government's rate of change for local sales tax receipts minus the rate of change in the consumer price index (CPI) for the same time period as the change in local sales tax.

Appendix D

Local Government Environmental Indicators Scoring

Local Government Environmental Indicators Scoring							
Environmental Indicator	Scoring - Points	County		City and Village		Town	
		Max. Points	Scoring - Weighted Average	Max. Points	Scoring - Weighted Average	Max. Points	Scoring - Weighted Average
1. Change in Population 1990 to 2010	3 Points = Change Between 1990 and 2000 and 2000 and 2010 are Both Less Than 0% or Change Between 2000 and 2010 Less Than -10% 2 Points = Change Between 2000 and 2010 Less Than or Equal to -5% 1 Point = Change Between 2000 and 2010 Less Than 0% But Greater Than -5% 0 Points = Change Between 2000 and 2010 Greater Than or Equal to 0%	3	15%	3	15%	3	20%
2. Change in Median Age of Population 2000 to 2010	3 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 25%. 2 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 20% But Less Than 25% 1 Point: Greater Than or Equal to 15% But Less Than 20% 0 Points: Less Than 15%	3	10%	3	10%	3	10%
3. Median Age of Population 2010	1 Point: Greater Than or Equal to 50 0 Points: Less Than 50	1		1		1	
4. Child Poverty Rate 2010	3 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 39.80% (Twice the Statewide Average) 2 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 29.85% (One and Half Times the Statewide Average) But Less Than 39.80% 1 Point: Greater Than or Equal to 19.90% (Statewide Average) But Less Than 29.85% 0 Points: Less Than 19.90% (Statewide Average)	3	10%	3	15%	3	20%
5. Change in Child Poverty Rate 2000 to 2010	1 Point: Greater Than 0% 0 Points: Less Than or Equal to 0%	1		1		1	
6. Change in Property Value	3 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -4% or Change Between Last Two Fiscal Years Less Than -10% 2 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -2% But Greater Than -4% 1 Point = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -1% But Greater Than -2% 0 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than -1%	3	25%	3	30%	3	30%
7. Property Value Per Capita	3 Points: Less Than or Equal to \$10,000. 2 Points: Greater Than \$10,000 But Less Than or Equal to \$20,000 1 Point: Greater Than \$20,000 But Less Than or Equal to \$30,000 0 Points: Greater Than \$30,000	3		3		3	
8. Change in Unemployment Rate	1 Point: Greater Than 0% 0 Points: Less Than or Equal to 0%	1	10%	1	10%	1	10%
9. Unemployment Rate	1 Point: Greater Than Statewide Average 0 Points: Less Than or Equal to Statewide Average	1		1		1	
10. Change in Total Employment in County	1 Point: Less Than 0 0 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 0	1		1		1	
11. Reliance on State and Federal Aid	3 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 50% 2 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 40% But Less Than 50% 1 Point = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 30% But Less Than 40% 0 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than 30%	3	10%	3	10%	3	10%
12. Change in State and Federal Aid	1 Point: Less Than 0% In Last Fiscal Year 0 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 0% In Last Fiscal Year	1		1		1	
13. Constitutional Tax Limit Exhausted	3 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 80% Last Fiscal Year. 2 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 65% But Less Than 80% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point: Greater Than or Equal to 50% But Less Than 65% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points: Less Than 50% Last Fiscal Year	0	0%	3	10%	0	0%
14. Change in Local Sales Tax Receipts	3 Points: Less Than 0% 2 Points: Greater Than or Equal to 0% But Less Than One Half the CPI Change 1 Point: Greater Than or Equal to 1.35% But Less Than CPI Change 0 Points: Greater Than or Equal to CPI Change	3	20%	0	0%	0	0%
Total		27	100%	27	100%	24	100%

Appendix D

Local Government Environmental Indicators Scoring

The categories will be given different weights to reflect their relative importance in determining environmental conditions. The total maximum number of points that a county, city, or village can receive is 27 points. If a county, city, or village receives an overall score greater than or equal to 50 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the worst environmental conditions, which will be notated by "###;" if a county, city, or village receives an overall score greater than or equal to 40 percent of the total points, but less than 50 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the next level of negative environmental conditions, which will be notated by "##;" if a county, city, or village receives an overall score greater than or equal to 30 percent of the total points, but less than 40 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the last level of negative environmental conditions, which will be notated by "#;" and if a county, city, or village receives an overall score less than 30 percent of the total points, it will be classified as "no designation" for environmental conditions.

The total maximum number of points that a town can receive is 24 points. If a town receives an overall score greater than or equal to 50 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the worst environmental conditions, which will be notated by "###;" if a town receives an overall score greater than or equal to 40 percent of the total points, but less than 50 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the next level of negative environmental conditions, which will be notated by "##;" if a town receives an overall score greater than or equal to 30 percent of the total points, but less than 40 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the last level of negative environmental conditions, which will be notated by "#;" and if a town receives an overall score less than 30 percent of the total points, it will be classified as "no designation" for environmental conditions.

Appendix E

School District Financial Indicator Calculations

The following contains an in-depth explanation of each of the financial indicator calculations:

Unassigned Fund Balance – The general fund's unassigned fund balance, except for reserve for tax reduction (account code 917 only), divided by the general fund's gross expenditures⁹ (EOU) during the same fiscal year.

Total Fund Balance – The general fund's total fund balance at fiscal year end divided by the general fund's gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year.

Operating Deficits – The general fund's gross revenues¹⁰ (ROS) minus gross expenditures (EOU) at fiscal year end divided by the general fund's gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year.

Cash Ratio – The total of the general fund's cash and investments (account codes 200-223, 450, and 451) at fiscal year end divided by the general fund's current liabilities (account codes 600-626, 631-637, and 639- 668 minus account codes 280, 290, and 295) during the same fiscal year.

Cash as a Percentage of Monthly Expenditures – The total of the general fund's cash and investments (account codes 200, 201, 450, and 451) at fiscal year end divided by the general fund's average monthly gross expenditures (EOU) during the same fiscal year.

Short-Term Debt Issuance – The total of short-term debt (RANs, TANs, deficiency notes, and budget notes) that was issued during the fiscal year divided by the general fund's total revenues¹¹ during the same fiscal year.

Short-Term Debt Issuance Trend – Beginning with the most recent completed fiscal year, the number of consecutive years that short-term debt (RANs, TANs, deficiency notes, and budget notes) was issued over the last three fiscal years..

⁹ “Gross Expenditures” consist of expenditures plus other uses (transfer activity) for any of the calculations that they are included in.

¹⁰ “Gross Revenues” consist of revenues plus other sources (transfer activity).

¹¹ “Total Revenues” only consist of revenues and not other sources (no transfer activity).

Appendix F

School District Financial Indicators Scoring

School District Financial Indicators Scoring			
Financial Indicator	Scoring - Points	Max. Points	Scoring - Weighted Average
1. Unassigned Fund Balance	3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 1% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 1% But Less Than or Equal to 2% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 2% But Less Than or Equal to 3% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 3% Last Fiscal Year	3	50%
2. Total Fund Balance	3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 0% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 0% But Less Than or Equal to 5% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 5% But Less Than or Equal to 10% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 10% Last Fiscal Year	3	
3. Operating Deficit	3 Points = Deficits in Three of Last Three Fiscal Years Less Than or Equal to -1% or a Deficit in the Last Fiscal Year Less Than or Equal to -3% 2 Points = Deficits in Two of Last Three Fiscal Years Less Than or Equal to -1% 1 Point = Deficit in One of Last Three Fiscal Years Less Than or Equal to -1% 0 Points = No Deficits Less Than or Equal to -1% in Last Three Fiscal Years	3	20%
4. Cash Ratio	3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 50% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 50% But Less Than or Equal to 75% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 75% But Less Than or Equal to 100% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 100% Last Fiscal Year	3	20%
5. Cash % of Monthly Expenditures	3 Points = Less Than or Equal to 33.3% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 33.3% But Less Than or Equal to 66.7% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 66.7% But Less Than or Equal to 100% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = Greater Than 100% Last Fiscal Year	3	
6. Short-Term Debt Issuance Amount	3 Points = Greater Than 15% Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Greater Than 5% But Less Than or Equal to 15% Last Fiscal Year 1 Point = Greater Than 0% But Less Than or Equal to 5% Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = 0% Last Fiscal Year	3	10%
7. Short-Term Debt Issuance Trend	3 Points = Issuance in Each of Last Three Fiscal Years or Issued a Budget Note in Last Fiscal Year 2 Points = Issuance in Each of Last Two Fiscal Years 1 Point = Issuance in Last Fiscal Year 0 Points = No Issuance	3	
Total		21	100%

Appendix F

School District Financial Indicators Scoring

The categories will be given different weights to reflect their relative importance in measuring financial stress. The total maximum number of points that a school district can receive is 21 points. If a school district receives an overall score greater than or equal to 65 percent of the total points, it will be considered in significant fiscal stress; if a school district receives an overall score greater than or equal to 45 percent of the total points, but less than 65 percent of the total points, it will be considered in moderate fiscal stress; if a school district receives an overall score greater than or equal to 25 percent of the total points, but less than 45 percent of the total points, it will be considered susceptible to fiscal stress; and if a school district receives an overall score less than 25 percent of the total points, it will be classified as "no designation."

School District Classifications of Fiscal Stress	
Percentage of Total Points	Classification of Fiscal Stress
65% – 100%	Significant Fiscal Stress
45% – 64.9%	Moderate Fiscal Stress
25% – 44.9%	Susceptible to Fiscal Stress
0% – 24.9%	No Designation

Appendix G

School District Environmental Indicator Calculations

The following contains an in-depth explanation of each of the environmental indicator calculations:

Change in Property Value – The school district's full value¹² minus the school district's full value for the prior fiscal year divided by the school district's full value for the prior fiscal year.

Change in Enrollment – The school district's enrollment for the most current fiscal year minus the school district's enrollment for the prior fiscal year divided by the school district's enrollment for the prior fiscal year.

Trend in First Budget Vote Being Defeated – In fiscal years prior to the 2012-13 fiscal year budget vote, a majority of total votes had to be "yes" (more than 50 percent) or the budget would be defeated. Starting with the 2012-13 fiscal year budget vote and budget votes in fiscal years after, a majority of total votes had to be "yes" (more than 50 percent) or the budget would be defeated if it did not include an override of the tax cap. Alternatively, a supermajority of total votes had to be "yes" (60 percent or more) or the budget would be defeated if it included an override of the tax cap.

Change in Approval Percentage for the First Budget Vote – The approval percentage for the first budget vote for the most current fiscal year minus the approval percentage for the first budget vote for last fiscal year. The approval percentage consists of the total number of "yes" votes for the first budget vote divided by the total number of votes cast for the first budget vote.

Graduation Rate Percentage – The total number of students that graduated divided by the number of students that entered 9th grade four years prior. The number of students who graduated consists of students who graduated within four years with a local diploma, Regents diploma, or Regents with an advanced designation diploma.

Free or Reduced Priced Lunch Percentage – The total number of students in Kindergarten through 12th grade who are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch divided by the total K-12 enrollment for the same year.

¹² All school district environmental data is obtained from the New York State Education Department except for real property data, which is obtained internally.

Appendix H

School District Environmental Indicators Scoring

School District Environmental Indicators Scoring			
Environmental Indicator	Scoring - Points	Max. Points	Scoring - Weighted Average
1. Change in Property Value	3 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -4% or Change Between Last Two Fiscal Years Less Than -10% 2 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -2% But Greater Than -4% 1 Point = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -1% But Greater Than -2% 0 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than -1%	3	30%
2. Change in Enrollment	3 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -3.5% 2 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -2.5% But Greater Than -3.5% 1 Point = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -1.5% But Greater Than -2.5% 0 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than -1.5%	3	20%
3. Trend in First Budget Vote Being Defeated	3 Points = Budget Vote Defeated First Time Four of Last Four Fiscal Years 2 Points = Budget Vote Defeated First Time Three of Last Four Fiscal Years 1 Point = Budget Vote Defeated First Time Two of Last Four Fiscal Years 0 Points = Budget Vote Defeated First Time One or None of Last Four Fiscal Years	3	15%
4. Change in Approval % First Budget Vote	3 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -9% Points and Last Fiscal Year Approval % Less Than 60% 2 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -6% Points But Greater Than -9% Points and Last Fiscal Year Approval % Less Than 60% 1 Point = Four Fiscal Years Average Less Than or Equal to -3% Points But Greater Than -6% Points and Last Fiscal Year Approval % Less Than 60% 0 Points = Four Fiscal Years Average Greater Than -3% Points	3	
5. Graduation Rate %	3 Points = Graduation % Below 1.5 Standard Deviations of That Fiscal Year's Average Graduation Rate % in Three or More of Last Four Fiscal Years 2 Points = Graduation % Below 1.5 Standard Deviations of That Fiscal Year's Average Graduation Rate % in Two of Last Four Fiscal Years 1 Point = Graduation % Below 1.5 Standard Deviations of That Fiscal Year's Average Graduation Rate % in One of Last Four Fiscal Years 0 Points = Graduation % Below 1.5 Standard Deviations of That Fiscal Year's Average Graduation Rate % in None of Last Four Fiscal Years	3	15%
6. Free or Reduced Priced Lunch %	3 Points = Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 75% 2 Points = Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 65% But Less Than 75% 1 Point = Three Fiscal Years Average Greater Than or Equal to 55% But Less Than 65% 0 Points = Three Fiscal Years Average Less Than 55%	3	20%
Total		18	100%

Appendix H

School District Environmental Indicators Scoring

We recognize that there are instances in which some of the environmental indicators are not applicable to each school district. For example, school districts that include only grades K-6 will not have a graduation rate percentage and dependent school districts will not have budget vote data. When these instances occur, the environmental indicators that are not applicable to the school district will not be evaluated. Instead, the school district's overall environmental indicator score will be calculated by proportionately redistributing the weighted average for the environmental indicator categories that are not applicable to the school district to the other environmental indicator categories that are applicable. This will result in all school districts' overall environmental indicator scores being equitable and comparable to each other.

The categories will be given different weights to reflect their relative importance in determining environmental conditions. The total maximum number of points that a school district can receive is 18 points. If a school district receives an overall score greater than or equal to 60 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the worst environmental conditions, which will be notated by "###;" if a school district receives an overall score greater than or equal to 45 percent of the total points, but less than 60 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the next level of negative environmental conditions, which will be notated by "##;" if a school district receives an overall score greater than or equal to 30 percent of the total points, but less than 45 percent of the total points, it will be considered to have the last level of negative environmental conditions, which will be notated by "#;" and if a school district receives an overall score less than 30 percent of the total points, it will be classified as "no designation."

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

The proposed Fiscal Stress Monitoring System was shared with all local governments and school districts for their review and comment during a 60-day comment period. We want to thank all of the individuals who submitted comments during the open comment period. We evaluated the comments received and took them into consideration in finalizing the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System. The following contains a summary of the public comments and OSC's responses, including the resulting changes that were made.

Early Warning System

We received comments that the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System is not an early warning system because it provides information that local government and school district officials are already aware of. The Fiscal Stress Monitoring System is in fact an early warning system because it identifies both local governments and school districts that are currently in fiscal stress, and those that are susceptible to fiscal stress. Admittedly, in this initial application of the indicators, those places that were already in fiscal stress did not get the “early warning” when they first became susceptible to stress conditions. In the future, we anticipate that most localities and school districts will be first identified as susceptible to fiscal stress before the system identifies them as in fiscal stress. The Fiscal Stress Monitoring System will provide information to both local officials and the public that can be used to allow for early actions to prevent local governments and school districts from ending up in severe fiscal stress.

Bond Rating

We received comments that a local government's and/or school district's bond rating should be factored in to the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System. Additionally, we received comments that the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System is a duplication of work that is already performed by credit rating agencies. Bond ratings were not factored into the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System because they are not available for the vast majority of local governments and school districts. Also, for that reason, the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System is not a duplication of effort.

Unique Local Factors and Intangibles

We received comments that the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System does not take into account local governments' and/or school districts' unique local factors and intangibles (i.e., financial management practices). However, while there may be variations in such intangibles, they must eventually show up and influence the financial information we are evaluating. Otherwise, they are variations that do not have an impact on fiscal health.

Classification Terminology

We received comments that the “nearing fiscal stress” financial indicator classification should be amended because it can be construed as always being negative with regard to the fiscal direction of a local government or school district. After careful consideration, we have decided to amend the “nearing fiscal stress” financial indicator classification to “susceptible to fiscal stress.” The classification of “susceptible to fiscal stress” classifies units that are not currently in fiscal stress, but instead are exhibiting conditions that could lead them into fiscal stress in the short run.

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

Overall Financial and Environmental Score

We received comments that the report should contain more clarification as to how the overall financial and environmental scores will be calculated. As a result, we have provided more information in the report. The overall financial and environmental scores that will be used to determine the fiscal stress classification and environmental indicator notation will be calculated as percentages. The reason the scores will be calculated as percentages (i.e., 45.50 percent), instead of as total point amounts (i.e., 11.35), is because the thresholds for determining the fiscal stress classification and environmental indicator notation are based on percentages.

Weighted Average Scoring

We received comments that the report should contain more clarification as to how the weighted average scoring is applied. As a result, we have included an example below of how the weighted average scoring is applied. The example below is in relation to the financial indicators for local governments, but can be used as a guide for applying weighted averages to the financial indicators for school districts and the environmental indicators for both local governments and school districts.

Financial Indicator Categories							
Row		Year-End Fund Balance	Operating Deficits	Cash Position	Use of Short-Term Debt	Fixed Costs	Overall Score
1	Maximum Category Score	8	3	6	6	6	
2	Town of "Example" Category Score	6	1	4	5	0	
3	Score as a % of Total (Row 2 divided by Row 1)	75.00%	33.33%	66.67%	83.33%	0.00%	
4	Assigned Weight	50.00%	10.00%	20.00%	10.00%	10.00%	
5	Weighted Score (Row 3 multiplied by Row 4)	37.50%	3.33%	13.33%	8.33%	0.00%	62.50%

In the example above, the Town of "Example" received an overall score of 62.50 percent, which was computed by adding the weighted scores that were calculated for each of the five financial indicator categories. The Town of "Example" would receive a financial indicator classification of in "moderate fiscal stress" because it received an overall score greater than or equal to 55 percent of the total points, but less than 65 percent of the total points.

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

Funds Used for Each Local Government Financial Indicator

We received comments that the report should contain more clarification as to which funds are being used to calculate each of the nine financial indicators for local governments. As a result, we have included additional information in the report. When calculating the financial indicators for local governments, the general fund and combined funds will be used for indicators one and two (two results for each indicator), the combined funds for indicators three through five (one result for each indicator), and all funds, except the capital projects fund, for indicators six through nine (one result for each indicator). We selected the combined funds for each class of local government by including the funds that are the most common for each class and also the funds that generally account for the largest percentage of each class's financial activity.

Calculation of Local Government Financial Indicators

We received comments that the report should contain more clarification regarding how to calculate a result for each of the nine financial indicators for local governments. As a result, we have included additional information in the report. For indicators one and two, a result will be calculated for the general fund (step one), and one result will be calculated for the combined funds, less the general fund result (step two). For indicators three through five, one result will be calculated for the combined funds. For indicators six through nine, one result will be calculated for all funds, except the capital projects fund. When multiple funds are used (combined funds or all funds, except the capital projects fund) for each of the nine financial indicators, each of the separate fund's data will be added together to come up with one combined result. A separate result will not be calculated for each of the funds contained within the combined funds and/or all funds.

Fund Balance Classifications

We received comments that the report should contain more clarification on the fund balance classifications that are used for financial indicators one and two for both local governments and school districts. As a result, we have attached a link to a bulletin on our website that outlines the various classifications of fund balance (including both assigned and unassigned) and the account codes that are applicable to each classification of fund balance. The bulletin can be found at:

<http://osc.state.ny.us/localgov/pubs/releases/gasb54.pdf>

Local Government Financial Indicator One (Calculation)

We received comments that financial indicator one for local governments should not include assigned appropriated fund balance (account code 914). We considered these comments and performed additional analysis to determine if this change would improve the financial condition evaluation of local governments. Based on our analysis, we concluded that this change did improve the financial condition evaluation of local governments. As a result, we amended financial indicator one for local governments to consist of assigned fund balance, except for assigned appropriated fund balance, plus unassigned fund balance divided by gross expenditures. Based on the amendment that we made to the financial indicator calculation, we also amended the scoring thresholds for this financial indicator. The scoring thresholds consist of the following: less than or equal to 3.33 percent (3 points), less than or equal to 6.67 percent (2 points), less than or equal to 10 percent (1 point), and greater than 10 percent (0 points).

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

Local Government Financial Indicators Number One and Two (Funds)

We received comments that financial indicators one and two for local governments should look at more funds than just the general fund (such as the water and sewer funds). Financial indicators one and two for local governments do take into account more funds than just the general fund. Specifically, for indicators one and two, a result will be calculated first for the general fund¹³ only (step one – possible 0-3 points). There also is a second calculation for indicators one and two, which consists of calculating a result for the combined funds. The combined funds vary by class of local government. For instance, the combined funds for cities consists of the general, all water, and all sewer funds. Once the combined funds result has been calculated (percentage), the general fund result (percentage) that was calculated in step one will be subtracted from it (step two – possible 0-1 points). This calculation adds an additional point if the combined funds have a lower percentage than the general fund percentage. The reasoning behind this is that if the combined funds' percentage is lower than the general fund's percentage, it could mean that the general fund is currently supporting the local government's other operating funds or may have to in the near future.

Fund Balance Trend Indicator

We received comments that an indicator should be developed that evaluates the change in a local government's and/or school district's fund balance level (declining balance). We considered an indicator that would evaluate the change in fund balance for both local governments and school districts. However, we concluded that the operating deficit financial indicator that we had already developed would indicate the change in a local government's and school district's fund balance level.

Scoring Thresholds for Local Government Financial Indicators

We received comments that the scoring thresholds for the local government financial indicators under the categories of year-end fund balance and cash position should vary by class of local government. We considered these comments and performed additional analysis (various scoring threshold scenarios) to determine if these changes would improve the financial condition evaluation of local governments. Based on our analysis, we concluded that there should be a variation between the scoring thresholds for cities and counties versus villages and towns for cash as a percentage of monthly expenditures financial indicator. As a result, we amended the scoring thresholds for this financial indicator for cities and counties, but kept the original scoring thresholds for villages and towns. The amendments that were made were increasing the scoring thresholds for cities and counties from less than or equal to 33.3 percent to less than or equal to 50 percent (3 points), from less than or equal to 66.7 percent to less than or equal to 100 percent (2 points), from less than or equal to 100 percent to less than or equal to 150 percent (1 point), and from greater than 100 percent to greater than 150 percent (0 points). These amendments were made based on the difference between cities' and counties' versus villages' and towns' revenue cycles at the beginning of the fiscal year.

¹³ The general fund calculation for indicators one and two for towns will consist of the general town-wide and highway town-wide funds together (one combined result for each indicator), and will only consist of the general fund for cities, counties, and villages.

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

Weighted Averages for Local Government Financial Indicators

We received comments that the weighted averages that were assigned to the local government financial indicator categories of year-end fund balance, operating deficits, and cash position should be changed. We considered these comments and performed additional analysis (various reallocations of weighted averages between categories) to determine if these changes would improve the financial condition evaluation of local governments. Based on our analysis, we concluded that the reallocation of weighted averages between categories from the original weighted averages did not improve the financial condition evaluation of local governments. As a result, we did not amend the weighted averages for the local government financial indicator categories.

Gross Revenues, Gross Expenditures, and Total Revenues

We received comments that the report should contain more clarification as to the meaning of gross revenues, gross expenditures, and total revenues that are included in the financial indicator calculations. As a result, we have included additional information in the report. “Gross Revenues” consist of revenues plus other sources (transfer activity), “Gross Expenditures” consist of expenditures plus other uses (transfer activity), and “Total Revenues” only consist of revenues and not other sources (no transfer activity).

Change in Local Sales Tax Receipts Environmental Indicator

We received comments that the change in local sales tax receipts environmental indicator should not only be applied to counties, but also to any other local governments that collect sales tax receipts or receive distributions from their respective counties because of its significance as a revenue source. This indicator was only applied to counties because it was developed as an environmental indicator to provide insight into the health of the local economy (consumer spending), and not as a financial indicator. While we acknowledge that sales tax receipts are a significant revenue source for many local governments, the Fiscal Stress Monitoring System does not evaluate individual revenues (i.e., real property taxes, sales tax receipts, etc.) for financial purposes.

Tax-Exempt Property Indicator

We received comments that an indicator should be developed in relation to the total amount and annual change in the total amount of tax-exempt property within a local government’s and/or school district’s boundaries. We obtained tax-exempt property data from the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services, which we then analyzed to determine if it provided information that was useful in determining a local government’s or school district’s level of fiscal stress. Based on our analysis, we concluded that a tax-exempt property indicator does not provide information that correlates with a local government’s or school district’s level of fiscal stress.

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

School District Financial Indicator One

We received comments that financial indicator one for school districts should not include assigned fund balance, but instead should only include unassigned fund balance. We considered these comments and performed additional analysis to determine if this change would improve the financial condition evaluation of school districts. Based on our analysis, we concluded that this change did improve the financial condition evaluation of school districts. As a result, we amended financial indicator one for school districts to consist of the general fund's unassigned fund balance, except for the reserve for tax reduction (account code 917 only), divided by the general fund's gross expenditures.

Scoring Thresholds for School District Financial Indicators

We received comments that the scoring thresholds – under the categories of year-end fund balance and operating deficits – for the school district financial indicators should be changed. We considered these comments and performed additional analysis (various scoring threshold scenarios) to determine if these changes would improve the financial condition evaluation of school districts. Based on our analysis, we concluded that there should be changes in the scoring thresholds for financial indicators one and three. As a result, we amended the scoring thresholds for these financial indicators.

Based on the amendment that we made to the calculation for financial indicator one, we also amended the scoring thresholds for this financial indicator. The proposed scoring thresholds consisted of the following: less than or equal to 0 percent (3 points), greater than 0 percent but less than or equal to 2 percent (2 points), greater than 2 percent but less than or equal to 5 percent (1 point), and greater than 5 percent (0 points). The amended scoring thresholds consist of the following: less than or equal to 1 percent (3 points), greater than 1 percent but less than or equal to 2 percent (2 points), greater than 2 percent but less than or equal to 3 percent (1 point), and greater than 3 percent (0 points).

We also made amendments to the scoring thresholds for financial indicator three. The proposed scoring thresholds consisted of the following: deficits in three of the last three fiscal years of less than or equal to -1.5 percent (3 points), deficits in two of the last three fiscal years that are less than or equal to -1.5 percent (2 points), deficits in one of the last three fiscal years of less than or equal to -5 percent (1 point), and no deficits in the last three fiscal years (0 points). The amended scoring thresholds include: deficits in three of the last three fiscal years that are less than or equal to -1 percent, or a deficit in the last fiscal year that is less than or equal to -3 percent (3 points), deficits in two of the last three fiscal years of less than or equal to -1 percent (2 points), deficits in one of the last three fiscal years of less than or equal to -1 percent (1 point), and no deficits of less than or equal to -1 percent in the last three fiscal years (0 points).

Evaluation and Scoring of Special Act Districts

We received comments that the financial indicators that were developed for school districts should be different for evaluating and scoring special act districts. The Fiscal Stress Monitoring System will not evaluate or score special act districts or non-operational districts.

Appendix I

Summary of Public Comments and Responses

Weighted Averages for School District Financial Indicators

We received comments that the weighted averages that were assigned to the school district financial indicator categories of year-end fund balance, operating deficits, and cash position should be changed. We considered these comments and performed additional analysis (various reallocations of weighted averages between categories) to determine if these changes would improve the financial condition evaluation of school districts. Based on our analysis, we concluded that the reallocation of weighted averages between categories from the original weighted averages did not improve the financial condition evaluation of school districts. As a result, we did not amend the weighted averages for the school district financial indicator categories.

School District Environmental Indicators

We received comments that each of the school district environmental indicators are not applicable to each school district, and therefore, the scoring should be changed when evaluating school districts when this is the case. We recognize that there are instances in which some of the environmental indicators are not applicable to each school district. For example, school districts that include only grades K-6 will not have a graduation rate percentage and dependent school districts will not have budget vote data. When these instances occur, the environmental indicators that are not applicable to the school district will not be evaluated. Instead, the school district's overall environmental indicator score will be calculated by proportionately redistributing the weighted average for the environmental indicator categories that are not applicable to the school district to the other environmental indicator categories that are applicable. This will result in all school districts' overall environmental indicator scores being equitable and comparable to each other. Additional clarification has been added to the report in relation to this issue.

Weighted Averages for School District Environmental Indicators

We received comments that the weighted averages that were assigned to all of the school district environmental indicator categories should be changed. We considered these comments and performed additional analysis (various reallocations of weighted averages between categories) to determine if these changes would improve the environmental condition evaluation of school districts. Based on our analysis, we have amended the weighted averages that were assigned to the school district environmental indicator categories. Specifically, we amended the weighted averages as follows: the enrollment category has been increased from 10 percent to 20 percent, the budget votes category has been decreased from 25 percent to 15 percent, the graduation rate category has been decreased from 25 percent to 15 percent, and free or reduced price lunch category has been increased from 10 percent to 20 percent.

Reporting Results

We received comments that the financial classification and environmental notation for each local government and school district should not be publicly released until the preliminary results are reviewed with the chief fiscal officer of each unit. The draft scoring will be shared with each local government and school district that is identified as in or susceptible to fiscal stress for their review before the list is finalized.

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