

Dear Member,

Districts have education budgets squeezed by the governor's Tax Cap and Gap elimination legislations. This school year from September through December numerous classrooms ran without: adequate supplies, funds for ABA programs, ink for printers, textbooks, calculators, etc. If staff had not generously supplemented from their own pockets, these deficits would have been felt by students. We just negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement in order to save employee summer jobs accepting a reduction in salary to help relieve the deficit caused from running summer school. The amount of tax payer dollars necessary to support the position of Chief Operating Officer is unconscionable in these fiscal times. The position has brought negative publicity to this organization over the years and most recently several districts threatened to pull out of this BOCES if a new COO were appointed. *

Therefore as BTA president, I must express my great concern regarding the appointment of a new Chief Operation Officer on April 22, 2015. The position could have been eliminated with the appointment of Dr. Harold Coles to the position of Superintendent if the organization were restructured so that Dr. Coles could oversee the day to day operations as well as take care of the regional and state demands. This is not a question of the quality or character of the new COO, but rather the need for the position. It raises further concern that this appointment was neither listed on the Agenda nor the Addenda to the April 22nd meeting, giving no time for an audience to assemble to express concerns.

One of the roles of any school board is to be the education watchdog for the communities, ensuring that students get the best education for the tax dollars spent. This recent appointment, in direct opposition to district request, does not align with that responsibility. I believe this union should encourage the efforts of the BOCES board to focus on creating a well-structured organization over which the superintendent, Dr. Coles, can administer on his own.

In Solidarity,

Lesa Curtis, President BTA

P.S. If you wish to respond to my private email from yours, my address is: lcurtisbta@gmail.com

* Reference to article: Tax Watch: School chiefs want BOCES to cut a top job
by David McKay Wilson, dwilson3@lohud.com 9:20 a.m. EDT March 20, 2015