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No name, No Approval: East Ramapo Superintendent Pick Rejected by State

A major power struggle is unfolding inside the East Ramapo Central School District after state officials blocked the district's unanimous choice for superintendent—triggering a lawsuit and intensifying long-running tensions over who controls the troubled district.

In March, the East Ramapo school board selected its preferred finalist for superintendent, describing her only as a bilingual Latina, a district resident, and a seasoned educator. Despite the significance of the selection, the district never publicly released her name. Before the board could finalize the appointment, state-appointed monitors intervened and rejected the choice outright.

Those monitors operate under the authority of the New York State Education Department, which has maintained oversight of East Ramapo for more than a decade. State officials said the candidate lacked the operational experience needed to manage a district facing chronic fiscal distress, governance problems, and deep academic challenges—despite acknowledging her strong educational background.

The district sharply disagrees, and in April filed a lawsuit in state Supreme Court seeking to overturn the monitors' decision. The suit argues that the rejection was made without enough explanation and that it undermines the power of the locally elected board. East Ramapo is asking a judge to allow its chosen candidate to be hired and to stop the ongoing superintendent search.

So far, the court has refused to pause the process, meaning the district must continue interviewing candidates even as the legal battle plays out.

The secrecy surrounding the original finalist has only intensified frustration in the community. While candidate confidentiality is not unusual in superintendent searches—particularly when finalists currently hold other jobs—the combination of a blocked appointment, no name disclosed, and limited explanation from state monitors has fueled criticism that the process lacks transparency.

The conflict comes amid years of instability for East Ramapo, which has cycled through multiple superintendents in a short span. Persistent leadership turnover has complicated efforts to address long-standing issues, including budget deficits, high absenteeism, and uneven academic performance. State officials have indicated that if the board and monitors cannot agree on a candidate, the state could take the extraordinary step of appointing a superintendent directly.

For now, East Ramapo faces a tight timeline. Interviews with other candidates are expected through May, with a new superintendent supposed to be in place by July 1. Whether that leader is the board's original undisclosed choice or someone new acceptable to state monitors remains uncertain as the court fight continues.

Spring Valley Tax Revolt: Furious Residents Force Village to Back Down

A proposed double-digit tax increase in Spring Valley sparked intense backlash before village officials significantly scaled it back following a heated public hearing.

Mayor Schenley Vital initially put forward a tentative budget that included a tax hike of more than 12%, citing rising labor costs, inflation, and long-term financial strain on village operations.

But the proposal quickly triggered outrage from residents, many of whom packed an April 29 public hearing at Village Hall to voice opposition.

Speakers criticized the size of the increase, arguing it would place an added burden on already strained households. In Spring Valley—a densely populated majority-minority community where many residents are renters or living on fixed or limited incomes—the plan became a flashpoint for frustration over affordability and village spending priorities.

Village officials defended the original budget, pointing to police contract costs, employee benefits, and inflation-driven expenses as key factors behind the proposed increase. They said many of the costs were unavoidable and tied to existing agreements.

Still, after public pressure and internal review, the village dramatically revised course.

The final budget reduced the increase to about 3.6%, a steep drop from the original proposal and within New York's tax cap framework.

Officials said the adjustment was made through a combination of budget restructuring, spending reductions, and identifying additional revenue sources.

While the final figure is far lower than initially proposed, the debate highlights ongoing financial pressures in Spring Valley—and the political fallout that comes when tax burdens collide with public frustration.