



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## NYS Senators Applaud Release of \$45 Million in Non-Public School Safety Equipment Funds for Immediate Distribution to Religious and Independent Schools in New York State to Address Alarming Rise in Anti-Semitism and Anti-Muslim Threats

SENATOR SHELLEY MAYER November 7, 2023

| ISSUE: **SCHOOL SAFETY, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, ANTISEMITISM, ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Shelley Mayer, Chair of the New York State Senate Education Committee, and their Senate Majority colleagues applaud the announcement today by the NYS Education Department and the State Division of the Budget that the full amount of funding appropriated in the 2022-23 budget for Non-Public School Safety Equipment (NPSE) will be released for immediate distribution. The Majority Leader, Senator Mayer, and their colleagues had been pushing for the release of the full amount of funds, increased in last year's adopted budget from \$15 million to \$45 million, to address the urgent need for school safety funding, especially for Jewish and Islamic schools in New York.

Funds from the 2022-23 budget, for the 2023-24 school year, were scheduled to be available for schools to apply for as reimbursement beginning in April 2024. Thanks to this announcement, schools will be able to access these funds immediately to address pressing security needs.

**Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said,** “We stand united in our commitment to ensuring the safety of all students in New York State. I am glad my conference was able to play a crucial role in the release of \$45 million in funds for non-public schools. This is a crucial step in addressing the concerning rise in anti-Semitism and anti-Islamic threats. We believe in the importance of protecting all religious and independent institutions, fostering a safe and inclusive educational environment for all our children.”

**Senator Shelley Mayer said,** “Today’s announcement is a much-needed step towards addressing the pressing needs of New York’s religious school community in light of ongoing threats and acts of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim violence. Jewish and Islamic schools have incurred additional and substantial costs over this past month as they seek to provide safety and peace of mind to students, staff, and families. With anti-Semitic and Islamophobic threats at a devastating level in New York State, we must do everything in our power to protect these schools and their students and staff. We are deeply appreciative of Governor Kathy Hochul and Education Commissioner Dr. Betty Rosa’s leadership in ensuring these funds are promptly distributed to these schools for necessary security costs.”

**Maury Litwack, Managing Director of the Orthodox Union & Founder, Teach Coalition, said,** “This is an important step towards meeting the urgent needs of our Jewish Day School community, which is incurring substantial unanticipated costs simply to ensure that students, staff and families are safe. I’m grateful for the leadership of Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Senator Shelley Mayer and the Senate Democratic Conference for their persistence on this issue and thank Governor Hochul and Commissioner Rosa for ensuring these immediate needs can be met.”

**Dr. Khadijah Jean Pryce, Head of School, Islamic Cultural Center School, said,** “As our communities face increased threats and violence in our schools statewide, these funds will help ensure safety and peace of mind for our students, staff, and families. We want to thank

the Senate Democratic Conference, Commissioner Rosa, and Governor Hochul for their efforts to ensure NPSE funds are available immediately to our schools.”

The Non-Public School Safety Equipment grant is a non-competitive program that allocates funds on a per-student basis to reimburse religious and independent schools for costs related to certain school safety and health expenses.