



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo meets with NYSED Commissioner to discuss issues affecting area schools

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO January 29, 2024

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New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, recently met with state Education Department Commissioner Betty Rosa and senior department officials to discuss challenges facing school districts in the state. The conversation included concerns with the Foundation Aid Formula, as well as staffing, safety, programming, electric buses and other issues.

The meeting comes after the governor unveiled her proposed budget and school aid runs. While the governor indicated that schools would be getting the largest investment in state history, several school districts in the 53rd Senate District will see their funding from the state reduced due to several proposals advanced by the governor in the Executive Budget. This includes the removal of the “hold harmless” provision and the reduction of the statutory CPI growth factor.

The elimination of the “hold harmless” provision that provides critical stability to local school districts is a glaring example of misplaced priorities by the legislative majorities and governor. This bloated \$233 billion proposed budget siphons state aid away from local schools while dedicating \$2.4 billion in taxpayer dollars earmarked for migrants, bringing the total to \$4.3 billion over the last two years.

“While I think the direction being pursued to fully fund foundation aid is the right thing to do, the governor’s proposal regarding aid for schools will have a detrimental effect on many districts in the state, especially rural ones in Upstate New York,” **Sen. Griffo said.** “These districts rely on these funding mechanisms to support important student services and enhance the education that they provide to students. This proposed reduction in aid – in some cases hundreds of thousands of dollars - could result in program and staffing cuts, which will hurt our schools and our children. I will continue to work to ensure that school districts have the resources they need to provide students with a high-quality education.”

Sen. Griffo also will be meeting with area school administrators and teachers soon.

To further assist school districts, Sen. Griffo and the Senate Republican Conference today unveiled a legislative package aimed at keeping education a priority and ensuring that New Yorkers' hard earned tax dollars help schools obtain the resources they need. Key among the legislative package’s provisions is reversing the devastating cuts to schools that the governor included in her budget proposal. The legislative package includes proposals that will:

- Reverse misguided changes in the education formula proposed in the Executive Budget that will take resources away from our local schools; and
- Close the pandemic learning loss gap by ensuring unspent Federal emergency relief aid supports academic recovery programs, expand state grant funding, create an office in the State Education Department to track outcomes of such programs and focus on future aid increases for early education to ensure students are provided a solid foundation for future academic challenges; and
- Prohibit the housing of migrants in K-12 schools or on school grounds throughout the state (S.7391, Sen. Alexis Weik); and

- Commit greater resources for school building security by creating a school resource officer program to permit the employment of retired law enforcement officers and provide grants to school districts and non-public schools. (S.4985, Sen. Peter Oberacker).

The legislative package outlined today is the first in a series of comprehensive proposals that will be put forth by the Republican Conference this session to assure New Yorkers that our children's education will remain a top priority.

Earlier this month, Senate Republicans unveiled the "A New Hope for the Empire State" 2024 Legislative Agenda. A New Hope for the Empire State agenda prioritizes the issues that affect every day New Yorkers but have been neglected by the legislative majorities and governor, including increasing affordability, improving public safety and building a greater New York.

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