



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Urging Additional Help for Yonkers Schools

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 23, 2011

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Legislation Would Account for Increased Enrollment and Pre-Kindergarten Program

(Albany)- Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins (35th District- D/WF/I) is urging passage of two bills that she sponsors in the State Senate, which would provide additional State funding to the Yonkers city schools. The first, S. 1011, would provide the Yonkers City Schools with \$4.8 million for the district's Pre-Kindergarten program, and the second, S. 1012 would provide \$3.98 million to address the district's growth of approximately 1500 students. Both bills passed the Senate last year, but did not become law.

This announcement comes on the heels of the restoration of \$15 million of Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Aid to the City of Yonkers in the 2011-2012 State Budget, which was cut in the Senate Republican Budget Resolution. Senator Stewart-Cousins spearheaded the effort to restore this aid, which by law is disbursed directly to the Yonkers City Schools. The aid was restored by the General Government Conference Committee, of which Senator Stewart-Cousins is a member.

"I am grateful that the Conference Committee was able to resolve this issue and restore the VLT funding to the Yonkers schools, as I have been pushing for this since day one. But the district still faces very difficult challenges, and although this is an encouraging development,

we have much more work to do on behalf of the Yonkers schools.” said Senator Stewart-Cousins. “These two bills are a good place to start, because as the district continues to grow, Yonkers should not be left behind.”

The Yonkers City School District has experienced an enrollment increase of about 1500 students, but the State’s allocation to the Yonkers schools does not account for this growth. Additionally, the district has a fully implemented Universal Prekindergarten Program which has had a significant positive impact on improving student performance. The Senator’s bills take both of these factors into account and provide a combined \$8.8 million dollars of additional funding from the State to support the Yonkers city schools.

“Moving forward, we must continue to fight for the Yonkers schools and invest in their future, because our students deserve to have the best educational opportunities available to them,” concluded Senator Stewart-Cousins.

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