



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Calls On Governor To Modify Education Aid Formula

JAMES L. SEWARD January 6, 2012

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ONEONTA, 01/06/12 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I–Oneonta) today called for a reconfiguration of New York’s public education aid formula to better meet the needs of low-wealth, rural school districts.

“A child growing up in upstate New York should have the same educational opportunities as someone who lives in Westchester County,” said Senator Seward. **“Schools across the state are being asked to do more with less, but for those who depend more heavily on state aid because of a lower tax base, the cuts run much deeper.”**

A letter to Governor Cuomo signed by 15 upstate senators including Senator Seward highlights the need for changes to the education aid formula to better fund school districts in low-wealth, rural areas of the state.

“Unlike $E = mc^2$, or other well known equations, the formula used to determine education aid is not as straightforward. There are a variety of changing characteristics which have to be accounted for and periodic adjustments need to take place. Recent inequities from district to district confirm that now is the time to reevaluate and fine-tune the way education aid is determined,” added Seward.

The **letter to Governor Cuomo** reads in part: *“While wealthier districts debate whether to curtail one of a multitude of foreign language offerings, arts or extracurricular activities, our schools struggle mightily to meet basic educational needs. Additionally, existing school funding formulas fail to adequately account for the true financial condition of our rural schools. The existing formula is based on a scale that treats the poorest districts equally with districts whose residents have twice the income.”*

Senator Seward says he is hopeful Governor Cuomo will address the inequities in school aid in his executive budget which is scheduled to be released on January 17th.

“Fair distribution of state education aid is needed to help guarantee that a New York State education is a New York State education, no matter where the school is located,” Seward concluded.