



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Press Release: Senator Stewart-Cousins Joins Rally for Yonkers Public Schools at the State Capitol

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS May 20, 2015

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Albany, NY - State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Senate Democratic Leader, addressed Tuesday's rally in support of additional funding for Yonkers Public Schools at the State Capitol in Albany.

"We have a responsibility to educate our children," Senator Stewart-Cousins told the crowd of students, parents, administrators and city leaders who had gathered on what is referred to

as the Million Dollar staircase. “One of the things we want to do is to turn this Million Dollar Staircase into a \$28 million staircase. Every effort is important because every child is worth every single ounce of our energy.” [Click here to listen to her full remarks.](#)

The aim of the rally was to ask the state for additional financial help with a projected \$28 million budget shortfall in the Yonkers Public Schools. This year’s budget crisis comes one year after a \$55 million accounting error was revealed by the district. Last year, the Governor worked with Senator Stewart-Cousins, the Yonkers state delegation and city officials to create a package of financing to help the district through the crisis. The package included a one-time \$28 million grant and \$45 million in bonding authority for the district. This year, the Yonkers Public Schools are seeking another \$28 million to recover the shortfall and avoid devastating cuts to programs and services for students.

The 2015-2016 State Budget increased school aid to Yonkers by \$19 million for a total of \$262 million. The increase came as part of the Legislature’s addition of \$1.3 billion toward education aid. The Assembly also added another \$20 million in building aid and \$2 million in bullet aid for Yonkers.

Prior to the rally, Leader Stewart-Cousins made a direct appeal to the newly-elected Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan about Yonkers’ needs. Senator Stewart-Cousins urged Senator Flanagan to attend the rally, which he did.

Senator Stewart-Cousins has always been a strong advocate for public education and the resources needed for student success across New York State and in Yonkers, the city where she lives and where she sent her children to public schools. As a former teacher in Yonkers, she also understands the socio-economic challenges the district, its teachers and students face.

“We have an opportunity here to get it right,” said Senator Stewart-Cousins.