



THE 4201 SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Testimony Presented to
Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature
Hearing on the FY 2021-2022 Executive Budget

January 28, 2021

Albany, New York

Cleary School for the Deaf (Nesconset)
Henry Viscardi School (Albertson)
Lavelle School for the Blind (Bronx)
Lexington School for the Deaf (Queens)
New York Institute for Special
Education (Bronx)

New York School for the Deaf (White Plains)
Rochester School for the Deaf (Rochester)
St. Francis de Sales School for the Deaf
(Brooklyn)
St. Joseph's School for the Deaf (Bronx)
St. Mary's School for the Deaf (Buffalo)

The 4201 Schools Association represents ten (10) not-for-profit state-supported schools serving students who are deaf, blind and severely physically disabled throughout New York State. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the 2021-2022 Executive Budget as it relates to our students and schools.

The 4201 Schools Association would first like to thank the Legislature and the Executive for its longstanding support of our students and schools. This has been vital during the COVID-19 emergency, as our schools worked to maintain our students' access to education and related services over the last year. This work continues every day, even as the measures our schools have taken to ensure the safety of students and staff differ a bit from other schools.

For the FY 2021-2022 State Budget, we ask your support for the following priorities:

State Support - The Executive Budget proposes level funding in FY2021-2022, which we support and appreciate. We urge the Legislature's approval and advocacy.

- The Executive Budget proposal appropriates \$93.7 million, of which up to \$84.7 million is available to school districts for the tuition costs of students attending a 4201 school, and \$9 million for allowable purposes, such as the education of deaf children under the age of 3 years and residential facilities. An additional \$10.2 million is available for general support of the schools for the 2021-22 school year.
- The Executive Budget also re-appropriates the \$30 million capital grant program for health and safety projects enacted in 2019.

Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools/EANS -The Executive Budget proposes a federally funded grant program for emergency assistance to non-public schools.

- We hope that these funds are accessible to our schools to help us with COVID-19 expenses.
- We request that the Legislature set aside \$2.25 million of these funds specifically for the 4201 schools. Our schools have remained open for in-person instruction for most of the pandemic emergency, and have incurred costs to make our schools safe.

- While considered “non-public” our schools were established in law for the purpose of supporting students with low-incidence disabilities. Our students are public school students. The state should prioritize any Federal aid towards students with disabilities who otherwise would be served by public school districts.

Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) - The FY 2022 Executive Budget proposes to make not-for-profits and school districts eligible to utilize DASNY's loan, design, and construction services for capital projects over \$5.0 million.

- We ask that these services be accessible to our schools to help our schools with ongoing capital expenses and investments.

Broadband Access – The FY 2022 Executive Budget proposes to make broadband access available to low-income households statewide.

- Many of the children we serve need specialized hardware and software to access digital learning and life needs. These extras are often costly and students need training to use these devices effectively. We support efforts to ensure broadband access to all students and their families.

The 4201 schools are proud to be a partner with New York State in ensuring high quality educational opportunity to students with low incidence disabilities. We take very seriously our responsibility to provide each of our students with a safe and healthy environment by which to grow and succeed. We are truly grateful for the support provided that makes our schools a reality for the students we serve across New York.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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