



**2010 -2011 JOINT BUDGET HEARING**  
**FEBRUARY 2 – 10:00 AM**  
**ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**HEARING ROOM B**  
**LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING**

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New York City Department of Education	Joel Klein Chancellor
NYS United Teachers	Andrew Pallotta Executive Vice President
United Federation of Teachers	Michael Mulgrew President
Conference of Big 5 School District	Dr. James Williams Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools
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	Bernard Pierorazio Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools
	Georgia Ascitutto Big 5 Executive Director

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## New York Library Association

*The Voice of the Library Community*

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### Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on 2010-2011 Executive Budget

Good afternoon and thank you for letting me speak to you today about the latest round of budget cuts proposed for libraries. I am here today speaking on behalf of the 4,000 plus members of the New York Library Association and the millions of library users they serve throughout the state.

Sadly, this is the fifth time that I have had to speak to you about cuts in library funding. The Governor is proposing a 2.76% or \$2.4 million cut in funding for libraries that would drop Library Aid to \$84.45 million, which is below 1998 levels. The cumulative total of these five cuts would be 18% or \$18 million less in funding for library services since April 2008.

I am hard pressed to name another part of the Education budget that has been cut as many times in such a short period or is asked to function at 1998 levels or even less if you factor in inflation.

In addition, these state cuts will result in a corresponding loss of almost \$2.8 million in federal aid that is used to fund innovative and cost-sharing programs at libraries and to fund the NOVEL databases that are used by all types of libraries and which saves them approximately \$87 million a year through statewide licensing of these valuable online information resources, that are used by students, researchers, and businesses.

I also want to make the case, that libraries are essential... To Life-Long Learning, Jobs and Opportunity, to our Quality of Life and to Community Empowerment.

Libraries are the quintessential "universities of the streets", a place where people of all ages can go for life-long learning, to further educate themselves and improve their prospects in life. Librarians are educators – our students range from 4 year olds in early literacy classes, to 18 year old high school or college students researching their term papers, to twenty-something year old Jamaican or Bosnian immigrants learning English, and to senior citizens wanting to know how to use the computer and internet.

Libraries are the place for the unemployed or underemployed to go and use the free resources available, whether it's the computers, or internet access to look for or apply for a job, or help with printing or writing their resumes.

According to a study funded by the Gates Foundation, 73% of libraries serve as a community's only option for free internet access, and that number rises to 82% in rural areas. So if you don't have a computer or internet access at home -- and according to the U.S. Census Bureau 38% of Americans still do not have internet access at home, you rely on the library for free internet access.

So put yourself in the shoes of an unemployed or underemployed New Yorker, who doesn't have a computer or internet access at home, and ask yourself, where would you go to look for or apply for a job, especially on the weekends and evenings?

I called around last week to several NYS Dept. of Labor One Stop Centers across the state, and found that all the ones I called are not open in the evenings or weekends, unlike libraries, although that may change if these cuts continue. The Albany and Rensselaer One Stops close at 4:30 or 5 pm, the Harlem One Stop is open from 8:30 – 5 p.m. M-F, Syracuse and White Plains and Buffalo, the same.

So again, ask yourself, if you got laid off from your manufacturing job or customer service position, and are now working part-time at Wal-Mart to pay the bills, or staying home to watch the kids, because you can no longer afford after-school child care, and you can't make it to one of these 71 One Stop Centers during the week to look for a job, where would you go? Libraries are open convenient hours *and they are in every community in the state*, a total of 1,100 separate locations.

Libraries are supported and appreciated by your constituents. More importantly, voters have put their money where their mouths and hearts are by overwhelmingly approving their local library budgets. Attached to my testimony is a chart provided by the NYS Library that shows that over the past three years, on average 97% of library budgets have been approved by the voters.

So why does New York State continue to cut funding for library services at a time when libraries, now more than ever, are needed by so many in our communities to survive and recover from this economic downturn? In a January 2009 survey NYLA conducted, 80% of libraries had helped a patron look or apply for a job, and that number has probably increased by now. Cutting library funding now makes as much sense as cutting financial assistance to the unemployed or funding for food banks.

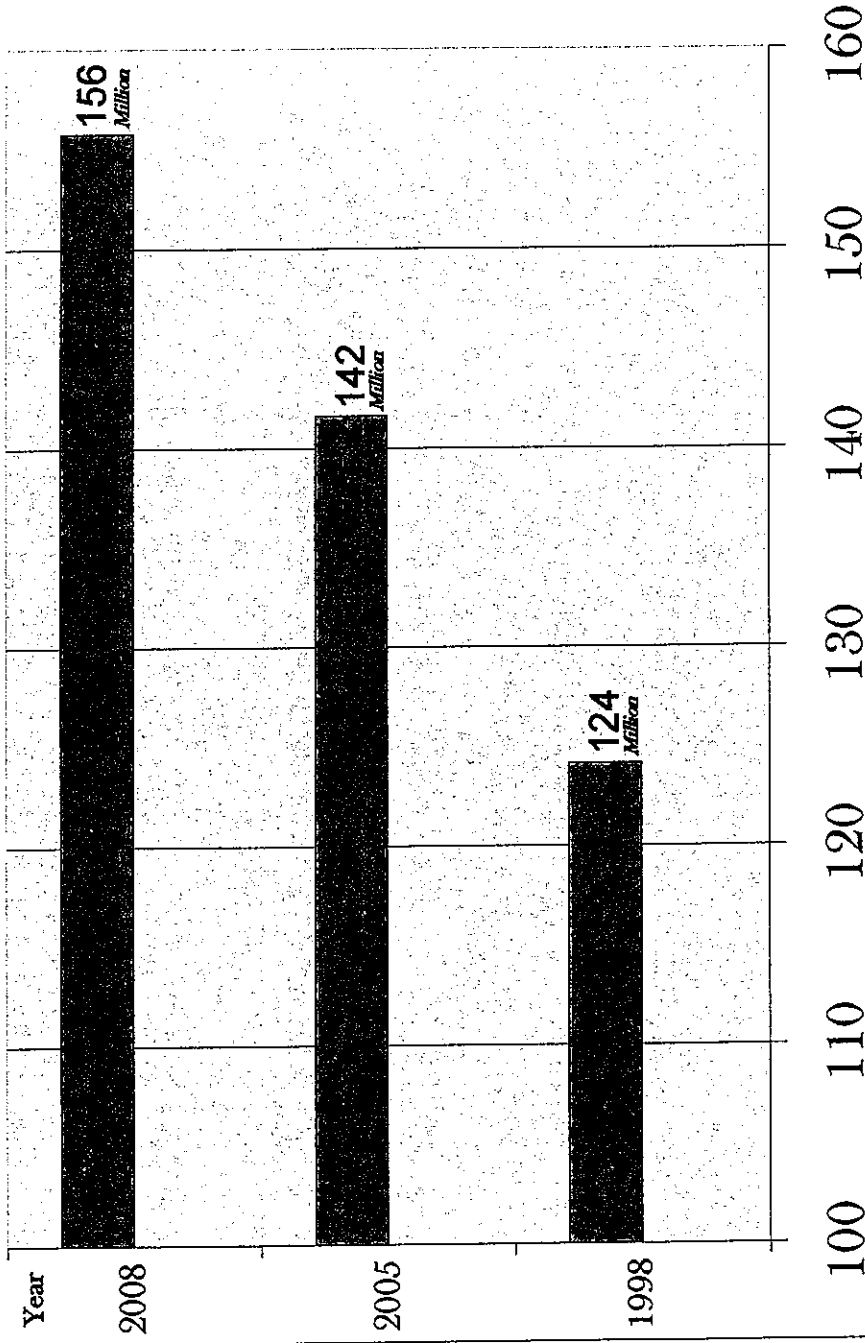
The last time our country faced this type of economic downturn, FDR created the WPA, which built or expanded 1,000 libraries across the country. New York provides \$14 million in public library construction grants for 755 public libraries, when there is a \$1.4 billion plus list of shovel ready construction projects waiting to be funded. Providing additional construction funding, which is bonded through the Dormitory Authority, would provide a boost to our economy and your local libraries.

In addition, there are plenty of existing state funding streams that libraries should be allowed to tap into, like Employment Preparation Education (EPE) funds. There is \$96 million for schools to provide GED and other jobs skills, services that libraries are also providing. There is \$375 million for Universal Pre-K, which many libraries are providing similar services. And why not allow school district public libraries, whose buildings are owned by the school district, and whose budgets and trustees are elected on the same ballot as the school districts, to tap into the \$2 billion plus fund set aside for school construction.

In conclusion, during tough economic times, when the neediest among us are looking for help, now is not the time to be cutting the very services and assistance they need the most. Whether it's food banks, job training programs, unemployment assistance or libraries, it would be penny wise and pound foolish to cut the very services that are in the greatest demand and can do the most good to those in need.



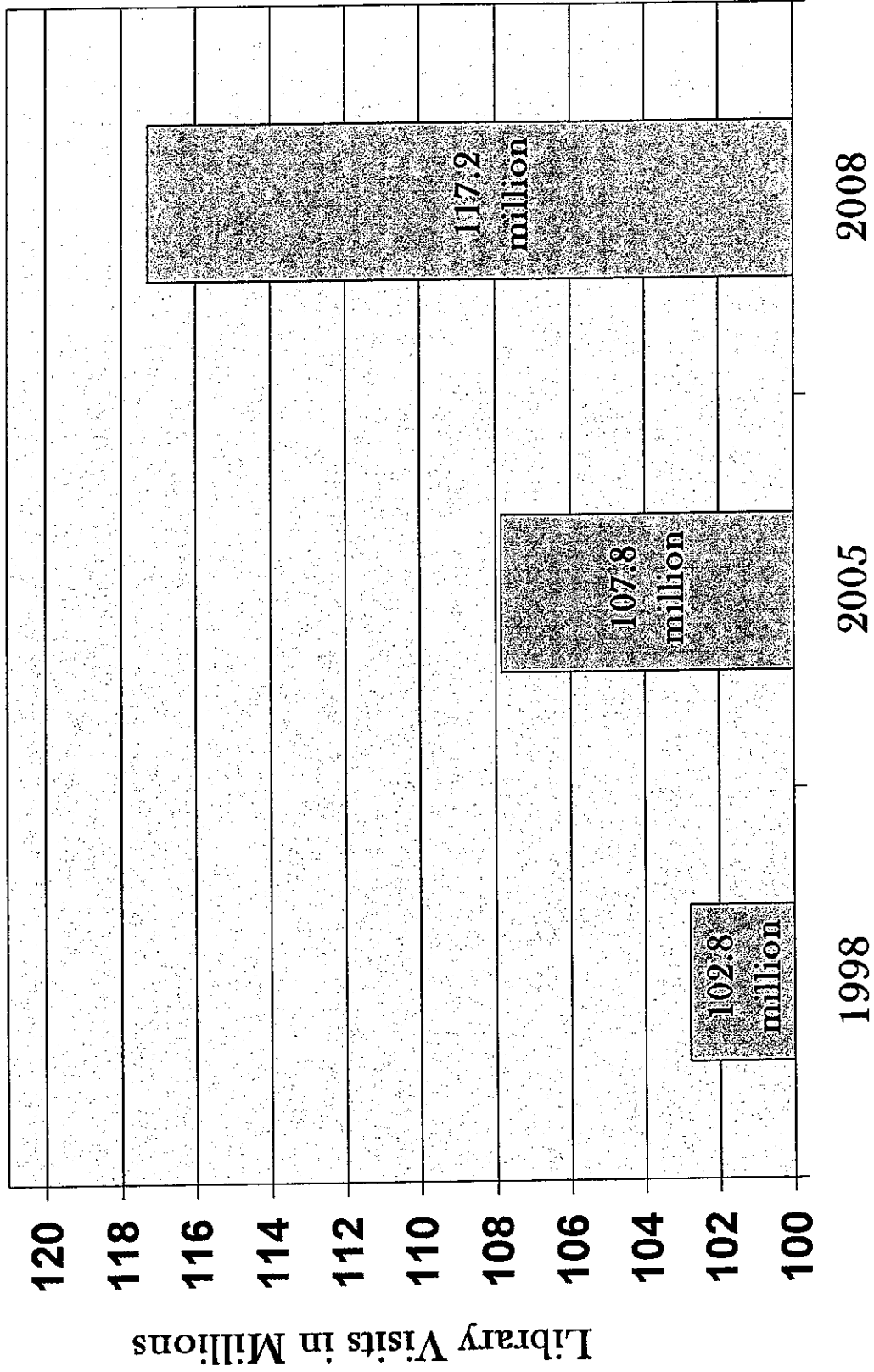
# Circulation in Public Libraries Continues to Grow



Circulation in Millions

Data from 1998, 2005 and 2008 Annual Reports for Public and Association Libraries  
New York State Library, December 2009

# Visits to Public Libraries Continue to Grow



Data from 1998, 2005 and 2008 Annual Reports for Public and Association Libraries  
New York State Library, December 2009

The New York Times

**City Room**

Blogging From the Five Boroughs

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JANUARY 28, 2010, 3:47 PM

**Winners and Losers in Bloomberg's Budget Plan**

By MICHAEL BARBARO

The biggest loser in the mayor's 2011 budget: the city's libraries.

When Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg proposed his financial plan for the next year on Thursday, he called for 834 job cuts. More than a third of those — 299 — would be library employees.

Cultural institutions would lose 186 workers; the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene would lay off 141; the Department of Finance would fire 65; and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development would cut four positions.

Who is shielded from the budget ax? Police officers, firefighters, sanitation workers and correction officers (whose employees are generally the highest paid in the city).

Oh, and the mayor's office. It would not lose any of its nearly 500 workers. In fact, it has added a few jobs in the last few weeks, to make room for former staff members of Mr. Bloomberg's re-election campaign.

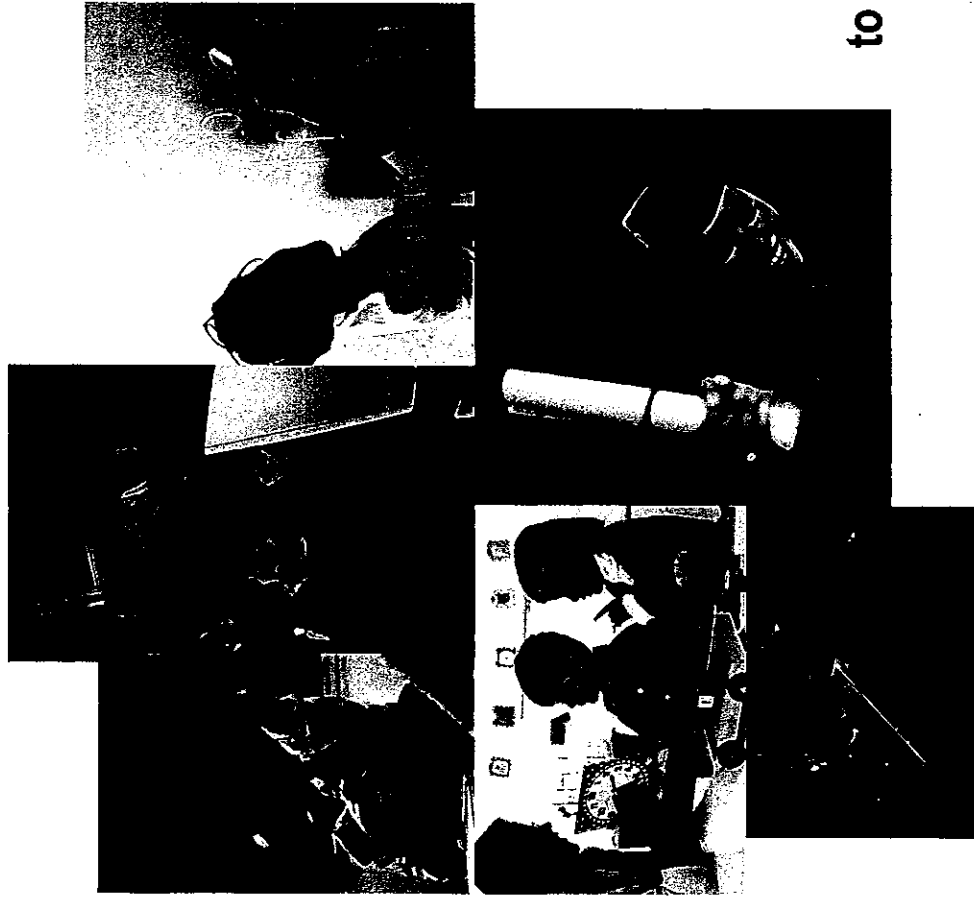
	Total Aid Authorized by Ed Law	State Aid to NYC Libraries			Total Cuts
		Total Approp. Apr-08	Total Approp. Apr-09	Total Approp. DRP - Dec. 09	
Brooklyn	\$7,852,627	\$7,635,002	\$7,095,869	\$6,769,459	\$1,083,168
NYPL	\$21,101,316	\$20,506,901	\$19,067,782	\$18,190,664	\$2,910,652
Queens	\$6,992,335	\$6,798,687	\$6,318,484	\$6,027,833	\$964,502
					\$4,958,322

\$30 million or 35% of Library Aid goes to the three NYC libraries.  
 Further cuts in Library Aid will only worsen their situation given the cuts proposed by Mayor Bloomberg.





University of the State of New York  
State Education Department



# Accelerating Student Achievement 2010-2011

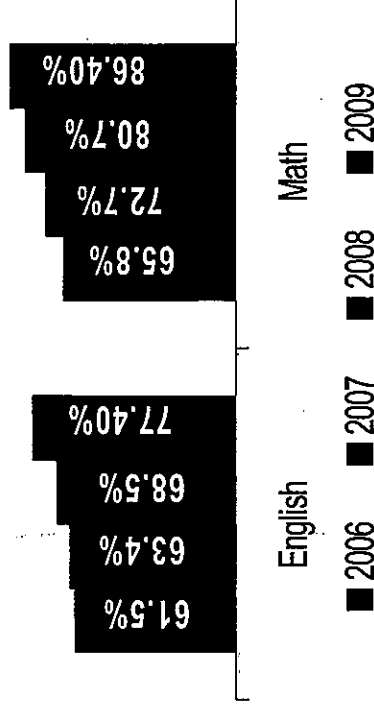
Presentation by  
Commissioner David M. Steiner  
to the Joint Legislative Fiscal Committees  
February 2, 2010

# Return on Our Investment in Education

- New York's NAEP results are flat, except for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

NAEP Test Results (NYS)	% Students Proficient		
	2003	2007	2009
Grade 4 Math	33%		40%
Grade 8 Math	34%		32%
Grade 4 Reading	34%	36%	
Grade 8 Reading	35%	32%	

Percentage of NY Students Grades 3-8 Meeting Proficiency Standards



- Increases in number of students in grades 3-8 meeting Math and English standards – but it is still not good enough
- English Language Learners continue to show improvements in English: 36% proficient in 2009; 16.2% in 2006 – but it is still not good enough
- Black and Hispanic student performance continues to improve – but it is not good enough

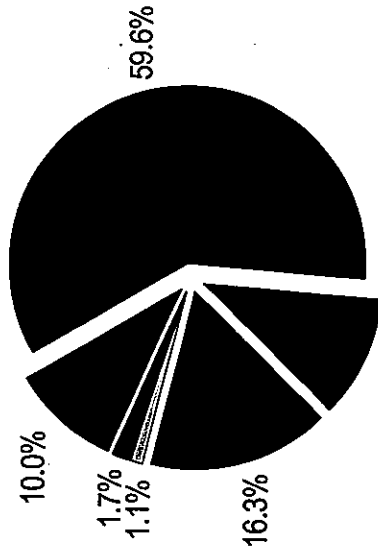
Percentage of NY Students Grades 3-8 Meeting Proficiency Standards

Year	English		Math	
	Black	Hispanic	Black	Hispanic
2007	45.2%	45.6%	54.6%	60.5%
2008	52.9%	52.6%	65.9%	71.1%
2009	64.3%	64.8%	75.0%	79.5%

# High School Graduation: Only Modest Gains

## NYS Public School June 2008 Graduation Rate

Students who started 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2004, after 4 years



- Graduated: Regents Diploma
- Graduated: Local Diploma
- Still Enrolled
- Transferred to GED Programs
- IEP Diploma
- Dropped Out

- More students are graduating in 4 years with Regents and Local Diplomas:

2004 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort: 70.9%

2001 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort: 65.8%

- More Black and Hispanic students graduating:

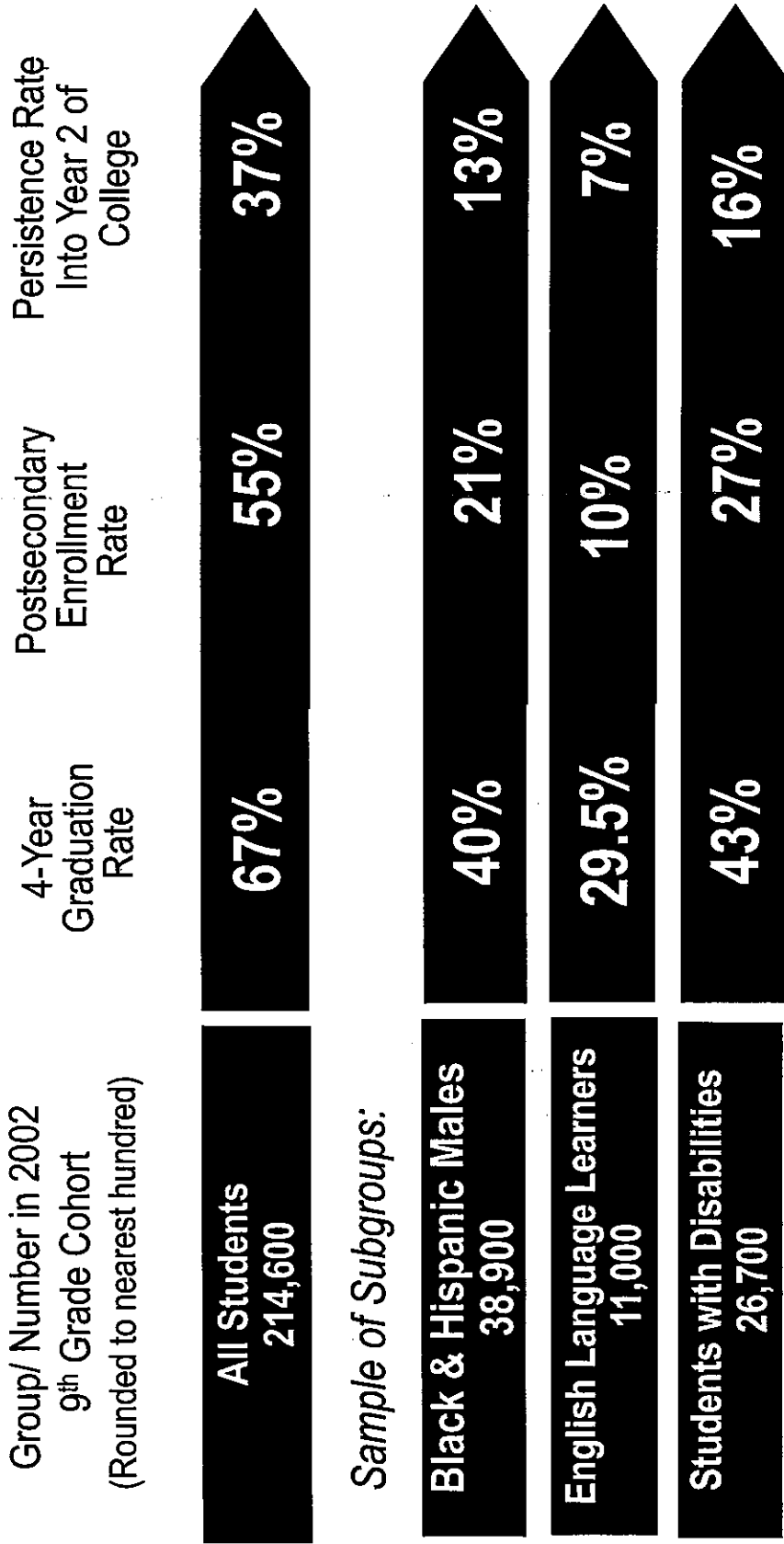
Cohort	2001	2004
Black	45.3%	54.2%
Hispanic	42.2%	52.2%

through June 2008

Despite modest improvement over the past few years, NY State's 4-year high school graduation rate is only 71%. And the gaps are disturbing:

Students	% Graduated
White	82%
Black	54%
Hispanic	52%
Students w/ Disabilities	42%
English Language Learners	36%
Economically Disadvantaged	58%

# Persistence Through the Education Pipeline



# Regents Vision for Education Reform

- 1. Curriculum and Professional Development:** Provide students with a world-class curriculum and align professional development to the new curriculum.
- 2. Assessment:** Allow for student preparedness and provide data for decision-making.
- 3. Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness:** Transform teacher preparation to focus on outcomes measured by performance-based assessments.
- 4. Replace Failing Schools:** Exercise authority to close chronically underperforming schools and work to implement a plan to improve student outcomes.
- 5. Raise Graduation Rates for At-Risk Students:** Raise graduation rates through the redesign of secondary schools.
- 6. School Leader Preparation:** Transform school leader preparation to emphasize outcomes measured by performance-based assessment.
- 7. Organizational Redesign:** Transform NYSED from a compliance-oriented agency to a support-oriented agency focused on helping districts.
- 8. Data System:** Build a P-20 data system to provide information to strengthen decision-making.
- 9. Early Childhood:** Expand access to high-quality early childhood learning opportunities.

**The Ultimate Goal –  
College and Career Readiness for All Our Students**

# Race to the Top: Funding for Reform

**Key Element of Regents Reform Agenda  
Would help improve student achievement overall and close the  
achievement gap**

New York could receive up to \$700 million for these major education reforms:

- Adopt more rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and compete in the global economy.
- Recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals, especially in hard-to-staff schools.
- Build a P-20 data system that measures student growth and success, and shows teachers and principals how they can improve instruction.
- Turn around our lowest-achieving schools.

# Services for English Language Learners

## Language Diversity

- 215,527 ELLs in the state's public schools in 2009; 68.8% attend school in New York City.
- New York's students speak 164 different languages.
- More than 40% of students in New York City report speaking a language other than English at home (Home Language Identification Survey, 2008).

## Most Common Languages in NYS (2009)

Spanish – almost 140,000  
Chinese – almost 23,000  
Arabic – almost 5,000  
Bengali – almost 4,600  
Haitian-Creole – almost 4,000

## NYS English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

measures English language proficiency and helps districts make student placement decisions

## 14 Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers

support high-need districts with large numbers of English language learners

## Intensive Teacher Institute

provides tuition assistance to teacher certification candidates in bilingual education and English as a Second Language—areas of critical need

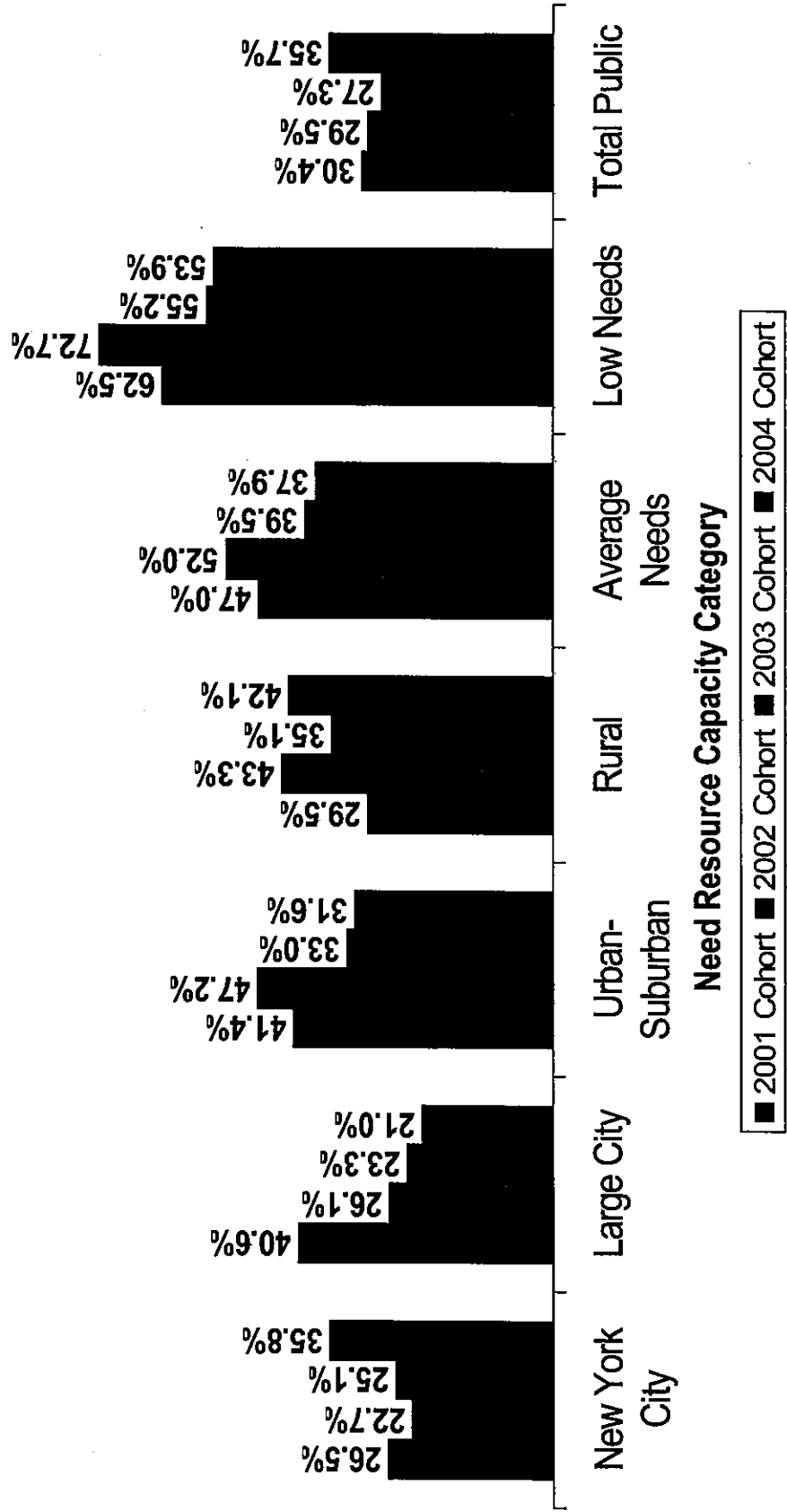
## District Grants for Tutoring Programs

help English language learners meet state standards and graduation requirements

... and many other valuable programs

# Achievement Gap is Closing Too Slowly for English Language Learners

Graduation rates have improved in New York City and the state as a whole, but they are still too low, and progress is uneven.



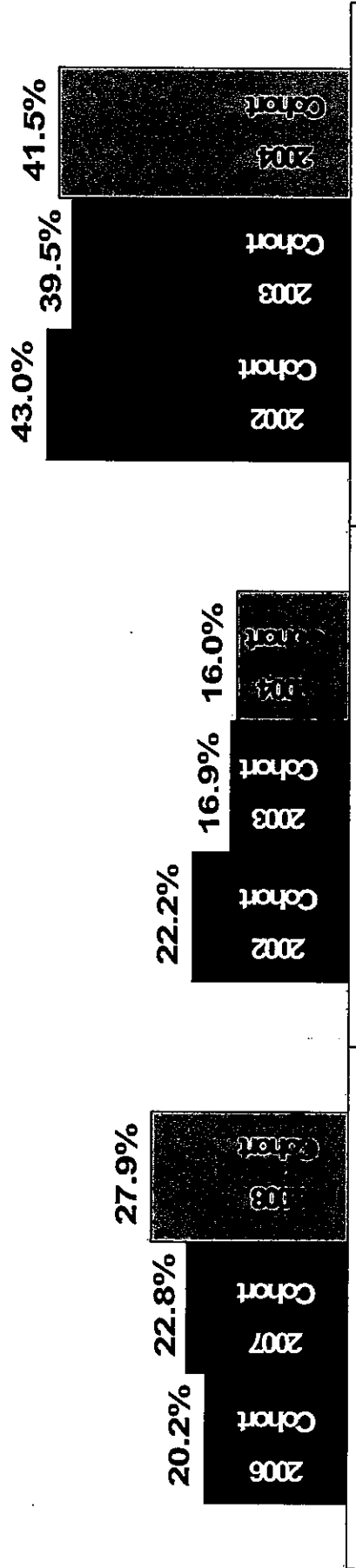


# Students with Disabilities: Achievement Mixed, Problems Remain

- Achievement is up in grades 3-8 English and math.
- Fewer students are educated in separate settings.
- More are taking and passing Regents exams.

*but*

- While progress has been made, the dropout rates are much too high and graduation rates are much too low, particularly in the large cities.
- Student performance remains especially low in middle school.



Scoring at Levels 3 or 4 on Grades 3-8 ELA

## The Regents Response

- Set targets for improvement and use data to select districts with poorest performance.
- Provide assistance and funding to these districts and monitor student results.
- Focus on improving instruction in literacy, behavior and use of proven teaching strategies.
- Fund Parent Centers so parents get needed support and information.

## Access to the GED

- NYS administers the most GED tests of any state -- over 58,000 in 2008, including almost 4,500 with special accommodations or in languages other than English.
- Overall GED pass rate is 59.7% in NYS - very low - but state provides the greatest access and opportunity
- NYS has an “open door” access policy for students most in need: no fees; no prerequisites
- Reductions in State funding over the past two years have decreased the GED budget significantly. Demand exceeds available funding.

## **Adult Literacy Education**

State-funded program created in 1988 currently serves almost 9,400 out-of-school youth and adults at the lowest levels of literacy or English language proficiency.

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The percentage of our students who advance two grade levels has climbed steadily in recent years and now exceeds national benchmarks.

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**The Executive's proposed 38% cut would eliminate services for an estimated 2,181 students.**

# **Align Curriculum and Professional Development**

## **Standards Initiatives**

- Regents revising NYS Learning Standards beginning with English language arts (ELA)
- New York participating in NGA/CCSSO Common Core State Standards Initiative and evaluating results for possible statewide adoption

## **Curriculum Frameworks, Grades PreK-12**

- Redesign NYS's curriculum frameworks, initially in ELA and mathematics, based on standards initiatives
- Redesigned curriculum frameworks will be sequenced, spiraled, and content-rich and will include grade-by-grade student expectations, teaching strategies, learning examples, and assessment tools

## **Professional Development**

- Will be aligned to curriculum frameworks
- Will include strategies for teaching all students, including special populations

## **Investing in Student Success**

Despite the economic situation, we must move forward to put in place funding changes that provide all students with the opportunity for a quality education.

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## **Regents State Aid Proposal**

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- Put Foundation Aid back on track with a 1.1 percent, \$170 million increase that grows over time and is fully phased-in after ten years.
- Provide a \$53 million increase in state support for universal pre-k and commit to a full phase-in of this program for four-year-olds — for half-day programs within four years and for full-day programs within 10 years.

**This aid will help school districts raise student achievement and close performance gaps for their neediest students.**

# **Mandate Relief**

## **Executive Proposals Supported by the Regents**

- Eliminate unnecessary school district plans and reports
- Promote regional transportation strategies
- Repeal the Wicks Law
- Flexibility to use Employee Benefit Accrued Liability Reserve funds for operating purposes

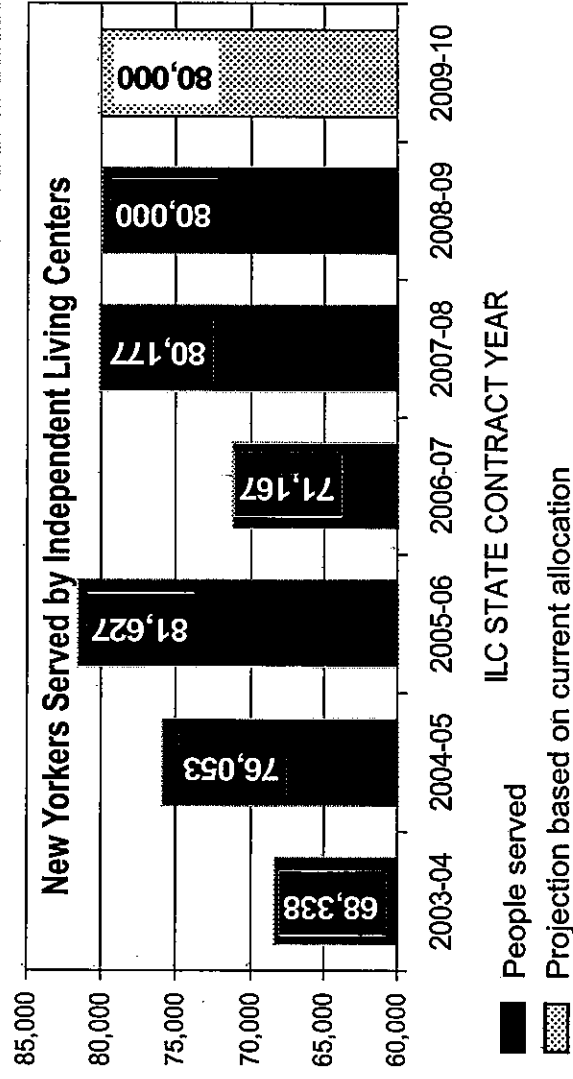
## **Other Important Mandate Relief Proposals**

- Require regional task forces to explore district or functional consolidation and report obstacles to reducing local costs to the State Education Department
- Promote use of shared business offices services through BOCES

# VR and Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are Cost-effective Solutions

- The employment rate for individuals with disabilities is 31.1%, compared with 72.3% for people without disabilities, a gap of 39.3% (Cornell survey, 2009)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Employment Outcomes	13,826	13,292	12,956	13,198	13,236	12,151
Annualized Earnings	\$208 M	\$206 M	\$210 M	\$218 M	\$222 M	\$199 M



Training, employment assistance and help in negotiating community-based supports for individuals with disabilities – An alternative to more costly institutional settings

# Cultural Education: 2009-10 Highlights

- 40 million visits to museums in New York each year.
- 36 million searches of NoveIN Y databases including 550,000 searches at the State Library, by New Yorkers accessing materials from 5,500 libraries, or their home, school or work. NoveIN Y saves local libraries over \$87 million in subscription costs.
- 217,000 pages of fragile documents, photos, maps and manuscripts were digitized, providing online citizen access from anywhere, 24/7, and preserving fragile originals from wear and tear.
- 249,000 teachers, administrators and students used online curriculum resources available through public broadcasting stations, a 24% increase over the previous year.
- NYS Museum grant and contract funding has grown to over \$12 million.
- Students whose teachers were trained by State Archives to use historical records scored 13% higher on the NYS social studies assessment
- 12,600 local and state government officials were trained to manage electronic and paper records for significant savings to tax payers
- NYS Archives preserved over 50 million pages of valuable local government records, saving \$40 million and providing faster access for citizens.

## New York's Cultural Institutions are:

7,000 Libraries

900 Museums

4,500 Local Governments

3,000 Historical Record Repositories

9 Public Television Stations

16 Public Radio Stations

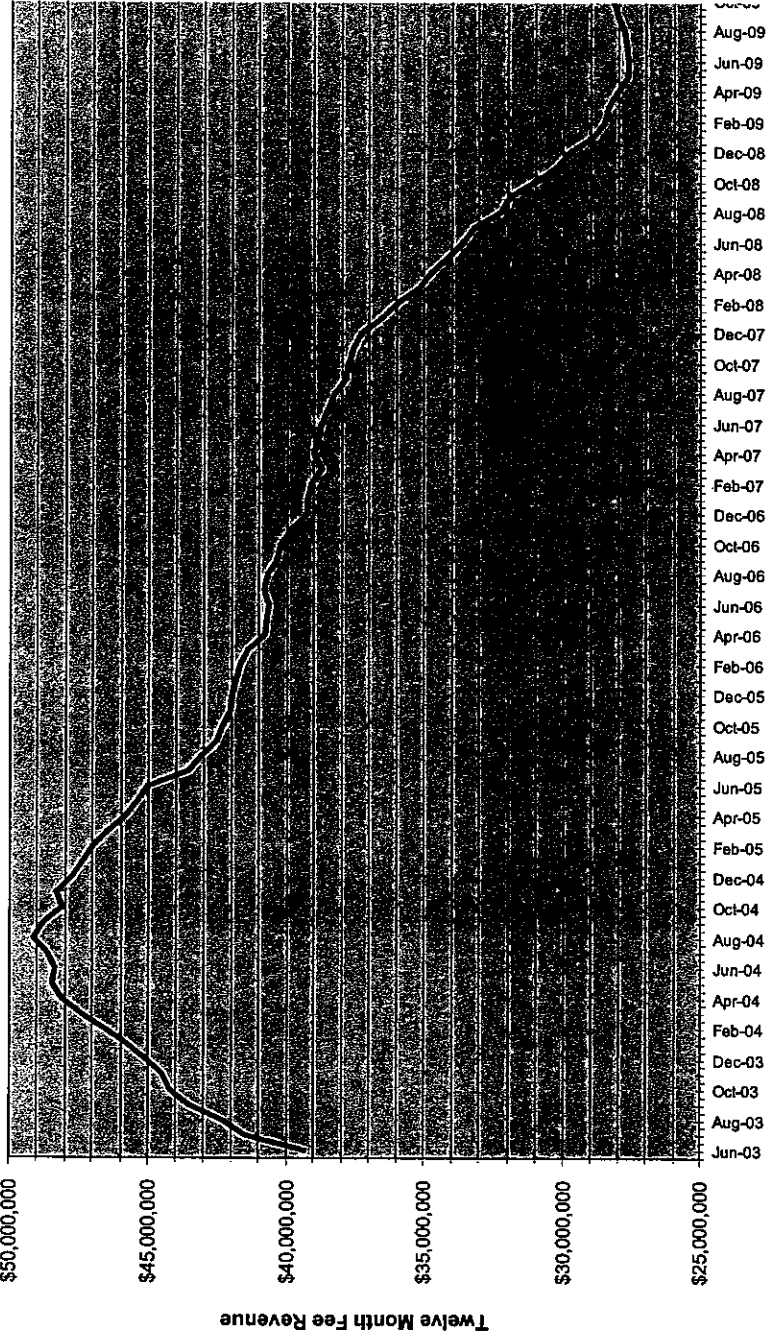


# Cultural Education Funding

**Cultural Education Program revenues DECREASED by \$8.3 million from \$36.9 million in 2007/08 to \$28.6 million in 2008-09**

**Twelve Month Moving Average of Cultural Education Account Fee Revenue**

As of 11/30/09



- Cultural Education Account created in 2002, with transfer of all OCE functions previously supported by State General Fund
- Provides a majority of operational funding for the State Library, State Museum, State Archives and the Public Broadcasting Program
- 2009/10: Revenue estimate is \$28.5 million, while the cost of operating OCE program is nearly \$35 million

## **Investing in Education Reform**

- Maintain the Foundation Formula –1.1% increase
- Adopt Executive’s Mandate Relief Proposals
- Expand UPK – Half-day in 4 years; Full-day in 10 years
- Stabilize the Cultural Education Account
- Support English Language Learners
- Support Students with Disabilities
- Support Adult Literacy Education and GED
- Support the Summer School for the Arts
- Support Postsecondary Education Aid to Native Americans
- Restore SED’s Capacity to Serve the State’s Residents

**The Ultimate Goal –  
College and Career Readiness for All Our Students**



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## INTRODUCTION

Good morning Chairman Kruger, Chairman Farrell, and Vice Chair Krueger. Greetings also to Education Committee Chairs Oppenheimer and Nolan.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to comment on the 2010-2011 Executive Budget Request. I am joined today by the Department of Education's Chief Operating Officer, Photeine Anagnostopoulos, and by Lenny Speiller, the Executive Director for the Office of Public Affairs.

I come before you today mindful that we face great challenges—as a nation, as a State, and as individual, local communities. While our economy has begun to show signs of improvement, our families continue to struggle and our State continues to face tough choices. Although these challenges and struggles are real, and full recovery seems far on the horizon, I am optimistic that we can find positive solutions so that our school children do not bear undue burdens in these difficult times.

I am optimistic because our State has faced tough challenges in the past, and time and again we have overcome those challenges and emerged stronger on the other side. In the eight years since the Mayor took control of the schools, this Legislature has funded education at historic levels in the good times, restored hundreds of millions of dollars in rough times, and twice passed mayoral control. These measures, and many others, have made a real difference in the lives of our kids and also helped make New York City a national model for education reform. I thank you for your partnership in these efforts.

As you know, all New York City agencies have endured several rounds of belt-tightening over the past two years. In facing these challenges, we have implemented budget reductions equitably across our system of more than 1,500 schools, while continuing to direct relatively more funding to support our highest-need students, including English language learners, special education students, and students who are struggling academically.

As you now determine how to achieve necessary cuts to education budgets across the State, I ask you to exercise similar leadership and fairness. If the budget is implemented as proposed, you can be sure that City students will feel the pain of these cuts in the loss of high-quality teachers from their classrooms. Specifically, as Mayor Bloomberg testified last week, the Governor's budget would potentially result in 8,500 fewer teachers working in our schools come September.

Today, I will elaborate on the Mayor's testimony by providing some additional detail about our Department's fiscal situation and will then discuss several specific ways you can help



mitigate the impact of the budget shortfall on our students so that we can continue to build on the significant progress they have achieved.

## **OUR BUDGET SITUATION**

**When you consider the combined effect of reductions from the State, changes in the City's funding, and increases in non-discretionary spending, we are looking at a preliminary budget gap of \$1.2 billion for the coming school year.**

The Governor's proposal effectively reduces the New York City Department of Education's 2010-2011 budget by \$600 million through a combination of direct cuts and cost shifts. We urge you to seriously reconsider the magnitude of this proposed reduction as it would have a dire impact on our students.

Under the plan, we would receive \$442 million less in State funding next year compared to this year, excluding changes in expenditure-based allocations such as transportation and food. You will notice that our analysis shows a cut greater than the \$418 million proposed in the executive budget. This is because the Governor counts school construction aid against the cut in formula-based school aid that the City is receiving. This type of accounting is misleading. Building aid and operating aid are not interchangeable. You cannot count building aid as operating aid any more than it would be acceptable for us to apply those funds to cover teacher salaries.

Beyond that, we are also deeply concerned that the Governor's executive budget calls for freezing foundation aid at its current level. If implemented, we will not receive any new dollars for the 14,000 additional students who are now attending our public schools, and that would represent another effective cut of more than \$80 million.

And, as the Mayor explained during his testimony last week, the Governor's budget would also shift payment for mandated summer school special education services from the State to the City. Since our schools are under Federal mandate to provide these services, we cannot eliminate those payments. This cost shift will effectively cut the City's education budget by at least \$51 million and as much as \$78 million.

We're also extremely disappointed that full funding for student MetroCards was not restored in the proposed executive budget as the Governor had previously promised. This year, the State has dramatically cut its contribution to the costs of funding student MetroCards, which could force families—including many low-income families—to pay thousands of dollars out of their own pockets toward school transportation costs. This is simply unfair given that the State provides aid toward student public transportation in other districts. New York City is upholding its end of the longstanding agreement to share



Department of  
Education

the costs of funding student MetroCards, and the State must contribute its full share as well.

Like last year, we will also experience significant increases in contractual costs and other mandated expenses for next year. Based on our preliminary estimates, we anticipate that the net increase in our nondiscretionary costs will be \$600 million, largely due to increased special education expenditures and teacher compensation costs.

Additionally, the Governor's proposal without warning reduces our current year budget by \$30 million in the middle of this school year by moving the deadline for adjusting claims for mandated special education services from June 2010 to November 2009. We don't have extra revenue in our budget to plug this hole. If this plan is implemented, we will be forced to pull back money from our schools when we just managed to protect them from an anticipated mid-year cut.

As you know, Governor Paterson has also proposed eliminating State revenue sharing exclusively for New York City, while other counties would only experience cuts between one and five percent—this is utterly unfair. Since education spending currently makes up 34 percent of the City's total budget, eliminating revenue sharing for the City will inevitably reduce available funding for City schools in both the immediate term and for years to come.

**In total, the combination of cuts in State funding, cost shifts from the State to the City, and increases in uncontrollable costs results in a budget hole of nearly \$1.2 billion for the 2010-2011 school year and a midyear cut of \$30 million to the current year's budget. I ask you to eliminate—or at the very least reduce—the size of our cut and the impact of expensive cost shifts. We must address the shortfall now because, unlike last fiscal year, there will be no stimulus money left to plug additional funding gaps later on this year.**

As in the past, we will continue to work very hard to shield our schools from budget hardship wherever possible. While school budgets hold the lion's share of our Department's overall discretionary funding, between fiscal years 2008 and 2010, we have reduced central office spending by more than 16 percent compared to an eight percent reduction in school budgets. This reduction of \$116 million at our central offices follows a five-year effort to slash administrative spending that already drove more than \$350 million in savings to our schools and classrooms. Today, the Department's central and field operating costs comprise only three percent of our total budget.

Just last week, Mayor Bloomberg and I worked together to identify a combination of new savings in our operating budget that allowed us to roll back an anticipated mid-year



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Education

budget cut that would have jeopardized schools' ability to maintain many important programs and resources. I recently notified DOE managers and other non-unionized staff that I would fund only one third of the increase in their compensation that had been budgeted by the City. This move limited raises to two percent for each of two years, with a cap of about \$2,800. Subsequently, the Mayor proposed new compensation agreements, similar to the managerial change, with the United Federation of Teachers and the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators that—in combination with the savings from the lower managerial increase—would save \$160 million this year and \$357 million next year.

And we fully expect to make further cuts to our central and field budgets, including a five percent head count reduction planned for this fiscal year. This follows the eight percent headcount reduction that we took over the last two years. But nearly half of our agency's \$22 billion budget cannot be reduced because of fixed costs like pensions, debt service, special education mandates, energy, and leases. Principals manage \$8 billion dollars of our budget at the school level, and more than 85 percent of those dollars pay for salaries, mostly for teachers.

**What does this mean? It means that we have no choice but to cut back on core school operations to fill next year's budget hole.**

If the Governor's budget is implemented in its current form, and without accompanying legislative reforms that could blunt the impact of the proposed cuts, we will have to eliminate 8,500 teaching positions, representing approximately 15 percent of our core teachers who teach math, English, science, and social studies. We will be forced to execute layoffs strictly on the basis of seniority, without regard to the relative effectiveness of those teachers in boosting student achievement. The prospect of State layoffs resulting from such a huge cut in State funds adds urgency to our proposed reform of the "last in, first out" teacher lay off policy. Clearly, the only thing worse than having to lay off teachers would be laying off great teachers instead of failing ones.

It is important to note that we may have no other choice than to layoff additional school-based staff as a result of increasing costs.

## **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

In addition to seeking more funds, we have come here today in hopes of avoiding that scenario, with ideas—some old and some new—that could help protect our kids in these difficult times. Clearly the magnitude of the reduction must be eliminated if we are to avoid the disruption to learning that the layoff of 8,500 teachers would produce. I will present to you some solutions and fundamental reforms that would generate significant savings for our schools without incurring any costs to the State.



As you approach this budget, we ask you to adhere to three core principles to ensure that our students continue to get the top-notch education that they need and deserve. These are:

1. Achieving “smart” savings.
2. Ensuring access to every dollar.
3. Maximizing spending flexibility.

**Let’s discuss our first principle.**

The need for layoffs resulting from State cuts underscores the importance of reforming State laws to make rational hiring and firing practices in our schools. As we face the possibility of cutting 8,500 teaching positions, current State law mandates that teachers be let go in order of reverse seniority within teaching licenses. This “last in, first out” requirement fails to recognize school needs as well as differences in teacher effectiveness and their real impact on the lives of our students. We need you to empower us to evaluate teachers objectively and transparently, and then to make personnel decisions based on what matters most: success in the classroom.

Additionally, a layoff scenario based on seniority and not merit means more teachers will ultimately lose their jobs, resulting in a smaller teaching force and thus, larger class sizes.

“Last in, first out” also creates the potential for operational chaos: in the event of severe budget cuts, as would be the case with this budget, resultant layoffs would trigger a chain reaction of seniority-based “bumping” throughout the City’s schools. We would be forced to let go of our newer teachers and the remaining teachers would be shuffled from school to school without regard for their skills or strengths.

The ensuing disarray would be most damaging to our highest-needs students and schools. A 2008 study in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* found that the teacher quality gap between our lowest- and highest-poverty schools has narrowed significantly during the last decade, largely due to the hiring of more successful newer teachers. Some of the teachers who are producing outstanding outcomes for our highest-needs students are the very individuals who would be forced out of the system and out of a job.

For example, we may have to pull a math teacher who is achieving tremendous results helping overage students get back on track from his classroom and replace him with a teacher who struggled with that population in her previous school. Not only is this nonsensical, but it would also have a dangerously negative impact on student learning



and may discourage some of the best and brightest from becoming New York City teachers in the first place.

We therefore urge you to amend Section 2588 of the Education Law to provide school districts the authority to establish an orderly process for dealing with employee layoffs and to give principals final authority over which personnel are let go based on assessments of needs, skill, and quality, and following the recommendations of their School Leadership Teams.

Further reform to this section of the law could also remediate the Absent Teacher Reserve Pool ("ATR Pool"). Right now, when tenured teachers are excessed for any reason, they are placed in the ATR pool—and remain on the DOE payroll indefinitely. Many ATR teachers quickly find jobs elsewhere in the system, but some remain in the pool for years without being hired. There are currently more than 1,100 teachers in this pool, at a total annual cost of more than \$110 million to taxpayers. Almost half of them have been in excess for more than six months.

The school system cannot continue spending so much money on an indefinite and unconditional unemployment benefit at a time when it is struggling to maintain vital programs and services in our schools. This is even truer when you consider that a 2008 study conducted by the New Teacher Project found that more than half of ATR teachers hadn't applied to a single vacancy through the City's online hiring system. Other districts—like Chicago—have a one-year time limit for displaced teachers, allowing for the full termination of personnel after a year "in excess" at full salary. We urge you to adopt a similar policy in New York.

We also need your help to reform the so-called "rubber rooms" by enacting legislation to change the absurdly expensive and time-consuming process of firing teachers charged with incompetence or misconduct. Current State education law establishes a protracted process for terminating a teacher. While this process is intended to conclude within 60 days after a teacher is removed from the classroom, cases often drag on for years, during which teachers continue to receive full pay. We're still paying teachers in New York City who have been in the rubber room for as long as seven years. These are taxpayer dollars that could otherwise pay the salaries of 370 additional teachers, directly benefiting our students and schools.

On Sunday, the New York Post ran a front-page story about a teacher who has been reassigned to the rubber room for more than seven years. He's a tenured teacher at the very top of the pay scale who has not stepped into a classroom since 2001 because I believe he poses a risk to the safety and well being of our students. In the event of layoffs, I wouldn't be able to get rid of this teacher—he'd be able to keep his job and his





\$100,049 salary based on his seniority alone. Instead, I'd be forced to lay off other teachers so this reassigned teacher can continue showing up each day to a rubber room, collecting a paycheck and adding to his pension.

We urge you to streamline the 3020-a process, enabling faster resolution for teachers who are ultimately reinstated and should be in the classroom, while simultaneously allowing principals greater latitude to remove misbehaving and incompetent teachers so long as they demonstrate that these decisions are reasonable and not arbitrary. Streamlining the 3020-a hearing process would reduce the time teachers spend in rubber rooms and, in turn, reduce associated costs, which currently reach more than \$30 million annually.

I do also want to echo the Mayor's commendation for the Governor's plan to let the City create a sinking fund for principal on federally-subsidized school construction bonds. The resultant reduction in borrowing costs would permit us to build and repair more City schools.

I want to propose two similarly smart ideas that would save money without cost to the State. The first is eliminating the Board of Education Retirement System and merging its members into the New York City Employees Retirement System and the Teachers Retirement System, a move that would save the City approximately \$8 million annually. The second is extending the Wicks Law exemption to the Education Construction Fund (ECF). The ECF does the same work as the School Construction Authority, but with a mixture of private dollars that are donated for the purpose of school construction. By lowering the cost of construction, we can free up more money to be used for further construction projects needed in our schools today.

### **Moving on to principle two: ensuring access to every dollar.**

In tough times, we simply cannot afford to leave any available funding on the table. As you know, President Obama and United States Education Secretary Arne Duncan recently issued an unprecedented challenge to the education establishment by launching its "Race to the Top" competition. Race to the Top provides a strong financial incentive to bring our schools into the 21<sup>st</sup>-century by implementing common sense reforms that will put more students on the path to success.

Last month, New York State submitted an application for as much as \$700 million in federal Race to the Top aid—funds which are needed more than ever given current economic challenges. While we support the State's efforts to raise academic standards—which accounts for 14 percent of the State's application—we were disappointed that key



actions that would have made our application more competitive were not taken. As a result, our State's three million school children might miss out on much-needed funding.

The necessity of lifting the State's charter school cap is at this point indisputable. Several recent studies have demonstrated that New York City's charter school students consistently outperform their peers in district schools and are a model for other districts across the nation. And demand for seats in the City's existing charter schools far outpaces available supply, with more than 35,000 children on charter school waitlists. While I would have preferred to resolve this issue in time to include it in the State's first-round Race to the Top application, we must nonetheless work to raise the cap within the current legislative session without any provisions that would stymie the growth of charter schools—provisions that are clearly at odds with the goals and guidelines of Race to the Top. This effort will improve our competitiveness in future Race to the Top rounds. More importantly, it's the right thing to do for our children.

Another way you can ensure that we achieve maximum benefits from available funding is to permit the City to use a portion of universal pre-Kindergarten funds to pay for part of the cost of our current full-day pre-K programs and to open additional full day programs where needed. But last year, as in years past, we left more than \$25 million of unused pre-K funds on the table. With families struggling to maintain their jobs and the unemployment at 10 percent, it is important we provide families with full-day pre-K options. At the same time, we must maximize all available funds to cover the cost. Currently, we pay for our full-day programs, covering the hours beyond the two-and-a-half-hour half-day period, by cobbling together various funding streams. Facing an effective State cut of \$600 million and another \$600 million in uncontrollable expenses, we ask that for next year we be able to utilize the full universal pre-K allocation to defray the costs of existing full day pre-K programs and to expand full-day pre-K to better serve our families.

We also believe the City and the State can save millions of dollars in special education costs. First, I ask you to consider revising Section 4403 to allow parents of preschool special education students to receive reimbursements for using their own transportation instead of having these children ride buses. This change would save \$30 million for the City and the State. Next, I request that you freeze the tuition rates paid to special education providers for Preschool Special Education and Contract schools for a savings of \$28 million and \$21 million for the City and State, respectively.

Lastly, I urge you to finalize the State Plan Amendment for Medicaid for school districts so that we can begin implementing the new requirements and realize all possible funding available to us under Medicaid. New York State has been unable to file Medicaid claims for school districts for new services since July 2009. Other states have already modified

their Medicaid programs through successful negotiation with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and New York should establish a timetable for doing the same. We are currently developing a new data system that will greatly improve our ability to document and create accurate, complete, and timely submissions for Medicaid reimbursement. By working together, the City and the State can ensure that we have access to tens of millions of dollars—possibly more than \$100 million—to reimburse the City for our a significant portion of our Medicaid costs.

**Let me now talk about the third and final principle, flexibility.**

Giving school systems and school leaders more flexibility in how they can use their budgets is also more crucial than ever. In a universe of increasingly limited resources, we simply must empower our principals with the maximum flexibility over available funding so they can make the best possible choices for the needs of their particular schools and students.

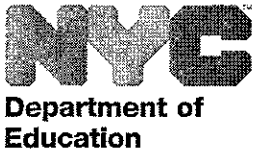
I would like to thank the Governor for proposing a moratorium on unfunded special education mandates and a repeal of special education reporting requirements that are duplicative with federal laws. These steps go a long way in reducing the administrative burden associated with State programs, leading to more cost-effective and efficient procurement processes.

Following the Governor's direction, you could help improve flexibility in spending for our schools and our entire district by providing relief from State mandates that are not required by the Federal IDEA. The Legislature and the Board of Regents should work to modify Section 4403 of the Education Law that establishes an arbitrary minimum level of special education services such as speech therapy and sets the maximum student caseloads for special education service providers.

I want to be clear: I am not talking about diminishing the quality of services that our students need. Rather, I'm calling for enhanced local flexibility to make the decisions that impact our classrooms. And allowing more flexibility will not cost the State anything, but it will put more money into our schools where it's most beneficial to our students.

In addition, other districts around the State have the ability to add between one and three students to special education classes with poor attendance. New York City is not allowed to do this. This exception should be lifted. These decisions should be based on the individual needs of students and schools rather than across-the-board rules.

Finally, I ask you for greater flexibility in using Instructional Aid Materials money. It should be up to local school districts to determine the best way to spend funding from the three



Instructional Materials Aid programs: Textbook Aid, Computer Hardware, and Computer Software Aid. This consolidation carries no cost for the State or school districts, but would allow school leaders to use their resources even more wisely by giving them the flexibility they need to make the smartest decisions for their schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

At a time when funds are scarce, it is critical that we work together to protect our students and schools against the worst effects of ongoing economic uncertainty. As a Department, we have made every effort to reduce administrative expenses before cutting funding at the school level, and those cuts that were necessary were applied equitably across schools.

We ask that the cuts to our schools—both direct and indirect—be reduced to the lowest level possible. We also brought you a variety of reform proposals that would significantly help our bottom line without incurring costs to the State's budget.

Since the Mayor took office, our students have made historic academic gains in math and reading, and our graduation rate, which had long been stagnant, has increased by more than 15 points. Thousands more students are now graduating each year with the skills they need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy.

Despite enduring several rounds of budget cuts since 2007, our progress has continued unabated, demonstrating our careful stewardship of every dollar, along with the exemplary management skills of our principals and the hard work of our dedicated teachers and students.

All of us want to keep this progress going and to do everything possible to shield our students from potential harm. Please join me in making our difficult budget situation as tolerable as possible for our students.

Thank you for your time and attention and I welcome your questions.



# Testimony

to the  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
and  
**Assembly Ways and Means Committee**  
on the  
**Education Budget**  
for  
**Elementary and Secondary Education**  
**February 2, 2010**

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Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education and health care  
Affiliated with the AFT – NEA – AFL-CIO

Testimony of  
Andrew Pallotta  
*Executive Vice President*  
New York State United Teachers  
to the  
Senate Finance Committee  
and  
Assembly Ways and Means Committee  
Chairman Kruger and Chairman Farrell  
on the  
Education Budget  
for  
Elementary and Secondary Education

February 2, 2010

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Good afternoon Chairman Kruger, Chairman Farrell, and honorable members of the Senate Finance Committee and Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

I am Andrew Pallotta, Executive Vice President of the New York State United Teachers.

NYSUT is a statewide union representing more than 600,000 members. Our members are pre-k to 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, school related professionals, higher education faculty, and other professionals in education and health care.

I thank you for the opportunity to address you today regarding the Executive Budget for 2010-11.

My testimony will broadly outline NYSUT's comments on the Executive Budget proposal for public education. As always, in the days ahead, our members and staff will be meeting with you and your staff to expand on these comments and seek your help in addressing them.

### **School Aid**

NYSUT believes that, particularly in these troubling economic times, investing in education makes both good fiscal sense and good public policy. Funding targeted to quality public schools will see the greatest return on taxpayer money and will strengthen the entire economy.

Thanks to our congressional delegation, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided the funding to restore a substantial amount of last

year's proposed cuts. Initial reporting from states is that at least 250,000 education jobs have been created or saved across the nation thanks to the Economic Recovery Plan-18,600 of these jobs are in New York state. This plan is supporting our students and fueling our economy. Despite the economic situation, we can and must move forward in our drive to put in place funding that provides all students with the opportunity for their constitutionally guaranteed right to a sound basic education.

The Governor's budget includes an overall reduction in School Aid of \$1.1 billion year to year. Operating aids are reduced by a \$1.4 billion Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). This amounts to a 7.5 percent cut in operating aids for schools. This funding level is \$4.2 billion below the levels promised under the CFE decision. The massive cuts proposed for education would force schools to cut additional teachers and programs – last year we lost over 5,000 teachers and other school staff statewide. These cuts would inevitably erode most of the good that was accomplished by the federal aid devoted to education last year. Thousands of additional school staff would be laid off that had been saved last year by the ARRA. In fact, the magnitude of the Executive's proposed cut is roughly equal to the entire \$1.2 billion ARRA appropriation for school aid adopted by the legislature last spring for the current 2009-10 school year.

In 2007, the Legislature enacted school funding reforms to satisfy the requirements of the CFE case and made a historic commitment to fund education fully over a four year period. Adding resources fairly to public schools across the state, with an extra commitment in areas of high need, was and continues to be the right priority for both children and taxpayers. The proposed cuts are on top of an already broken promise to our schoolchildren. While we understand the tough fiscal times the state and our nation are experiencing – keeping the promise to our school children is the right choice for our state.

The four year phase in of increased school aid was intended to allow for local district planning and to create a predictable funding stream which schools could depend upon. We know that this financial commitment was made in good faith, but last year the phase-in was delayed from four to seven years, and now the Governor is proposing a further extension to 10 years. And this year, with the Governor's proposed cuts, we'd be \$4.2 billion behind in keeping that commitment. Each year that Foundation Aid is frozen, school districts that are highly dependent on State Aid get further behind.

The Executive budget leaves school districts in the unenviable position of either proposing double-digit property tax increases, or eliminating the programs and teachers that New York's children need. President Obama has said before that our nation must "educate our way to a better economy" and we couldn't agree more. Unless our children graduate from high school ready to take on the challenges of the future, we may never get out of this economic crisis.

The next generation of New York's workers must come from New York public schools and universities. Employers are going to demand it, and state policymakers

must ensure that New York's education system can meet that demand. Promising a knowledge economy without an investment in knowledge is a hollow promise.

While we face difficult options in the current crisis, most economists agree the worst thing a state can do in a severe recession is cut spending, because that decreases aggregate demand and weakens the overall economy.

We ask that you restore the Governor's cuts, restart the Foundation formula and minimally provide the level of resources for our schools adopted in the 2010-11 Regents proposal, a \$469 million year to year increase.

### **What Would These Cuts Mean In Our Schools?**

In the Wyandanch school district on Long Island — which would lose almost \$1 million under the governor's proposal — teacher layoffs, as well as the elimination of AP courses, summer school, sports teams and bus rides are all possibilities. Such cuts would be especially devastating given that due to budget constraints last spring, Wyandanch — a low-wealth district — was forced to layoff reading teachers and school support staff, and eliminate high school elective courses and nearly half its sports teams.

In New York City, Mayor Bloomberg said last week that the Governor's budget plan would mean 8,500 fewer teachers next year. This would cause an explosion in class sizes in already overcrowded classrooms across the city, after school programs would be curtailed and academic intervention services would likely be reduced.

Officials in the Albany City School District say the governor's Executive Budget plan, if approved, would result in the elimination of more than one hundred positions, and likely mean program cuts and another possible school-building closure.

The superintendent of the Eastchester school district in the Lower Hudson Valley said the governor's proposal would result in larger class sizes and layoffs — adding that personnel cuts through attrition would not be enough. And this Superintendent is not alone — in a recent survey this past fall of 150 superintendents statewide, 89 percent predicted they would likely have to eliminate jobs in their school district, even before the threat of further severe cuts had materialized.

### **Don't Erase Our Progress**

Now is not the time to take a step backward. Our kids can't afford that. Please, continue investing in our students, our teachers, and our schools. Don't erase the progress we've made. With a committed investment in our public education system by the state Legislature via Foundation Aid reforms enacted in 2007, the significant progress and proven results being made by our students statewide can continue.



Test scores and graduation rates are up. Eighty-six percent of students in Math in grades six through eight achieved the standards in 2009 compared with 80 percent a year earlier. New York leads the nation in Advance Placement test results and we are the largest and most diverse population taking the exam. Recently, 197 schools and 26 districts have been removed from the list of schools needing improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act. And last year, the state's public education system was ranked among the top three in the nation by the independent national publication, "Education Week."

In fact, I've seen firsthand, the miracles that can be accomplished in our schools.

Ten years ago, the school where I taught, PS 32 in the Fordham section of the Bronx, was at risk of closure. But thanks to a strategic plan based on teamwork and a desire to do the right thing for our students and community, we were able to turn PS 32 around. We implemented a series of professional development programs for both staff and new teachers. We placed a greater emphasis on science curriculum, and hired two new science teachers. And we held outreach workshops on subjects such as math and technology, which were attended by parents.

Now, PS 32, ranks in the top 10 percent of all New York City elementary schools and is a textbook for educators who want to create a productive learning environment and improve student achievement. Seventy-five percent of students are now proficient in English language arts. Two years ago, the percentage was 59. And in math, 93 percent of students are proficient, up from 80 percent in 2006-07.

Poughkeepsie Middle School is another success story. Test scores there a decade ago were so low only 17 percent of the kids met state standards on the eighth-grade math test, and the school was placed under state corrective action.

But again, thanks to hard work, a series of teacher-led changes and a new collaborative approach with a principal who came up through the ranks, student achievement has improved significantly. Investments were made in the school. Four English language arts teachers, and two math teachers were hired. Teachers were relieved of non-instructional duties so that they could work on model lesson plans, compare notes on students and intensively review student data. As a result, test scores on math and ELA jumped dramatically, and today, this school is on track to become a school in good standing with the state Ed Department this coming year.

Simply put, we cannot afford to erase the progress our students and schools have made. But unless the deep education cuts proposed by the governor in his Executive Budget are rejected by the state Legislature, this is exactly what will happen and our students will be the ones who lose.

## **55/25 Retirement Option**

In 2009, the Executive signed legislation into law modifying the State's public pension system, adding a new pension tier, Tier V, for all public employees hired after January 1, 2010. Included in this reform was a commitment by both the Governor and the State Legislature to enact legislation this legislative session offering an early retirement option for NYSUT members who have reached 55 years of age and have at least 25 years of service.

It is imperative that state leaders keep this commitment and enact necessary legislation as soon as possible. This option will place no financial hardship on either the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement Systems or the New York State Teachers' Retirement System and, if enacted quickly, will provide needed budgetary flexibility to school districts, SUNY and community colleges helping to avert staff layoffs and program cuts.

Allowing seasoned teachers and staff who are at the top end of the pay scale the option of retiring a few years early without a significant pension penalty, could, in some instances, save a significant number of recently hired educators and educational support staff from being laid off in the coming months.

## **Additional Revenue Options**

The federal ARRA provided substantial funds for state stabilization over a two-year period. In fact, Federal recovery assistance is closing roughly 31 percent of New York's budget hole in the current year.

This past December, the House of Representatives passed the Jobs for Main Street Act which includes a \$23 billion "Education Jobs Fund." This would provide an estimated \$1.4 billion in funding for New York. We urge you to join us in reaching out to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand asking them to push for a similar bill in the Senate. This funding could go a long way towards closing our budget gap this year and saving education jobs in our state.

Another potential source of revenue is the Stock Transfer Tax. It is basically a sales tax on Wall Street paid on each transaction. The tax is technically already in effect but unfortunately the money is currently tallied, assessed, collected – then handed right back to the brokers who paid it. A side benefit of retaining some of these revenues would be to lessen the frenzied volatility that has caused many of the recent problems on Wall Street. New York State currently rebates 100 percent of the \$16 billion back to brokers. We suggest that 80 percent be rebated and that the state retain the other 20 percent which would result in an additional \$3.2 billion annually in state revenue.

Finally, we would be pleased to provide, in a separate submission, additional revenue generating ideas including the cost saving benefits of economies of scale and initiatives such as green schools.

## **Teacher Centers**

As we continue the discussion of how we can provide our kids with everything they need to excel, it is also important to provide those who will teach these students with the necessary support to ensure their success. There are currently over 130 teacher centers across New York state. These centers are operated by teachers and over 200,000 teachers were served by their teacher center last year. Teacher centers provide an invaluable resource to all teachers and contribute to the growth and maturity of less experienced teachers. In fact, the Governor's own Race to the Top application includes a reliance on teacher centers as a means to sustain and improve professional development programs statewide. Given this backdrop, it is surprising to us that the Governor chose to eliminate funding for teacher centers in his Executive Budget. In addition to the loss of high quality professional development opportunities, the loss of funding for these centers will also mean adding hundreds of teacher center employees to the list of New York's unemployed. We ask for a full restoration to last year's enacted level of \$40 million.

## **Special Education**

In the area of Summer School Special Education, the Governor's budget proposes to modify state reimbursement to school districts for summer school special education costs from what is now a flat rate of 70 percent for all districts to a share of somewhere between 10-80 percent using the Foundation Aid State Sharing Ratio. The proposal would also limit the portion of the current year appropriation that is available to pay prior years' claims. Statewide, this would create "winners and losers", but overall districts' aid for this program would be cut by \$86 million in the 2010-11 school year.

The Governor's budget also proposes to limit the growth in the county share of costs for preschool special education to two percent per year beginning with the 2010-11 school year and to assign any growth above two percent to the school district of residence. This cost shift would have an immediate impact on school districts and is estimated to increase costs by \$11.7 million outside of New York city. The cost shift will have the same impact as a cut and it will force the elimination of personnel or programs. Local taxpayers may also be asked to foot the bill, placing significant pressure on local property taxpayers at a time when state leaders are attempting to lessen the burden.

## **Public Libraries**

Public libraries are playing an essential role in helping people deal with the current financial crisis. There was a great story in the Wall Street Journal a couple

weeks ago which highlights this. According to the article, American libraries are reporting up to a 65 percent rise in attendance over the past 12 months as droves of people visit their local library to make use of the free services they offer. It seems that the bulk of these new visitors are turning to the library after losing their jobs, with many needing urgent help and advice on how to search for jobs, update their resumes and even looking for free entertainment given their loss of disposable income. In addition to ever popular lending services, free broadband internet access, counseling services and careers workshops are also proving a massive draw.

Despite their obvious value, publicly funded libraries have been under siege. The Governor's proposal would be the fifth cut in library aid in two years. If this cut is enacted it will bring funding below 1998 levels. The cumulative impact of these five cuts would total an 18 percent cut in less than two years (this amounts to an \$18 million reduction since April 2008). The local impact reported statewide is extensive resulting in reduced hours, layoffs, program elimination and service cuts.

According to a recent survey conducted by Public Agenda, "At a time of broad concern about wasteful public spending...71 percent say that libraries spend public money well. Fifty-two percent say that if their local library needed additional funding, they would favor tax increases to generate necessary resources."

We ask you to reject the Governor's proposed cut to libraries and recognize the essential role that libraries are playing in helping people deal with the worst economic conditions since the Great Depression.

## **Conclusion**

The Executive Budget would reverse much of the painstaking progress schools have made in closing the achievement gap in recent years. It would delay for far too long the state's commitment to provide the resources every student needs to meet rigorous learning and graduation standards. However, we know that the Governor's proposal is the first word in the annual budget battle. I am confident that legislators from both parties will understand the impact this proposal would have on the ability of schools to meet the needs of students. As always, we will be working with the Legislature and the governor to improve this spending plan to ensure that the final budget - the last word - meets the needs of our public schools.

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TESTIMONY  
OF THE  
UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

MICHAEL MULGREW, PRESIDENT

BEFORE THE  
ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE &  
THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

EXAMINING THE EDUCATION FUNDING PROPOSALS IN  
THE 2010-11 EXECUTIVE BUDGET

FEBRUARY 2, 2010

Good morning, Assemblyman Farrell, Senator Kruger and members of these distinguished committees. My name is Michael Mulgrew, and I am the president of the United Federation of Teachers. On behalf of our two hundred thousand members, I thank you for this opportunity to testify today on the Governor's proposed budget.

It was just one year ago that New York City schools were facing seemingly insurmountable odds: \$1.5 billion in budget cuts and 15,000 layoffs, the equivalent of every first, second and third year teacher. Schools were literally bracing themselves for 8 to 12 percent cutbacks.

In the face of adversity, however, something amazing happened. Instead of giving up, people stepped up. Strong leadership and a willingness to collaborate by you and your colleagues in the Legislature made the difference. We teamed up to secure federal stimulus funding. We collaborated on a progressive income tax. We joined forces to prioritize spending that directly affects classrooms.

Working together, we were able to whittle that deficit down by more than two-thirds.

A year later, the economic landscape is still murky and the deficit is still very real. New York City schools are facing another proposed major cutback in state school aid somewhere in the range of \$500 million dollars for the 2010-2011 school year. Mayor Bloomberg says that will translate into thousands of layoffs, and he speaks as if there is nothing else that can be done.

Don't believe the rhetoric. We are at the beginning of the budget process, and the UFT will continue — as we have always done — to work with you and your colleagues here in Albany as well as the City Council and others to protect classrooms as much as we possibly can.

We view the proposed state budget as exceedingly unfair to New York City, and in particular its considerable disinvestment in education. We can't ignore the realities of our

struggling economy, of course, and I'm certainly not going to minimize the difficulties ahead. But our job now should be to work together and shield classrooms from the brunt of these cuts. And we will work with the Mayor to accomplish this if he is willing to work with us.

We made a promise to every child in our city and state – all of us did – that each and every one of them would get a quality education. So make no mistake. We owe it to our students to find solutions and minimize the impact on the services and programs on which they depend. If we don't then our school communities will be devastated. It took decades to reverse the damage caused to schools during the 1970s when funding and personnel were severely cut. We cannot let that happen again.

I want to lay out a few ideas that will help us move forward and lessen the blow to schools. As you will see, solutions are within our grasp. There are three priorities in the 2010-2011 budget that I want to talk about today:

- Keep Classrooms Whole
- Keep the promise of CFE
- Support Teacher Centers

#### KEEPING CLASSROOMS WHOLE

You don't need to be standing in front of a blackboard to know what massive cutbacks to schools would mean. The loss of hundreds of millions at the beginning of this current school year has already translated into fewer programs and services for kids. Not just sports, clubs and extracurriculars, mind you, but also the academic intervention services and tutoring that can make or break a child's future. When you're trying to engage hard-to-reach and at-risk children, you need those types of programs. You need the arts. You need the smaller class sizes that allow you to watch over those students more closely and give them individualized attention. And when those programs and services are lost, so are the kids.

First and foremost, we are calling for the creation of a retirement incentive, which would potentially save \$300 million or more. Educators have a salary structure that is unique among public employees in that entry-level salaries are less than half of the maximum educators eventually reach near retirement. To give you an idea about what this means, consider this: for every eligible educator who takes advantage of a retirement incentive, we could effectively save the cost of two new teachers' salaries. An incentive is not only the right way to take care of this; it is also the smart way.

To give you an idea of the numbers we're talking about, there are approximately twenty-five thousand (25,000) UFT members in the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) that would be eligible for an incentive. If an incentive is implemented correctly and relatively soon, the schools would have ample time to make the necessary adjustments and ensure that schools and classrooms are properly staffed for the fall. Incentives were offered twice during the 1990's and both were successful.

Here at the state level, I also believe we need to raise additional revenues and find additional cost savings. Cutting the Empire Zone Program, for example, could save the state approximately \$600 million a year. Closing corporate loopholes and reducing the state's use of high-priced consultants could save hundreds of millions more. Even using the state's purchasing power to negotiate prescription drug prices for civil service employees could save \$100 million a year and, in the process, could help local governments as well.

It's worth noting that there are tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions, in unrealized administrative cost savings that could be made at Tweed without directly affecting classrooms. For example, tens of millions could be saved by reforming the DOE's testing and data initiatives, some of which are duplicative and some of which simply aren't affecting students in any real way. The DOE could also save millions by cutting out high-priced consultants and bureaucracy, halting its plan to reorganize the school support structure yet again, reassessing its vendor contracts and, perhaps most importantly, moving into permanent assignments hundreds of teachers who are now



working in the so-called “ATR” pool. We have tried to engage the Department of Education on all of these issues, but so far our proposals have been met with deaf ears. The Department seems more interested in using this crisis to further some of its own so-called “reforms.”

We also will go back to Washington and work to insure that State Stabilization Funding is included in the new Jobs initiative.

These are just a few ideas, and I’m sure we’ll hear many more in the coming weeks. While we may not be able to avoid cuts in aid in this economy, my point here is that we need to think creatively and find new ways to insulate our classrooms. We as a state cannot have a strong and vibrant economy and workforce without well-educated citizens. Investing in education has never been more important.

#### KEEP THE PROMISE OF CFE

You’ve heard me talk about the devastation that disinvestment caused our schools in the 1970’s. The loss of thousands and thousands of teachers, basic classroom services and supplies was in some ways just the beginning of a long spiral downward that left schools underfunded and in a state of disrepair.

Remember, too, the 13-year struggle to secure a victory in the landmark Campaign for Fiscal Equity case – a case that came about to help bolster schools that for so long had not received the resources they needed. And remember that fewer than two years after that historic victory, we were asked to accept a delay in the promised funds.

In this Executive budget, the Governor now proposes a new timetable by stretching out the promised CFE funds over a 10-year period. We view that proposal as an abandonment of the CFE promise. We must return to the promise of CFE as soon as our revenue picture turns around. We owe it to the children.

Further, we strongly urge the Legislature to consider stronger oversight and modifications to the Contracts for Excellence process. For New York City, an important part of the CFE promise was to reduce class sizes in all grades. The DOE's mismanagement has allowed class sizes to actually increase across the board for two straight years despite the \$760 million you and your colleagues here in Albany sent them specifically to reduce class sizes. That's why the UFT, along with a coalition of partners, filed a lawsuit challenging the DOE's failure to follow its Contracts for Excellence agreement. Given this track record, it's critical that the city Department of Education be required by the state to improve its internal class size monitoring and ensure that the city has procedures in place to achieve its mandated targets. CFE needs to be fixed so that its dollars go to achieving smaller class sizes and other targets. Deferring CFE compounds the mistake.

#### SUPPORT TEACHER CENTERS

I can say with absolute certainty that the teaching force in New York City public schools is the strongest we have ever had. The dedication and passion that I see in the schools every day is truly wonderful and inspiring. A big reason why we've come so far is because of the training, mentoring and support that our teachers receive from Teacher Centers. Educators need ongoing – and relevant – professional development, especially if we believe the quality of the teacher is the most important factor in improving student achievement. The UFT Teacher Center, the nationally known professional development program that is a partnership between the UFT and the DOE, operates at some 300 schools citywide and allows thousands of city teachers to sharpen their skills to better serve their students. That's why I am here to strongly oppose the Governor's proposed elimination of all Teacher Center funding.

In New York City, where Teacher Centers are embedded in low-performing schools, they have been shown to be the most effective professional development in New York City schools. Indeed, student test scores increased the most in places where Teacher Centers provided the professional development. We cannot afford to lose these critical services.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to once again be bold. The Governor and the Mayor are right when they talk about the harsh realities of our budget problems, but all of us in this room know that our children can't afford to lose core classroom services and personnel.

New York City school children are depending on us now more than ever, especially since they've already had a difficult year. Beyond the millions in budget cuts that schools began the year with, we've seen wave after wave of sobering headlines. Class sizes have risen in every grade across the five boroughs for two straight years. National test scores revealed that the achievement gap hasn't budged in years and proved that the DOE's current approach to learning is fundamentally flawed. The capital plan has fallen woefully behind on its promises and studies have shown it won't come close to meeting future space needs. Even Student Metrocards are on the chopping block. Not only do all of these changes have a direct economic impact on a child's education, but they take a psychological and emotional toll as well. What kind of message are we sending them? And what are they thinking of us as we do this?

The fiscal challenges we face are difficult, but the UFT stands ready to work with anyone on these issues, just as we did last year when we faced similar budget cuts. The union has a long history of stepping up for the schools and finding smart solutions to fiscal problems, including major agreements just last year on health benefits and pensions that will save the city hundreds of millions of dollars. We at the UFT have never – and will never – waver from our responsibility to protect our students and school communities.

###

*Every child is a work of art. Create a masterpiece.*

That statement is at the heart of everything we need to do in the Rochester City School District. And it is the foundation upon which our five-year strategic plan is built. It is at the core of what makes for great teaching and great schools in every district, but it is a particularly compelling directive in an urban district.

We have the profound privilege and profound **responsibility** to educate and to prepare every child for success in college, work, and life. Every child brings a wealth of talent, gifts and potential to us. They also bring dreams, aspirations, struggles and needs to us. We must embrace that talent and potential and equip every student with an education that draws forth the unique talents (the masterpiece) that lie within each of them.

Our strategic plan provides a roadmap for our work. It captures our accomplishments from the 2008-2009 school year, and operationalizes our work through 2012-2013. It details the changes we must make at the district, school, and classroom levels to ensure student success.

The improvements in student performance that we saw in 2008-09 show we are heading in the right direction: the percentage of students meeting standards increased eight points in English language arts and nine points in math on state exams, grades 4-8. We also saw a 13 point increase in our four-year high school graduation rate. With the state pushing the bar higher, our strategic plan will ensure that the work that made those results possible will continue.

Because our core work of teaching and learning takes place in our schools and classrooms, this is where our efforts are focused. Our entire community, however, plays a role in helping us reach our goals. Together, we can achieve our vision to create a masterpiece of every child, each a work of art.

Rochester's statistics – when compared to similar cities throughout the country – are staggering:

- Rochester has the 11<sup>th</sup> highest child poverty rate in the country. 37% - more than 1 in 3 - of children under the age of 18 live in poverty. And that number is even higher for children under the age of 5.<sup>1</sup>
- We have the highest rate of poverty among NYS Big 5 districts; 50% of our schools are at 90% poverty or higher.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2007-08, over 15% of incoming Pre-K students had a parent who was incarcerated.
- In that same year, over 27% of incoming Pre-K students had experienced the death of a close family member.
- The estimated 2007 median household income in Rochester was \$29,329, more than 45% lower than the NYS median of \$53,448.
- Between 2000 and 2006, the population of Rochester declined by 5.3%. Enrollment in our school district has continued to shrink over the past ten years.
- In the 2000s, 14-15% of incoming RCSD Pre-K and K students were hospitalized in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at birth. That figure increased to 19.7% in 2007-08. This represents a change from every 1 in 7 to every 1 in 5 children.

## **Our strategic plan calls for two core strategies**

### *Strategy 1: Proactively managing and supporting performance to empower schools*

This strategy involves several key ideas. The first is that our core work as a district is teaching and learning. Since teaching and learning take place in schools, schools must be the primary focus of our administrative efforts and resources. The central administration will manage and support school performance to ensure student success. Schools in turn will be held accountable for their performance, i.e., for what they add to what every student knows and can do from the start to the finish of each day, week and year.

The freedoms and supports that schools receive will be differentiated based on their performance and capacity. Schools that demonstrate strong performance and capacity will be empowered with the freedom and flexibility to make certain decisions. They will request support from central administration on an as-needed basis. These schools will be called Autonomous Schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Children's Defense Fund (2002) based on United States census data (2000).

<sup>2</sup> NYS Big 5 include New York City, Buffalo, Syracuse, Yonkers, and Rochester

**What we need**

I am not here to complain about lack of resources or proposed budget cuts. While we face a \$48M budget shortfall, we understand that New York State is in fiscal crisis and we must do our part. We applaud the governor's push for mandate relief but I believe that we can do more to empower local districts. I encourage you to work with the Big 5 school districts to identify and remove these barriers. These include but are not limited to rules surrounding Universal Pre-K, Contract for Excellence and Chapter 57 of the Education Law governing charter schools. We sought changes in Chapter 57 not solely because of ARRA funding but because it makes sense for our children. In Rochester we are working hard to "right-size" our district. With the support of our four bargaining units, we created a single health care plan that will avoid costs of more than \$40M over three years. Help us leverage other savings by eliminating regulations like the Tri-Borough Amendment of the Taylor Law.

As you know, fixing urban schools is not an altruistic goal. Our nation's future depends on the success of all of our children. You have done a lot to fund New York schools well. We are grateful. We need your help to take these steps and muster the political will to see this work to completion.

Thank you for your time and attention.

5B

***Testimony Before***

**Assembly Ways and Means Committee  
Assembly Education Committee  
Senate Finance Committee  
Senate Education Committee**

**GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
February 2, 2010**

Syracuse City



School District

***Daniel G. Lowengard***  
Superintendent of Schools

***Suzanne Slack***  
Chief Financial Officer

Syracuse City



School District

## Syracuse City School District

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Superintendent of Schools

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I am Daniel G. Lowengard, Superintendent of Schools for the Syracuse City School District. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you and discuss the proposed Executive Budget and the potential impact it will have on our District.

The Syracuse City School District currently provides educational services and supports to 21,329 children in Pre-K –12 with 79 percent of our students receiving free or reduced lunch. The ethnic breakdown of our students is: 54 percent black, 29 percent white, and 11 percent Hispanic. English as a Second Language (ESL) students comprise 11 percent of the student population and 22 percent receive Special Education services.

We certainly understand the fiscal situation of the State of New York, yet we cannot place the burden on the backs of urban school children. This fiscal crisis is yet another opportunity to transform the system to allocate funds correctly to children with the most needs versus continually adding percentages that only mask the true issue.

In Syracuse, 76% of our budget is derived from State Aid. The Governor's proposal is a reduction of approximately 3% (\$11 million). It is important to also note that even though the percentage cut in surrounding wealthier districts was higher, the impact is significantly less (see attached chart). Our cost per pupil cut will be \$534 while a district with three times our wealth is going to be cut \$413 per pupil.

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit was supposed to provide an "adequate" level of funding for urban districts over a four year period. 2010-11 was to be that fourth year, yet we find ourselves going backwards, not catching up. According to the court ruling we were to be paid approximately \$85 million or \$4,000 per student. Instead, the Executive Budget calls for a cut of \$534 per student and an extension of the CFE funding out 10 years. This type of action will negate the intent of the ruling and forever doom cities to lower achievement levels.

### **ENROLLMENT**

We can contain costs at 3% but the 5% reduction in all revenues leaves us with a \$35 million gap. This will result in a loss of 450 staff or 10% of our workforce. This comes at a time when the enrollment in the Syracuse City School District is up, yet we are told we will see no additional financial support as the Executive Budget freezes enrollment for foundation aid purposes. This will result in increased class sizes.



## **SAY YES TO EDUCATION**

Our enrollment is up while that of surrounding districts' is down in part due to the second year of implementing Say Yes to Education. We are grateful that the Governor recognizes the impact Say Yes has had on the education of our children and will have on residents of the City of Syracuse. Our new Mayor, Stephanie Miner, has endorsed this as the cornerstone of her new administration. The Governor has supported this with a \$350,000 grant but the cost of the program is forty (40) times that. For the first time in decades our enrollment has increased and we strongly believe there is a correlation to Say Yes. This District wide approach will transform urban education and urban cities. We certainly see it as a model to be emulated state wide, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult to stay the course with these suggested cuts. Urban school children need extended day learning and summer programs, as well as individualized study and support time to be successful academically. Say Yes also addresses their social and emotional needs in addition to the health and wellness supports needed for students growing up in poverty. We are working with our City and County governments to ensure that we are not duplicating services and are stretching every dollar possible to meet the needs of our students, yet it is still not enough.

## **FUND BALANCE**

We recognize the importance of doing business differently in this economy and have been rightsizing our district for the past four years. We have made substantial cuts and have been able to increase our fund balance. In preparing our budget we must utilize half of those funds to avoid massive layoffs, yet this may be unwise as the problems become magnified in 2011-12. There has been much talk about fund balances. My colleagues in wealthier districts may use smaller portions of their fund balance and make no reductions, while we will force hundreds to be unemployed while our student support will be diminished.

## **EXPENSES**

We have negotiated our contracts so that the highest paid employees contribute 20% toward health care benefits, while lower paid employees pay 10%. We believe this is a step in the right direction but the State should provide an incentive for this type of contract and sanctions to those who refuse to see the reality of rising health care costs.

Our ERS/TRS expenses have risen from 7% to 10% in one year. That is \$5 million or the equivalent of 75 positions. This increase should be mitigated by the State. It is time we enact a set rate increase for ERS and TRS funds so that we are not so heavily reliant on the volatility of the market.

## **MANDATE RELIEF**

Your proposals for mandate relief will have no effect on the bottom line for school districts.

### **CHARTER SCHOOLS**

There has been discussion around the idea of increasing the allowable number of charter schools. With the urban centers being underfunded, why not set up a separate funding source for charters? Use Race to the Top funds. Give the urban centers the funding they lose to charter schools until the CFE promise is met, then return to the current funding method. This will help take the financial burden off the city schools and comply with Race to the Top requirements.

### **SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTERS**

School Based Health Centers are another integral part of educating the whole child. An innovative bill is working its way through the legislature that would make 2,000 square feet aidable for health centers. This would encourage schools in the Big 5 to build centers. We ask that you support this bill.

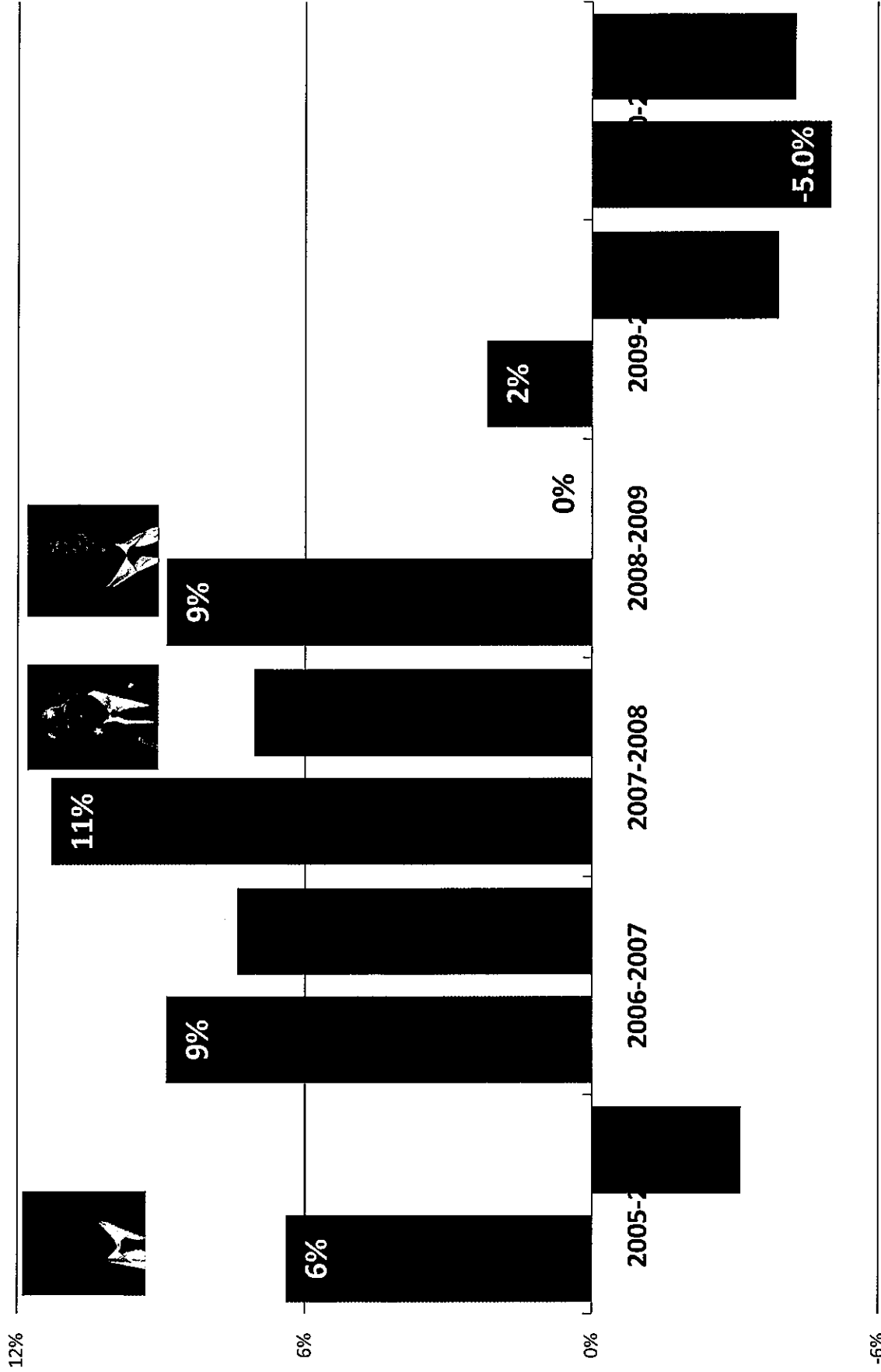
### **SUMMARY**

As the political leadership of this State, consider revamping the way we have done business for so many years with regard to education aid. It needs to be done in a fair and equitable way. It needs to be done so that the burden does not continue to fall to the poorest areas of the State.

These are certainly some of the most difficult times in recent memory, but we have an obligation to provide an education for all of our children. It is proven that the best way out of poverty is through education.

Thank you.

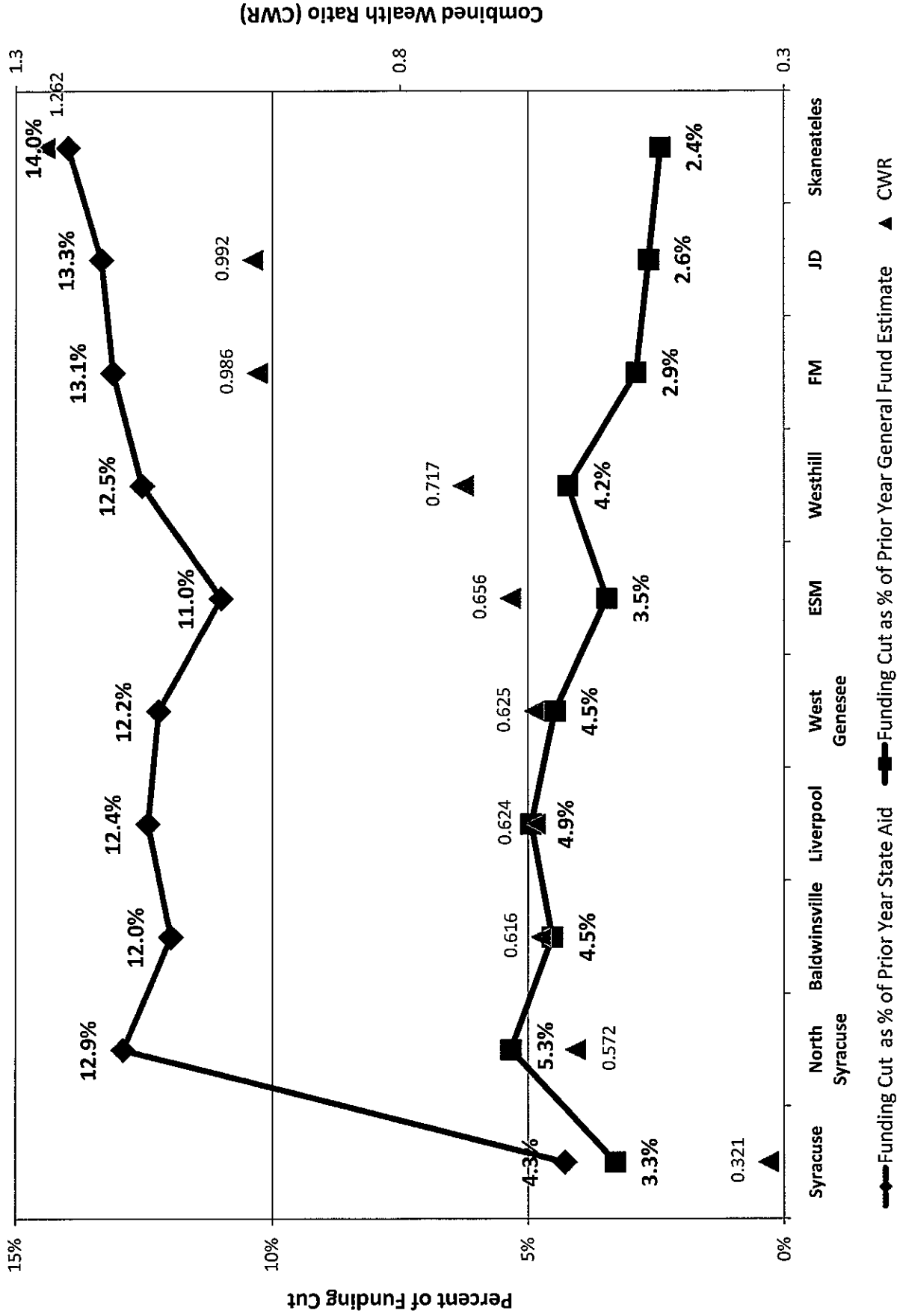
## State Funding Trend



■ New York State increase in Education Funding

NYSSBA On Board January 25, 2010. Source NYSSBA Research. NYSED.GOV State Aid Reports.

# 2010-11 Executive Budget Cuts as Compared to General Fund Budgets





## SYRACUSE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2009/2010 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

*November 2009*

### PRIORITIES

#### 1. Say Yes to Education

This Initiative will drive economic development and educational reform. Syracuse seeks to be the state demonstration site for Say Yes to Education. The Initiative offers to all high school graduates of the Syracuse City School District (who are residents and have attended for at least 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades) tuition waivers at 23 private schools and 67 SUNY/CUNY schools. The cost of the private college tuition is being borne by the individual private schools through their commitment to the Higher Education Compact. The cost of the SUNY schools is being sought from the state, federal, and private funding. The tuition amount is relatively small (\$500K in 2009-2010 to \$4 million per year in 2022) as most students, due to the heavy concentration of poverty, receive significant aid in the form of Pell and TAP grants.

In a four-year phase-in, significant supports (tutoring, after school programming, summer school programs, and additional social workers) are being built into the schedule for all students beginning in Pre-K to prepare them for acceptance to and success in college. The costs of these supports will be built into the District operating budget (\$30 million per year) once the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) is fully funded. In the 2010-11 school year we will need \$15 million for these additional supports.

#### 2. Blodgett School

This school is the cornerstone of the City's near West side community. Renovation of Blodgett School has been noted by two architectural firms as more cost effective than building a new facility. We have a financial plan that includes borrowing in two phases to first renovate the exterior of the building (roof, windows, doors, exterior) and the second to renovate the interior of the building. Building Aid and the \$1.0 million grant from Senator Malcolm Smith will pay for the first phase ensuring that there is no local burden. In order to begin this renovation, we need approval from the City to borrow the funds.

#### 3. Pre-K Funding and Flexibility

The District needs flexibility to use current funding to provide full-day pre-kindergarten programming for all four year olds and to fund three year olds in integrated pre-k classes. Currently, over 1,200 of the 1,600 students enter kindergarten with a pre-k experience, but only 378 have had a full-day pre-k experience. We have been able to expand our full day offerings to 468 four year olds this school year but only because of funding provided through Say Yes to Education and the City. New pre-k regulations allow funding for only four year olds, making it difficult to maintain long-standing integrated programs for preschoolers (both three and four year olds). The goal should be that all preschoolers have a full-day pre-k experience as studies have shown that the increased graduation rate is directly linked to full-day pre-k experiences. This requires more money (\$1.4 million per year) in addition to the current allocations and more flexibility in regulations to serve all pre-schoolers.

#### 4. Increased State Aid Formula

The Syracuse City School District reduced over 170 positions in the past three years despite a new state aid formula. To help ensure fair funding, the state aid formula needs to be adjusted in the following ways: (1) full funding of CFE decision (2) remove the floor on the poverty index (3) allow for greater flexibility with C4E funds, and (4) eliminate the 3 percent increase guarantee to medium and low need districts. In 2010-2011 the District will face a 300 FTE reduction (8%) of staff if \$20 million additional aid is not secured.

## **5. State Aid Payments Need to be Accelerated**

Currently, the District borrows \$65-75 million for cash flow purposes which results in approximately \$2 million per year in borrowing fees. This occurs because the bulk of state aid is received in March, after a majority of the year's expenditures have already been incurred. Adjustments should be made for Syracuse and/or the Big 4 to receive the state aid at the beginning of the school year, or the state is able to borrow on a larger scale and at a better interest rate than individual districts and, therefore, should consolidate big city borrowing to reduce overall interest expense while improving cash flow to districts.

## **6. Contract for Excellence (C4E)**

The funding of the Contract for Excellence needs to be increased annually to absorb contractual and CPI increases. The reporting should be simplified to eliminate additional costs of administration and external auditing fees which are now required by the State. C4E funding should be districtwide not school by school.

## **7. Federal Stimulus Funding**

The State needs to provide continued funding of the Federal Stimulus dollars to ensure that Districts can maintain staff temporarily funded with ARRA monies. These funds need to have flexible use without the burden of additional reporting and funding should be direct to school districts, not funneled through the state.

## **8. Maintenance of Effort**

Legislation must continue to support Maintenance of Effort (MOE), however, the legislation should not allow for reductions in school and large cities should be mandated to increase school taxes a minimum percentage annually.

## **9. Medicaid**

Regulations for funding have to be simplified and changes to regulations have to be implemented proactively, not retroactively. Funding needs to cover mandated services. If Medicaid funding for students is intended to benefit a needy population and Districts are required to provide a certain level of services for these students, then the funding needs to be 100%.

## **10. Statewide Cost Control**

The following changes should be made at the state level during this fiscal crisis:

- Pension Costs – create a new pension tier and limit school district contribution to less than 5 percent of payroll.
- Health Care Costs – create a statewide health care program or make state aid contingent upon an average of a 20 percent employee contribution with a sliding scale based on salary.
- Triborough – modify that no step increase for contracts that expire.

## **11. Maximum Cost Allowance/Construction**

The Maximum Cost Allowance (MCA) needs to be adjusted upward. The City was approved for the first of a four phase \$1 billion school renovation plan. The first phase calls for \$180 million of which only \$140 million will be used due to low MCA's. In addition, more funding is needed for incentives beyond normal building aid for procuring and installing materials and equipment that promote "Green" buildings. Phase 2 legislation must be written differently to allow school districts greater flexibility in construction projects, for example, "at-risk" Program Management (PM).

The District has several shovel ready projects (\$60 million) if federal or state funds are available.

## **12. Construction of Health and Mental Health Clinics**

As the renovations of the first schools commence, a health clinic and/or mental health clinic in each of these facilities is necessary to meet the needs of our student population. However, the cost for approximately 2,000 square feet is \$400,000, which is not aidable. We are requesting building aid for the mental health and/or health clinics up to 2,000 square feet in renovated schools.

### **13. Teacher Recruitment and Training**

The District is the first to implement an Urban Teacher Calendar which lengthened the school year for staff and students. This includes 20 additional days (five hours per day) in the summer which is used for both professional development and direct student instruction. Our teachers will improve their instructional practices while our students are sustaining and gaining skills during the summer. The cost is approximately \$6 million per year. In addition, we are looking for incentives (i.e. loan forgiveness, home tax relief, stipends) to recruit and retain minority staff and those certified in Math, Science, Technology, ESL, and Foreign Languages.

### **14. IDEA (*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*)**

In 1975, Congress enacted the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) to ensure that all individuals receive an equitable and high quality educational program. Since the enactment in 1975, Congress has vowed repeatedly to fulfill its promise of funding 40 percent of the additional cost per student, but its current average is between 17 and 18 percent. IDEA was reauthorized in 2004 but funding did not change significantly. The proposed solutions are as follows:

- Make new IDEA funding mandatory while keeping the base discretionary.
- Increase the federal contribution from 17 percent to 40 percent.
- Accomplish full funding by 2012, meeting the commitment of the 2004 IDEA Reauthorization.
- Require states to maintain their level of financial support for special education.

### **15. Board of Education Control**

The Syracuse Board of Education has managed dramatic positive changes. The test scores and graduation rates are increasing. The budget is fiscally sound and balanced with a small surplus each year. The Say Yes to Education program will be a national model for school reform and economic development. Mayoral control would not increase or accelerate progress.

### **16. Syracuse Teacher Center**

The Syracuse Teacher Center budget has been \$547,000 for the past two school years (2007-2008 and 2008-2009). During the 2008-2009 school year over 3,500 constituents participated in over 400 activities supported by the Syracuse Teacher Center. These activities were focused on professional development for new and veteran staff and included courses, workshops, instructional coaching, meetings, creating classroom materials, borrowing books and instructional equipment, and a variety of other activities. Teacher Center activities have been documented to have a positive impact on classroom instruction and student achievement.

c: U. S. Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
U.S. Senator Charles Schumer  
Congressman Dan Maffei  
Senator John A. DeFrancisco  
Senator David Valesky  
Assemblywoman Joan Christensen  
Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli  
County Executive Joanne M. Mahoney  
Mayor Matthew Driscoll  
Common Councilors  
Dr. David M. Steiner, Commissioner of Education  
Board of Education

**TESTIMONY**

**of**

**The NYS Association of  
Small City School Districts**

**for**

**Joint Legislative Hearing on 2010-11 Executive Budget  
(Elementary and Secondary Education)**

**February 2, 2010**

**Presented by:  
Robert E. Biggerstaff, Executive Director and  
General Counsel**



**On behalf of the New York State Association of Small City School Districts and the quarter of a million children and 1.5 million residents we serve, we welcome this opportunity to comment on the 2010-11 Executive Budget for aid to elementary and secondary education. We also wish to note that in addition to the 57 small city districts, there are 225 other demographically similar districts (see Exhibits A and B) throughout the state representing at least 500,000 students in poor rural and suburban areas which face challenges and difficulties equal to and some cases greater than those faced in the small cities. We therefore speak today as an advocate of those 750,000 children, or about 28% of all students in the state.**

**The Members of the Legislature have been staunch defenders of children and education. We greatly appreciate the leadership you have provided and we strongly urge you to oppose any proposed solutions that undermine the ability of our schools and our communities to provide a quality education for all our children. Here are our concerns with the Executive Budget's impact on education:**

**The Executive Budget for 2010-11 negates established New York State and federal policies that support targeting education aid to our neediest students. It contains deep cuts in aid to districts classified as low wealth and high student need, such as those in the small cities. The per pupil cut in aid (GEA/pupil) is far higher in small city districts than in the average district.**

**It allows increases in education aids (Categorical Aids) that are not sufficiently targeted to our neediest districts.**

**It also extends the phase-in of Foundation Aid reforms over a ten year period, thereby condemning another generation of students in many districts to an education which does not meet the standards required by our state constitution.**

**And, for the second consecutive year, the Executive Budget fails to comply with the priorities set forth in the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**

(see Exhibit C) which requires use of Stabilization funds on an allocable basis for education adequacy reforms such as Foundation Aid.

Let us now be more specific. First, the Executive Budget fails to express sound public policy by its failure to target education dollars. A principal cause for the student performance gap between wealthy and poor districts is the State's chronic failure to target state aid sufficiently and aggressively to the districts with the highest student need and lowest property wealth. Nevertheless, the state's targeted formula, Foundation Aid, has been frozen at 2008-09 levels while other insufficiently targeted education aids have been funded and some actually allowed to increase. A glaring example of this is High Tax Aid. This aid category drives \$204 million to about 291 supposedly highly taxed districts (see Exhibit D). Nevertheless, some of the wealthiest, lowest taxed districts in the state are receiving this aid. Can the State, especially when in recession and when many districts in New York already do not receive enough state aid to provide the programs and services their students need to achieve, afford to send hundreds of millions of dollars in education aid to districts which are two and three times as wealthy as the state average and are taxing at levels 40% below average? We think the way this aid category is structured is an outrage. Other insufficiently targeted aids, or "categorical aids" such as BOCES Aid, Special Education Aid and Building Aid also need a major reworking (see Exhibit D).

Second, the Executive Budget freezes the phase-in of the full Foundation Aid amounts through 2011-12. As the Foundation Aid reforms were the State's response to state constitutional requirements, the Budget does not comply with the New York State Constitution. Although we face tough economic times, the state constitution does not apply only when the economy is strong and state coffers are full. Therefore, in order to avoid continuing violations of the constitution, the State's resources must be targeted to those low wealth districts that cannot provide their students with the necessary sound basic education. Any cut in education aid or shortfall in the funding of the full amount of Foundation Aid for districts not

reaching the Regents standards for a successful district is a dereliction of a legal, and we submit, a moral duty to our neediest children.

**Third, the Executive Budget violates the precepts and mandates of not only the New York State Constitution, but also federal law by failing to fund the phase-in of Foundation Aid with the federal Stabilization fund. ARRA was signed by the President on February 17, 2009. It provided substantial new funding under the Stabilization Grant intended in part to roll back reductions in education aid and to provide funding of existing education reform formulas including Foundation Aid.**

Small city school districts were heartened that additional federal funding was approved in 2009. To some extent, this will continue to enable our districts to avoid layoffs and deep reductions in essential programming and make the job of the State Legislature somewhat more manageable. However, the way the Stabilization Grant has been used by the State has not eliminated the freeze of Foundation Aid and delay of its phase-in.

We believe that with respect to the Stabilization Grant two areas of the Executive Budget must be looked at carefully:

**A. The allocation provisions of ARRA section 14002 in case there is a shortfall in funding have not been followed. Under the Executive Budget there is a premature funding of expense driven aids (\$391 million) which drives up the GEA and eliminates any amounts available to fund Foundation Aid.**

**B. Also, there should be a review of the proportional allocation between elementary-secondary education and higher education to insure that the allocation is actually proportional to the shortfall in Foundation Aid and other aids below the base year level of funding.**

**Last year the administration in Washington declared that this is no time to shirk our responsibilities for the education of our young people. A sound educational system provides the fundamental building blocks for a strong economy. Without consistent investment in that system, the nation's economy will decline: businesses will be unable to find sufficient pools of trained workers and our young people will be unprepared to contribute to the economy. We could not agree more, especially as that relates to providing the minimum quality education needed to compete in the workplace. Our state has a bifurcated educational system; on the one hand, many wealthy districts provide rich educational programming where student performance is exemplary, and on the other hand, many poor districts struggle but fail to provide all the services and resources their students need to achieve. Any short term solution to the current budget crisis that leans on our educational system for a bailout, and especially on those poor children and districts in the system most dependent on state aid, is short sighted and self-defeating in both human and economic terms.**

**Cuts to education aids in districts such as the small cities will only force the problems of dealing with tax revenue shortfalls onto local school tax payers. Small city school districts tax rates are already 30% higher than the state average. If the state abandons them they have no place to go except to impose higher school taxes, programmatic reductions and instructional staff layoffs of those directly servicing student educational needs. And once again, in the poorest districts which are most dependent on state aid, the effects of education cuts will be felt the most. The Executive Budget cuts of \$140 million in aid for small city school districts. This could translate into nearly 2,800 lost teaching jobs and staff positions in 2010-11. These job losses would be devastating to our schools and our communities.**

**There are many ways to address the state deficit that have not been explored, and the State deficit is too deep to address solely through budget cuts. One option is to restore state revenues to 1990's levels via a rollback of Governor Pataki's tax cuts for those in the higher tax brackets. It should be noted that those tax cuts provided a**

**15% rate reduction for the wealthiest tax payers and no tax cut for the poorest taxpayers (see attached Exhibit E). Since 1995 this has resulted in an enormous give back of hundreds of millions of dollars to wealthy taxpayers and a consequent loss and destabilization of the State revenue base. The cuts effectively gutted the State's supposedly progressive tax structure. Even with the tax surcharge enacted in 2009, tax rates since 1995 remain at historically low levels for those at the upper end of the tax brackets.<sup>1</sup> Part of the dilemma the State is in now is attributable to these tax cuts in prior years.**

**We do not claim expertise in State budgeting. We do know that the value judgments and choices made now will have a deep and lasting effect in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children whose well being is essential to their families, their communities and the entire state.**

**We therefore urge that you:**

**1. Preserve reforms of State education aid enacted in 2007, reject the Foundation Aid freeze proposed in the Executive Budget and fund the phase-in provisions of Foundation Aid before funding increases in other categorical or expense driven aids.**

**2. In the event some education aid cuts become necessary, a) eliminate cuts for districts not attaining the Regents definition of a successful school and which have school tax rates higher than 115% of the Foundation Aid target rate, and b) for all other districts, moderate cuts based on student need and district wealth.**

**3. In order to restore GEA education aid cuts and to fund Foundation Aid and in addition to the 2009 income tax reforms, repeal the income tax reductions for top bracket taxpayers instituted under the Pataki administration in the 1990's on an inflation adjusted basis. A return to pre-1996 tax rates would provide several billions in personal income tax revenues alone.**

**4. Amend expense driven aids and High Tax Aid to target more dollars to high need/low wealth districts as shown in Exhibit D attached hereto.**

**5. Make Transition Aid permanent. There is growing pressure on several small city districts from the growth in numbers of charter schools. The relative size of the charter school censuses to the small city district censuses is a significant problem not experienced by New York City and the other large city schools. The need for relief in this area has become extreme. See our recommended amendments in Exhibit F.**

**6. Suspend all new Contract for Excellence requirements for any year in which there is a freeze in education aid. Furthermore, allow greater flexibility in the accountability system established under the Contract for Excellence to reflect actual annual increases in educational costs, to give districts greater discretion in the use of funds and to acknowledge the progressive and effective programs already in place and deserving of support in many C4E districts (see Exhibit G attached). Nearly half of the 39 C4E districts are small city school districts.**

**7. Enact meaningful mandate relief. The Association membership has developed an extensive list of items for action which we strongly recommend (see Exhibit H).**

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**<sup>1</sup> We object to assertions made that New York is by far the most highly taxed state in the nation. If levels of taxation are measured on the ability to pay, that is, on the wealth of a state as measured by the state domestic product, the highest taxed state in the nation is Mississippi. And of course, when measured with states in our region, levels of taxation in New York State are in line with our sister states in the Northeast. New York State has an extremely vibrant and varied economy with the capacity even in hard times to provide the necessary services and infrastructure its residents and businesses deserve.**

**EXHIBIT A****Small City School Districts**

04/01/09	AD(WM0197) 05 COMBINED WEALTH RATIO FOR FOUNDATION AID
ALBANY	0.686
AMSTERDAM	0.464
AUBURN	0.555
BATAVIA	0.561
BEACON	0.819
BINGHAMTON	0.442
CANANDAIGUA	0.644
COHOES	0.504
CORNING	0.639
CORTLAND	0.481
DUNKIRK	0.381
ELMIRA	0.421
FULTON	0.349
GENEVA	0.501
GLEN COVE	2.132
GLENS FALLS	0.654
GLOVERSVILLE	0.323
HORNELL	0.304
HUDSON	0.713
ITHACA	1.039
JAMESTOWN	0.309
JOHNSTOWN	0.409
KINGSTON	0.827
LACKAWANNA	0.368
LITTLE FALLS	0.421
LOCKPORT	0.502
LONG BEACH	2.207
MECHANICVILLE	0.65
MIDDLETOWN	0.611
MOUNT VERNON	0.911
N. TONAWANDA	0.531
NEW ROCHELLE	1.632
NEWBURGH	0.59
NIAGARA FALLS	0.335
NORWICH	0.424
OGDENSBURG	0.37
OLEAN	0.485



ONEIDA CITY	0.462
ONEONTA	0.643
OSWEGO	0.633
PEEKSKILL	0.809
PLATTSBURGH	0.639
PORT JERVIS	0.515
POUGHKEEPSIE	0.547
RENSSELAER	0.57
ROME	0.423
RYE	4.453
SALAMANCA	0.253
SARATOGA	
SPRIN	1.145
SCHENECTADY	0.363
SHERRILL	0.47
TONAWANDA	0.517
TROY	0.529
UTICA	0.295
WATERTOWN	0.449
WATERVLIET	0.476
WHITE PLAINS	1.877
SCSD TOTAL	0.706
NEW YORK CITY	1.02
BUFFALO	0.334
ROCHESTER	0.293
SYRACUSE	0.312
YONKERS	1.024
BIG 4 TOTAL	0.49075
STATE TOTALS	833.33

**EXHIBIT B****Districts Demographically Similar to Small City School Districts**

6 Code	Name	LUNCH %, K-6, 3-YEAR AVG.	High Need?
20601	ANDOVER	50.7%	Yes
20702	GENESEE VALLEY CSD	57.0%	Yes
20801	BELFAST	44.6%	Yes
21102	CANASERAGA	41.0%	Yes
21601	FRIENDSHIP	60.6%	Yes
22001	FILLMORE	48.2%	Yes
22101	WHITESVILLE	57.9%	Yes
22302	CUBA-RUSHFORD	48.5%	Yes
22401	SCIO	60.0%	Yes
22601	WELLSVILLE	48.7%	Yes
22902	BOLIVAR-RICHBG	65.0%	Yes
30501	HARPURSVILLE	47.3%	Yes
31301	DEPOSIT	54.9%	Yes
31401	WHITNEY POINT	46.5%	Yes
41101	FRANKLINVILLE	50.8%	Yes
41401	HINSDALE	47.0%	Yes
42302	CATTAR-LIT VAL	39.6%	Yes
42801	GOWANDA	51.6%	Yes
42901	PORTVILLE	32.7%	No
43001	RANDOLPH	41.1%	Yes
43501	YORKSHRE-PIONE	45.6%	Yes
50401	CATO MERIDIAN	32.2%	No
50701	SOUTHERN CAYUG	33.3%	No
51301	MORAVIA	39.6%	No
60401	CASSADAGA VALL	49.5%	Yes
60601	PINE VALLEY	40.3%	Yes
61601	PANAMA	37.0%	No
62601	SHERMAN	57.4%	Yes
80101	AFTON	58.7%	Yes
80201	BAINBRIDGE GUI	47.7%	No
80601	GREENE	39.4%	Yes
81003	UNADILLA VALLEY CSD	61.1%	Yes
81401	GRGETWN-SO OTS	63.5%	Yes
81501	OXFORD	48.9%	Yes
82001	SHERBURNE EARL	51.7%	Yes
90201	AUSABLE VALLEY	38.7%	Yes
90501	NORTHEASTERN	32.0%	No
90901	NORTHRN ADIRON	55.8%	Yes
91402	SARANAC	30.8%	No
110101	CINCINNATUS	59.0%	Yes
110304	MCGRAW	50.8%	Yes
110701	HOMER	30.3%	No
110901	MARATHON	42.7%	Yes

120401	CHARLOTTE VALL	60.6%	Yes
121601	SIDNEY	44.1%	Yes
121701	STAMFORD	48.8%	Yes
121901	WALTON	41.8%	Yes
142201	NORTH COLLINS	36.1%	No
150901	MORIAH	69.7%	Yes
160101	TUPPERLAKE	31.3%	No
160801	CHATEAUGAY	40.4%	Yes
161501	MALONE	51.8%	Yes
161601	BRUSHTON MOIRA	57.8%	Yes
161801	ST REGIS FALLS	54.3%	Yes
171001	OPPENHEIM EPHR	38.7%	Yes
180901	ELBA	31.9%	No
181201	PAVILION	36.7%	No
190301	CAIRO-DURHAM	37.4%	No
210302	WEST CANADA VA	33.8%	Yes
211003	DOLGEVILLE	47.1%	Yes
211103	POLAND	49.6%	Yes
211701	VAN HORNSVILLE	58.0%	Yes
212001	BRIDGEWATER-W	47.0%	Yes
220101	S. JEFFERSON	37.6%	No
220301	INDIANRIVER	50.3%	Yes
221301	LYME	49.8%	Yes
221401	LA FARGEVILLE	49.9%	Yes
222201	CARTHAGE	44.5%	Yes
230201	COPENHAGEN	43.9%	Yes
230301	HARRISVILLE	41.6%	No
230901	LOWVILLE	41.4%	Yes
231101	SOUTH LEWIS	58.7%	Yes
231301	BEAVERRIVER	45.5%	No
240901	MOUNT MORRIS	58.1%	Yes
241001	DANSVILLE	41.6%	No
241101	DALTON-NUNDA	36.5%	Yes
250301	DE RUYTER	41.8%	Yes
250401	MORRISVILLE EA	45.2%	Yes
251101	MADISON	43.8%	No
251501	STOCKBRIDGE VA	34.2%	Yes
270301	CANAJOHARIE	38.7%	Yes
270601	FONDA FULTONVI	33.0%	No
270701	FORT PLAIN	53.2%	Yes
271102	ST JOHNSVILLE	52.6%	Yes
280201	HEMPSTEAD	85.8%	Yes
410401	ADIRONDACK	39.1%	Yes
410601	CAMDEN	53.9%	Yes
411902	WATERVILLE	40.7%	No
430901	GORHAM-MIDDLES	39.2%	No
450101	ALBION	47.2%	Yes
451001	LYNDONVILLE	34.4%	No
460102	ALTMARPARISH	55.5%	Yes
460701	HANNIBAL	51.8%	Yes

461801	PULASKI	44.4%	Yes
461901	SANDY CREEK	54.4%	Yes
470501	EDMESTON	55.3%	Yes
470801	LAURENS	43.3%	Yes
470901	SCHENEVUS	41.6%	Yes
471101	MILFORD	45.9%	Yes
471201	MORRIS	41.4%	Yes
471601	OTEGO-UNADILLA	41.6%	Yes
472001	RICHFIELD SPRI	45.0%	Yes
472506	WORCESTER	35.7%	Yes
490101	BERLIN	36.6%	No
490501	HOOSICK FALLS	38.9%	No
510101	BRASHER FALLS	45.8%	Yes
510201	CANTON	41.8%	No
511101	GOUVERNEUR	57.1%	Yes
511201	HAMMOND	55.8%	Yes
511301	HERMONDEKALB	57.4%	Yes
511602	LISBON	41.4%	Yes
512001	MASSENA	54.1%	Yes
512101	MORRISTOWN	56.8%	Yes
512201	NORWOOD NORFOL	42.5%	Yes
512404	HEUVELTON	46.7%	Yes
512501	PARISHVILLE	38.9%	Yes
512902	POTSDAM	37.9%	No
513102	EDWARDS-KNOX	56.0%	Yes
540901	JEFFERSON	43.9%	Yes
541001	MIDDLEBURGH	42.0%	Yes
541102	COBLESKL-RICHM	33.3%	No
541401	SHARONSPRINGS	36.9%	Yes
550101	ODESSAMONTOUR	44.0%	Yes
550301	WATKINS GLEN	37.4%	No
560501	SOUTH SENECA	50.2%	Yes
560603	ROMULUS	33.6%	No
570101	ADDISON	68.6%	Yes
570201	AVOCA	51.2%	Yes
570302	BATH	41.6%	Yes
570401	BRADFORD	53.1%	Yes
570603	CAMPBELL-SAVON	43.8%	Yes
571901	ARKPORT	32.6%	No
572301	PRATTSBURG	53.0%	Yes
572702	JASPER-TRPSBRG	44.4%	Yes
573002	WAYLAND-COHOCT	36.4%	No
580109	WYANDANCH	62.7%	Yes
580512	BRENTWOOD	85.9%	Yes
580513	CENTRAL ISLIP	63.3%	Yes
590901	LIBERTY	68.6%	Yes
591302	LIVINGSTON MAN	43.3%	Yes
600301	CANDOR	45.8%	No
600402	NEWARKVALLEY	36.3%	No
600801	SPENCER VAN ET	47.8%	No

600903	TIOGA	46.5%	Yes
610901	NEWFIELD	50.1%	Yes
622002	ELLENVILLE	44.7%	Yes
640701	GRANVILLE	40.7%	Yes
641001	HARTFORD	31.4%	No
641610	CAMBRIDGE	35.8%	No
641701	WHITEHALL	49.8%	No
650301	CLYDE-SAVANNAH	47.2%	Yes
650501	LYONS	48.9%	Yes
651201	SODUS	51.8%	Yes
651501	N. ROSE-WOLCOT	48.7%	Yes
651503	RED CREEK	42.0%	Yes
670201	ATTICA	30.7%	No
670401	LETCHWORTH		No
680601	PENN YAN	42.5%	No
680801	DUNDEE	59.5%	Yes
10201	BERNE KNOX	27.1%	No
10402	RAVENACOEYMAN	33.4%	No
10701	GREEN ISLAND	48.1%	No
20101	ALFREDALMOND	29.3%	No
30701	CHENANGO VALLE	37.0%	No
31501	UNION-ENDICOTT	36.3%	No
31502	JOHNSON CITY	52.1%	Yes
31701	WINDSOR	32.7%	No
40204	WEST VALLEY	37.3%	No
51101	PORT BYRON	34.8%	No
60701	CLYMER	44.7%	Yes
61101	FALCONER	34.8%	No
61503	FORESTVILLE		Yes
62301	BROCTON	52.6%	Yes
62401	RIPLEY	61.8%	Yes
62901	WESTFIELD	35.8%	Yes
70902	ELMIRAHEIGHTS	41.8%	No
90301	BEEKMANTOWN	39.9%	Yes
91101	PERU	30.6%	No
120301	DOWNSVILLE	46.2%	No
120501	DELHI	42.4%	No
120701	FRANKLIN	40.4%	Yes
120906	HANCOCK	46.8%	Yes
121702	S. KORTRIGHT	50.9%	Yes
140703	CLEVELAND HILL	33.6%	No
150203	CROWN POINT	47.8%	Yes
150301	ELIZABETHTOWN	25.9%	No
151601	WESTPORT	32.2%	No
161201	SALMONRIVER	77.4%	Yes
170801	MAYFIELD	31.8%	No
170901	NORTHVILLE	38.4%	No
181101	OAKFIELD ALABA	30.5%	No
181302	PEMBROKE	31.2%	No
190401	CATSKILL	45.2%	Yes

190901	HUNTERTANNERS	30.9%	No
191401	WINDHAM ASHLAN	31.4%	No
210402	FRANKFORT-SCHU	34.7%	No
210501	ILION	44.3%	Yes
210502	MOHAWK	44.8%	Yes
210601	HERKIMER	47.2%	Yes
220202	ALEXANDRIA	34.8%	No
220401	GENERAL BROWN	33.9%	No
220701	THOUSAND ISLAN	30.1%	No
220909	BELLEVILLE-HEN	44.6%	Yes
221001	SACKETS HARBOR	26.3%	No
241701	YORK	30.6%	No
250901	CANASTOTA	38.0%	No
280401	WESTBURY	84.0%	Yes
401301	BARKER	31.5%	No
411701	REMSEN	39.5%	No
420501	JORDANELBRIDG	31.1%	No
420702	SOLVAY	40.6%	No
431201	NAPLES	30.8%	No
431301	PHELPS-CLIFTON	32.4%	No
450704	HOLLEY	46.9%	No
450801	MEDINA	39.2%	Yes
460801	CENTRAL SQUARE	34.9%	No
460901	MEXICO	36.3%	No
462001	PHOENIX	38.3%	No
472202	CHERRYVLY-SPR	40.6%	Yes
490601	LANSINGBURGH	51.2%	Yes
510401	CLIFTON FINE	60.2%	Yes
511901	MADRIDWADDING	28.1%	Yes
520401	CORINTH	34.3%	No
540801	GILBOACONESVI	41.0%	No
560701	SENECAFALLS	32.4%	No
561006	WATERLOO CENT	44.8%	Yes
580105	COPIAGUE	52.1%	Yes
580232	WILLIAM FLOYD	42.4%	Yes
590501	FALLSBURGH	61.2%	Yes
591201	TRI VALLEY	31.8%	No
591401	MONTICELLO	50.4%	Yes
600101	WAVERLY	45.4%	Yes
600601	OWEGO-APALACHI	37.2%	No
610301	DRYDEN	33.5%	No
610501	GROTON	39.9%	No
630801	HADLEYLUZERNE	42.4%	No
631201	WARRENSBURG	42.1%	Yes
640101	ARGYLE	28.8%	No
640502	FORT ANN	29.7%	No
641301	HUDSONFALLS	43.6%	Yes
641501	SALEM	28.8%	No
650101	NEWARK	40.9%	Yes
650701	MARION	36.4%	No

661904	PORT CHESTER	58.5%	Yes
671201	PERRY	28.3%	No
671501	WARSAW	27.1%	No
30101	CHENANGO FORKS	31.7%	No
30601	SUSQUEHANNA VA	33.2%	No
31101	MAINE ENDWELL	18.3%	No
40302	ALLEGANY-LIMES	24.2%	No
40901	ELLCOTTVILLE	31.7%	No
50301	WEEDSPORT	22.3%	No
60201	SOUTHWESTERN	24.4%	No
60301	FREWSBURG	26.5%	No
60503	CHAUTAUQUA LAKE CSD	37.3%	No
61501	SILVERCREEK		Yes
62201	FREDONIA	30.0%	No
70901	HORSEHEADS	28.4%	No
90601	CHAZY	16.8%	No
100501	COPAKE-TACONIC	36.7%	No
101601	NEW LEBANON	23.5%	No
121401	MARGARETVILLE	51.3%	Yes
131101	NORTHEAST	36.4%	No
140101	ALDEN	24.3%	No
140701	CHEEKTOWAGA	35.7%	No
140702	MARYVALE	31.0%	No
140707	DEPEW	34.2%	No
140709	SLOAN	55.0%	No
141101	SPRINGVILLE-GR	26.4%	No
141401	EVANS-BRANT	35.9%	No
142101	AKRON	27.9%	No
142601	KENMORE	32.4%	No
150801	MINERVA	40.9%	No
151401	SCHROON LAKE	49.8%	No
151501	TICONDEROGA	57.9%	Yes
151701	WILLSBORO	34.9%	No
171102	BROADALBIN-PER	23.5%	No
180202	ALEXANDER	24.9%	No
180701	BYRON BERGEN	23.5%	No
181001	LE ROY	25.6%	No
190701	GREENVILLE	26.7%	No
200901	WELLS	50.2%	No
240101	AVON	22.5%	No
240201	CALEDONIA MUMF	20.4%	No
240801	LIVONIA	17.1%	No
260801	E. IRONDEQUOIT	35.0%	No
261501	CHURCHVILLE CH	18.2%	No
261801	BROCKPORT	29.7%	No
280208	ROOSEVELT		Yes
280209	FREEPORT	49.5%	Yes
400601	NEWFANE	25.8%	No
400701	NIAGARA WHEATF	29.4%	No
401201	ROYALTON HARTL	21.5%	No

401501	WILSON	26.7%	No
412201	HOLLAND PATENT	23.4%	No
412901	ORISKANY	28.0%	No
412902	WHITESBORO	22.2%	No
420303	NORTH SYRACUSE	26.3%	No
420601	FABIUS-POMPEY	16.5%	No
420807	LA FAYETTE	39.2%	No
421201	ONONDAGA	29.7%	No
421902	TULLY	17.5%	No
430501	EAST BLOOMFIEL	25.3%	No
431101	MANCHSTR-SHRTS	24.4%	No
431401	HONEOYE	29.7%	No
440401	PINE BUSH	22.5%	No
440901	HIGHLAND FALLS	25.3%	No
441101	MINISINK VALLE	15.9%	No
441202	KIRYASJOEL		Yes
450607	KENDALL	29.5%	No
490202	BRUNSWICK CENT	17.1%	No
491302	AVERILL PARK	12.3%	No
491401	HOOSICVALLEY	23.8%	No
500201	HAVERSTRAW-ST	39.7%	No
500402	EAST RAMAPO	70.8%	Yes
510501	COLTONPIERREP	40.3%	No
520701	GALWAY	26.0%	No
521401	S. GLENS FALLS	21.3%	No
521701	SCHUYLerville	20.6%	No
522101	WATERFORD	28.4%	No
530101	DUANESBURG	8.5%	No
530515	MOHONASEN	19.0%	No
541201	SCHOHARIE	31.3%	No
571502	Canistee-Greenwood		Yes
572901	HAMMONDSPORT	41.3%	No
580106	AMITYVILLE	56.7%	Yes
580235	SOUTH COUNTRY	34.7%	No
580403	HUNTINGTON	31.9%	No
580501	BAY SHORE	39.5%	No
580602	RIVERHEAD	36.5%	No
580909	BRIDGEHAMPTON	47.9%	No
581010	GREENPORT	53.9%	No
590801	ELDRED	19.2%	No
591301	ROSCOE	44.4%	No
591502	SULLIVAN WEST	25.5%	No
611001	TRUMANSBURG	29.4%	No
621801	WALLKILL	23.1%	No
630202	NORTH WARREN	39.8%	No
630601	JOHNSBURG	39.0%	No
640601	FORT EDWARD	42.9%	Yes
640801	GREENWICH	17.7%	No
650801	WAYNE	20.1%	No
650901	PALMYRA-MACEDO	23.7%	No



650902	GANANDA	14.6%	No
651402	WILLIAMSON	28.5%	No
660401	TARRYTOWN	46.1%	No
660409	ELMSFORD	32.1%	No
661401	OSSINING	35.2%	No
10306	BETHLEHEM	4.0%	No
10601	SOUTH COLONIE	16.9%	No
10605	NORTH COLONIE	9.7%	No
10615	MENANDS		No
10622	MAPLEWOOD		No
10802	GUILDERLAND	7.0%	No
31601	VESTAL	13.4%	No
51901	UNION SPRINGS	21.0%	No
61001	BEMUS POINT	14.4%	No
100902	GERMANTOWN	23.3%	No
121502	ROXBURY	29.7%	No

**EXHIBIT C**

**ARRA (P.L.111-5)- excerpt**

**SEC. 14002. STATE USES OF FUNDS.**

(a) Education Fund-

(1) IN GENERAL- For each fiscal year, the Governor shall use 81.8 percent of the State's allocation under section 14001(d) for the support of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education and, as applicable, early childhood education programs and services.

(2) RESTORING STATE SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION-

(A) IN GENERAL- The Governor shall first use the funds described in paragraph (1)--

(i) to provide the amount of funds, through the State's primary elementary and secondary funding formulae, that is needed--

(I) to restore, in each of fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011, the level of State support provided through such formulae to the greater of the fiscal year 2008 or fiscal year 2009 level; and

(II) where applicable, to allow existing State formulae increases to support elementary and secondary education for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 to be implemented and allow funding for phasing in State equity and adequacy adjustments, if such increases were enacted pursuant to State law prior to October 1, 2008.

(ii) to provide, in each of fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011, the amount of funds to public institutions of higher education in the State that is needed to restore State support for such institutions (excluding tuition and fees paid by students) to the greater of the fiscal year 2008 or fiscal year 2009 level.

(B) SHORTFALL- If the Governor determines that the amount of funds available under paragraph (1) is insufficient to support, in each of fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011, public elementary, secondary, and higher education at the levels described in clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (A), the Governor shall allocate those funds between those clauses in proportion to the relative

shortfall in State support for the education sectors  
described in those clause

(C) FISCAL YEAR- For purposes of this paragraph, the  
term `fiscal year' shall have the meaning given such term  
under State law.

## EXHIBIT D

### Targeting aids

#### State Aid Reforms That Target Scarce Funds

It should not be assumed that a scarcity of new funding makes it impossible to reform the distribution of state aid. To the contrary, it is even more important to target funds on the state's highest need schools when there is little funding available to meet inflationary demands. To simply freeze allocations at prior levels has the greatest negative impact on the state's neediest districts. Instead, targeted aid reductions can free up funding to maintain the state's historic commitment to equalizing aid formulas. Following are some of the areas where reductions would free up funds without materially hurting the poorest districts. These funds could then allow more funding for the equalized formulas.

#### High Tax Aid

This aid should be targeted to only those districts which are truly high tax districts. For example this aid could be limited to those for which tax rates are in excess of 70% of the target tax rate for foundation aid and for which CWR is not above twice the state average. This amendment alone would save \$35 million. The following districts receive High Tax Aid

	F(FL001) 00 2009-10 PUBLIC ENROLLMENT W/CHARTER (ATTN)	G(FA0029) 00 2010-11 HIGH TAX AID	W(WM0280) 00 2007 ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME	AA(WM0301) 02 DISTRICT TAX RATE (SMALL CITIES DEF)	PER PUPIL ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME (ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME/ENROLLMENT)	E(WM0182) 05 COMBINED WEALTH RATIO (CWR)	X(WM0283) 03 TAX EFFORT RATIO	% ELIG FRPL STUDENTS
01/15/10								
BETHLEHEM	5,066	\$ 950,728	\$ 1,114,473,675	17.84	\$ 219,990.88	0.913	3.858	5.00%
DEPOSIT	585	\$ 290,478	\$ 53,702,739	14.98	\$ 91,789.55	0.642	5.197	59.49%
WEST VALLEY	362	\$ 131,594	\$ 38,409,978	21.28	\$ 106,104.91	0.435	4.952	40.53%
CHAUTAQUA	794	\$ 256,703	\$ 1,11,280,417	7.71	\$ 140,151.66	1.27	7.799	38.35%
CLYMER	458	\$ 103,160	\$ 47,107,824	14.6	\$ 102,855.51	0.657	5.565	40.96%
BROCTON	652	\$	\$	21.49	\$ 86,762.56	0.31	3.935	64.40%



PAWLING	1,438	\$ 505,490	\$ 332,309,419	15.29	\$	231,091.39	1,241	6,268	7.82%
PINE PLAINS	1,191	\$ 27,384	\$ 424,850,336	9.43	\$	356,717.33	1,886	2,982	27.96%
ARLINGTON	10,227	\$ 222,138	\$ 1,693,067,485	15	\$	165,548.79	0.88	4,671	12.14%
SPACKENKILL	1,675	\$ 341,381	\$ 282,495,518	19.48	\$	168,654.04	0.962	4,008	12.57%
RED HOOK	2,245	\$ 157,632	\$ 351,964,241	14.94	\$	156,776.94	0.842	5,564	19.02%
RHINEBECK	1,202	\$ 100,000	\$ 447,282,420	12.38	\$	372,115.16	1,883	3,686	6.75%
MILLBROOK	1,237	\$ 83,975	\$ 372,402,580	8.92	\$	301,053.02	1,858	3,627	12.81%
CROWN POINT	265	\$ 70,000	\$ 32,684,654	10.15	\$	123,262.85	0.576	2,931	51.54%
ELIZABETHTOWN	329	\$ 100,000	\$ 44,172,964	9.15	\$	134,264.33	0.627	4,094	44.78%
KEENE	175	\$ 170,528	\$ 29,085,490	9.64	\$	166,202.80	2,743	8,511	19.92%
MINERVA	124	\$ 285,697	\$ 13,369,295	9.77	\$	107,816.90	1,544	10,683	36.22%
MORIAH	705	\$ 75,884	\$ 68,645,732	16	\$	97,369.83	0.384	3,629	64.31%
NEWCOMB	81	\$ 70,000	\$ 7,805,964	8.67	\$	96,369.93	4,027	2,358	19.28%
LAKE PLACID	725	\$ 150,669	\$ 224,615,663	6.77	\$	309,814.71	2,419	3,684	21.58%
SCHROON LAKE	245	\$ 181,474	\$ 32,937,580	6.54	\$	134,439.10	2,231	9,079	51.08%
TICONDEROGA	864	\$ 227,501	\$ 95,258,796	7.85	\$	110,253.24	1,113	6,415	53.72%
WESTPORT	271	\$ 70,000	\$ 27,018,372	13.43	\$	99,698.79	0.91	7,689	37.07%
WILLSBORO	296	\$ 127,909	\$ 43,310,447	11.27	\$	146,319.08	1,061	8,235	38.98%
SARANAC LAKE	1,393	\$ 227,664	\$ 229,801,943	7.9	\$	164,969.09	1,384	4,589	35.04%
WHEELERVILLE	142	\$ 142,853	\$ 27,039,738	1.35	\$	190,420.69	1,018	5,796	45.32%
OPPENHEIM EPHR	362	\$ 150,754	\$ 36,207,544	17.01	\$	100,020.84	0.429	3,634	55.97%
BATAVIA	2,377	\$ 729,993	\$ 324,620,401	23.6	\$	136,567.27	0.517	3,648	47.04%
CAIRO-DURHAM	1,525	\$	\$	10.82	\$	112,738.30	0.652	4,648	38.25%

	184,142	171,925,902							
CATSKILL	\$ 1,769	\$ 227,948,793	\$ 128,857.43	11.46	\$ 0.704	4.009			39.33%
COXSACKIE ATHE	\$ 1,553	\$ 214,799,084	\$ 138,312.35	14.04	\$ 0.755	4.458			24.68%
GREENVILLE	\$ 1,355	\$ 178,956,424	\$ 132,071.16	16.87	\$ 0.746	5.547			28.20%
HUNTER TANNERS	\$ 451	\$ 70,467,318	\$ 156,246.82	7.69	\$ 1.8	7.428			38.71%
WINDHAM ASHLAN	\$ 393	\$ 68,097,187	\$ 173,275.28	6.97	\$ 2.406	9.163			34.50%
INDIAN LAKE	\$ 170	\$ 23,474,268	\$ 138,083.93	6.45	\$ 3.043	9.572			27.40%
LAKE PLEASANT	\$ 90	\$ 18,282,030	\$ 203,133.67	7.02	\$ 3.816	9.239			47.77%
LONG LAKE	\$ 55	\$ 202,087	\$ 277,158.24	2.97	\$ 6.581	8.138			24.21%
WELLS	\$ 178	\$ 207,132	\$ 80,399.31	9.79	\$ 2.102	5.984			38.01%
TOWN OF WEBB	\$ 299	\$ 271,313	\$ 149,034.31	2.61	\$ 5.049	10.22			29.95%
EAST ROCHESTER	\$ 1,182	\$ 325,321	\$ 164,234.93	27.47	\$ 0.572	4.117			34.53%
WHEATLAND CHIL	\$ 711	\$ 181,923	\$ 192,869.62	25.66	\$ 0.739	3.714			30.41%
GLEN COVE	\$ 2,930	\$ 317,335	\$ 361,272.45	11.4	\$ 2.036	3.468			43.55%
HEMPSTEAD	\$ 6,458	\$ 1,965,762	\$ 104,034.10	26.15	\$ 0.519	3.859			85.46%
UNIONDALE	\$ 6,611	\$ 1,755,704	\$ 115,072.46	20.66	\$ 0.852	4.347			47.12%
EAST MEADOW	\$ 7,640	\$ 3,378,742	\$ 204,120.96	13.98	\$ 1.068	5.585			9.80%
NORTH BELLMORE	\$ 2,173	\$ 947,589	\$ 399,639.13	16.4	\$ 1.045	5.834			6.93%
LEVITTOWN	\$ 7,665	\$ 4,406,095	\$ 179,902.22	20.93	\$ 0.856	7.192			10.03%
SEAFORD	\$ 2,592	\$ 710,955	\$ 240,642.70	15.21	\$ 1.207	5.03			4.34%
BELLMORE	\$ 1,122	\$ 413,153	\$ 719,074.30	14.79	\$ 1.55	3.704			1.17%
ROOSEVELT	\$ 3,331	\$ 2,864,279	\$ 86,125.31	15.6	\$ 0.512	6.274			64.00%
FREEPORT	\$ 6,559	\$ 3,657,932	\$ 129,772.90	17.33	\$ 0.686	5.203			51.95%

BALDWIN	5,438	\$ 2,262,592	\$ 1,057,698,912	18.65	\$ 194,501.45	0.99	6.224	0.00%
OCEANSIDE	6,140	\$ 2,030,230	\$ 1,393,897,435	14.39	\$ 227,019.13	1.285	4.91	6.07%
MALVERNE	1,752	\$ 599,691	\$ 443,188,806	17.33	\$ 252,961.65	1.326	6.1	35.85%
V STR THIRTEEN HEWLETT	2,159	\$ 805,075	\$ 881,744,329	17.01	\$ 408,404.04	1.005	5.93	10.81%
WOODME	2,947	\$ 229,331	\$ 1,636,603,673	19.36	\$ 555,345.66	2.093	3.957	9.75%
LAWRENCE	3,021	\$ 240,598	\$ 2,226,233,525	9.38	\$ 736,919.41	3.352	2.374	37.53%
ELMONT	3,894	\$ 1,098,482	\$ 1,170,483,142	14.94	\$ 300,586.32	0.839	5.185	44.51%
FRANKLIN SQUAR	1,937	\$ 553,249	\$ 748,654,690	13.01	\$ 386,502.16	1.094	5.072	8.92%
GARDEN CITY	4,175	\$ 314,685	\$ 2,314,788,003	10.87	\$ 554,440.24	2.592	2.503	0.03%
EAST ROCKAWAY	1,303	\$ 575,562	\$ 308,615,166	18.2	\$ 236,849.71	1.226	5.133	12.45%
LYNBROOK	2,978	\$ 395,881	\$ 756,394,743	17.31	\$ 253,994.21	1.333	4.371	0.79%
ROCKVILLE CENT	3,553	\$ 376,635	\$ 1,547,592,820	15.74	\$ 435,573.55	1.88	3.154	7.67%
FLORAL PARK	1,445	\$ 161,576	\$ 776,000,764	11.85	\$ 537,024.75	1.409	3.878	5.69%
WANTAGH	3,639	\$ 872,758	\$ 760,324,491	16.44	\$ 208,937.76	1.04	5.062	1.32%
V STR TWENTY-F	1,079	\$ 1,074,876	\$ 353,994,848	17.34	\$ 328,076.78	0.95	5.202	19.43%
MERRICK	1,731	\$ 193,215	\$ 1,126,092,393	15.98	\$ 650,544.42	1.445	4.243	0.00%
ISLAND TREES	2,630	\$ 1,342,564	\$ 413,951,307	16.62	\$ 157,395.93	0.856	5.631	9.83%
WEST HEMPSTEAD	2,287	\$ 520,201	\$ 608,807,778	14.68	\$ 286,203.66	1.376	4.555	23.87%
NORTH MERRICK	1,316	\$ 620,873	\$ 514,675,511	17.6	\$ 391,090.81	1.031	5.586	3.57%
VALLEY STR UF	1,413	\$ 358,885	\$ 400,308,502	16.94	\$ 283,303.96	1.128	5.217	24.68%
ISLAND PARK	686	\$ 151,277	\$ 241,796,398	12.14	\$ 352,472.88	2.252	4.088	28.46%
VALLEY STR CHS	4,679	\$ 475,099	\$ -	16.9	\$ -	1.026	0	17.02%
SEWANHAKA	8,515	\$ -	\$ -	14.02	\$ -	1.077	0	24.41%



5C

***Yonkers Public Schools District***

***Testimony Before***

***Joint Legislative Budget Committee***



**YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

***February 2, 2010***

Presented By:  
Bernard P. Pierorazio, Superintendent  
Yonkers Public Schools District

## 2010-11 Executive Budget for Education

Senate Finance Committee and  
Assembly Ways and Means Committee

February 2, 2010

### KIDS FIRST



**IN EVERY DECISION**

*Chairman Farrell, Chairman Kruger and other members of  
the Legislature's Fiscal Committees:*

I am Robert Lowry, Deputy Director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents.

The nearly 700 superintendents and other school district leaders we serve respect the hard choices before you and Governor Paterson.

They face similar challenges for the communities they serve along with you. They too must balance needs against resources, trying to match what schoolchildren need with what taxpayers can afford.

Today I want to explain the choices school district leaders have been making and the choices confronting them now in considering the state aid cuts proposed for their schools in the Governor's budget.

A year ago, both state and school leaders were contemplating some of the same hard choices as now. Congress and President Obama delivered a partial rescue in the form of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the federal stimulus plan.

That help from federal leaders enabled you to avert a steep cut in state aid and hold Foundation Aid flat. We are grateful for their help and yours.

At the local level, school district leaders then had to balance competing pressures:

- From their local taxpayers and voters: *avoid or hold down property tax increases.*
- From Washington: *use the federal aid to save jobs and improve education.*

There was also our enduring imperative -- to give every child an education promising them the skills and knowledge they will need to thrive in life beyond school.

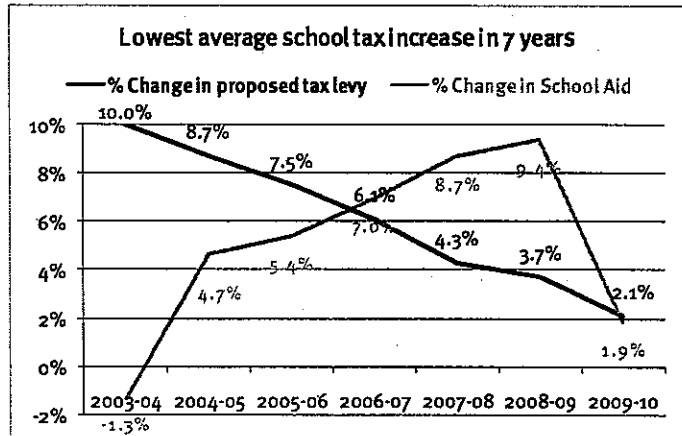
School leaders did their best --

- Statewide, we had the lowest average school tax increase in seven years, despite the smallest state aid increase in six years.
- At the same time, official statistics indicated that the primary federal fiscal relief enabled New York schools to save or create 18,000 education jobs.

New York State  
Council of School Superintendents  
7 Elk Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
(518) 449-1063

Voters supported school leaders' choices overwhelmingly, approving a record 97 percent of school budgets, with the highest percentage of "yes" votes (65 percent) since the State Education Department began compiling vote counts in 2003.

Still, we know that district leaders and their voters had to make hard choices to produce those outcomes. Over 85 percent of districts proposed budgets with spending increases below what the contingency budget cap would have permitted them to adopt without voter approval. Nearly half proposed spending increases below 2 percent.



SOURCE: NYSCOSS analysis of NYSED state aid and school property tax report card data; Big 5-City Districts excluded.

While the federal stimulus aid did save jobs we know that thousands of school jobs were still cut. Over three-quarters of New York superintendents responding to a national survey reported eliminating positions in their budgets for the current year.

There are probably as many different budget scenarios in the choices confronting school leaders as there are districts. Superintendents serving poor communities expect the toughest choices.

For example, one superintendent leading a high need small city district put it this way,

*"Last year we scrubbed the budget in an effort to reduce taxpayer burdens. We set as a goal, do no harm to children and we were pretty much able to avoid direct impacts on services to children. That drawer is now empty."*

A superintendent of a poor North Country district wrote,

*"When I came here five years ago we were a district in need of improvement. Our test scores have risen dramatically. I worry that we will have to dismantle the programs ... that have made such a difference for our children. If this continues or gets worse after federal stimulus, we will do great harm to children... The past two years and the next couple will have the effect of totally undoing the CFE [Campaign for Fiscal Equity] settlement. The return of extreme inequity is upon us."*

That last point is one of the most discouraging. The school finance reforms you enacted in 2007 were having a real impact. Equity in funding was improving, better programs were leading to better results, and at the same time, the rate of local tax increases across the state had been cut by half from three years before.

## Budget choices ahead

Even last spring, a universal theme from all districts was that budgeting choices were going to be harder for the year ahead. Some of the reasons are identical to those facing you as state leaders:

- we cannot eliminate the same job or program a second time; and
- pension costs are again surging in the aftermath of the stock market downturn.

Last year, spending in proposed school budgets rose by an average of 2.3 percent outside the Big 5 cities. But for the coming year, average school spending would rise by about 4 percent just by applying the assumptions for salary, pension, and benefit cost growth used for state employees in the Governor's budget.

Under similar circumstances in 2003 – the last time School Aid was cut – school districts proposed local tax increases averaging 10 percent. We don't foresee that happening this year. Instead, there will be more spending cuts.

One of my key points today is that school districts are uniquely democratic institutions, and that status is one of the considerations shaping the choices school leaders would make to accommodate potential state aid cuts.

Outside the five large cities, school districts must submit their operating budgets for voter approval every year, a requirement not imposed on local governments. To win approval for budgets, school leaders must satisfy the desires of parents whose support is essential, while also respecting the tolerance for property taxes among all voters.

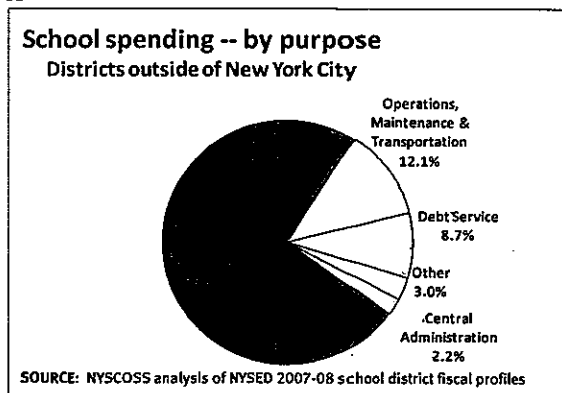
Because schools are democratic institutions, costs will be contained. That happened this past year, even with the pressure to save jobs, and will again in the coming year, as carefully as school leaders can within the constraints under which they operate.

Superintendents have not yet had much time to work with their boards and their communities to weigh the cuts that might be needed to offset proposed state aid reductions. But most of the superintendents who have responded to us so far say they expect their boards to aim for tax increases similar to those proposed a year ago – usually no more than 4 percent, and often lower. Most of those currently contemplating bigger tax increases serve poor communities whose schools have little left to cut that is not mandated.

## Hard to spare personnel and instruction from cuts

State aid and property taxes are the primary revenue sources for almost all districts. So coupling state aid cuts with property tax restraint will force schools to make programmatic reductions.

The nature of school spending makes it hard to avoid cuts to personnel and instruction. Measured by purpose, 74 percent of school spending is for instruction. Measured by object of expense, 70 percent goes to personnel – salaries and benefits.



Even before the threat of cuts in state aid became real, more districts were expecting to eliminate jobs in their budgets for next year – 89 percent of the New York superintendents responding to the national survey last fall expected to do so.

Virtually all the districts reporting to us since the state budget was proposed now expect to eliminate jobs. In some cases the reductions could be dramatic – 5 to 10 percent of staff.

School leaders will always try to avoid cuts that affect classrooms. Our motto, “*Kids first – in every decision*” is both a promise on our part, as well as a request to you.

When we asked superintendents a year ago what steps they had been taking to cut costs, conserving energy, reducing health insurance costs, and sharing administrative services with neighbors all ranked well ahead of staffing reductions.

But as the need for cuts accumulates, it becomes impossible to spare personnel. School districts have essentially no ability to unilaterally reduce personnel costs, *except by cutting positions*.

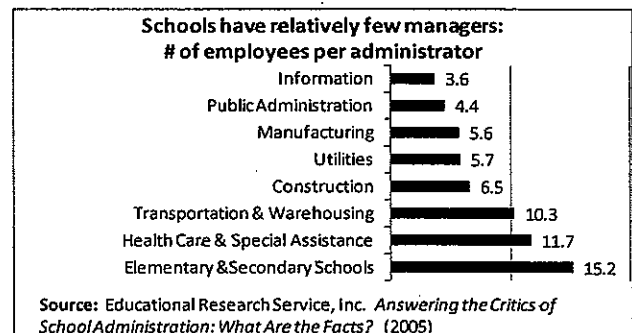
Pension costs are set by public retirement systems and salaries and other benefits are determined through collective bargaining. Commentators implore boards to bargain harder with the unions, but the nature of bargaining is that you always have to give something to get something. Also, “step” increases guaranteed by the Triborough law typically drive up payroll costs by around 2 percent, even when no collective bargaining agreement is in place.

The national survey I cited showed that New York superintendents who responded were four times as likely to say that federal stimulus aid permitted them to save classroom jobs, as opposed to administrative positions.

But there are practical limits to how much schools can cut from administrative and overhead functions.

In fact schools have fewer managers relative to their total workforce than most enterprises.

Spending on district administration averages only 2.2 percent in school systems outside New York City; school building-level administration typically adds another 3 to 5 percent.



Think about a typical elementary school. It will commonly have two dozen or more classroom teachers, plus physical education, music, and art teachers, classroom aides, a nurse, a librarian, food service workers, custodians, secretaries *and one administrator* – the principal.

In small upstate districts, superintendents often wear many hats – CEO, CFO, instructional leader, personnel director, transportation director, food service manager, student disciplinarian, and sometimes even back-up bus driver.

Schools are in the business of teaching and learning. That is where roughly three-quarters of their spending goes and what most of their employees do. So again, when the need for cuts accumulates, it becomes impossible to spare classroom personnel. That forces larger class sizes, less extra help for students who need it, and fewer options for advanced classes.

### **How the state cuts are allocated**

This year's state budget would impose one big cut upon schools – the Gap Elimination Adjustment, or GEA – and a relatively small number of other cuts.

The GEA would reduce total aid for most districts by between 4 and 14 percent, with cuts generally scaled based on student need and district ability to pay. Low need districts tend to face larger cuts as a percentage of aid but there are startling exceptions. Over one-third of below average wealth districts would suffer double-digit percentage losses in aid.

Also, when the GEA is measured as a cut to the total district budget, or in terms of the tax increase needed to offset it, the impact is generally much greater for poor districts.

For example, just to offset the GEA, the poorest 20 percent of districts would require tax increases averaging nearly four times greater than those the wealthiest 20 percent would need (15.8 percent vs. 4.0 percent).

The Governor proposes to freeze the Foundation Aid formula for another year and extend its phase-in to 10 years. If the Executive Budget is enacted, we will be \$4.2 billion below the level promised in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity resolution. We support the Regents proposal to restart the Foundation Aid formula.

There are other cuts we oppose:

- Shifting \$85 million in summer school-age special education costs from the state to school districts;
- Shifting some preschool special education costs from counties to schools; and
- Redeploying State Police now serving as school resource officers.

All these actions would shift costs from entities with larger tax bases on to school districts, which are also the only entities required to seek voter approval for their operating budgets.

### **Mandate Relief**

Governor Paterson has also proposed a series of mandate relief initiatives. We support nearly all of them.

Streamlining reporting requirements would save some clerical costs, but more importantly, it would save leaders' time for activities that can make a real difference for schoolchildren and taxpayers, especially superintendents leading small districts with little help.

We support allowing districts to use Employee Benefits Accrued Liability Reserve (EBALR) funds to offset state aid reductions, if not needed to pay for accumulated leave time for former employees. We also support Comptroller DiNapoli's proposal to give districts and local

government a lawful means to save for retiree health insurance costs, which at least three-quarters of the districts studied in the Comptroller's EBALR audit were attempting to do.

Of course we support exempting schools from the Wicks Law, requiring the Education Department to give greater consideration to the fiscal consequences of its mandates, and adopting a moratorium on unfunded statutory mandates. We are also grateful for the policy of Senator Oppenheimer and Senator Saland before her in assuring that the Senate Education Committee does not report bills imposing unfunded mandates.

We also support the proposal to encourage regional student transportation systems. We favor broader efforts to promote sharing of administrative and overhead functions through more aggressive use of BOCES, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services.

On the other hand the Governor's proposal to adjust the contingency budget cap does not offer enough help. It would set the cap at zero, requiring districts to freeze spending if they are unable to gain voter approval. But pension cost increases mandated by the state would alone drive school spending up by 2 percent for many districts. Instead, we favor the proposal sponsored by Assemblywoman Nolan and Senator Oppenheimer which would set the cap for the next year at a figure tied to average consumer inflation over the past five years.

Altogether, however, the Governor's proposals would not come close to offsetting the state aid cuts he has proposed.

When we ask our members what they have done to control costs, few mention special education. When we ask what the state could do to help them, many target that area. The discrepancy is significant. It indicates that school district leaders feel their hands are tied by state mandates. Other states produce better results for students with disabilities at far less cost to their taxpayers. We should study their experiences and apply the lessons.

Finally, some of our members advise that the "55-25" retirement incentive promised in the Tier V pension legislation could make a huge difference for their districts. But if prospective participants wait until June or later to give notice of their intent to retire – as the bill now in print would allow – the incentive would have little value in averting the need for school layoffs.

### **Conclusion**

Again, we respect the hard choices before you and Governor Paterson in attempting to construct a state budget. We will not minimize your challenges, please do not minimize ours.

The Governor suggests that schools have ample reserves to accommodate his proposed cuts. It seems there is a tendency to look at schools through a funnel and miss the bigger picture. In fact schools operate with far more limited "rainy day" funds than most enterprises.

Schools are allowed to maintain an unreserved, unappropriated fund balance of no more than 4 percent of their budgets. What is the limit for local governments? They have no percentage limit; they are permitted to maintain a "reasonable" level. In fact, the average for town governments in New York State in 2008 was over 20 percent.

The Government Finance Officers Association recommends an unreserved fund balance of 5 to 15 percent of expenditures. So what schools are permitted as a maximum is less than what experts deem adequate as a bare minimum.

More generally, we know that whatever you may do to improve upon the Governor's proposed budget, it will not be the end of hard times.

Comptroller DiNapoli warns of the funding cliff facing schools when federal stimulus aid expires after this year. To be blunt, we are all heading for that same cliff, the state and the schools, and exhausting all reserves now would send more schools over the edge sooner.

We are grateful for your past support. It has helped New York develop some of the finest public schools anywhere, to provide better opportunities students with various disadvantages, and to produce better outcomes for more students.

But we still have too far to go deliver on our constitutional promise of a sound education for all children. Cutting School Aid would put us further behind, especially in the poorest communities, whose districts already struggle to offer the opportunities we would all insist upon for our own children.

We all face difficult choices in the months ahead. The choices you make on the coming year's state budget can enable school leaders to give their voters better choices for the schoolchildren and taxpayers they serve.



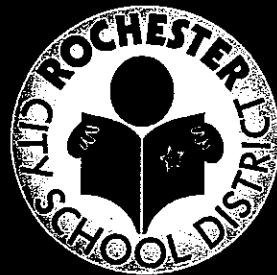


**NEW YORK STATE  
COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS  
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Every Child is a Work of Art



Create a Masterpiece.



*Rochester City School District ° Strategic Plan 2008-2013*

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# From the Board of Education President and Superintendent



MALIK EVANS



JEAN-CLAUDE BRIZARD

December 2009

Dear Rochester Community Members,

***Our strategic plan begins with our belief that every child, every child, can succeed.***


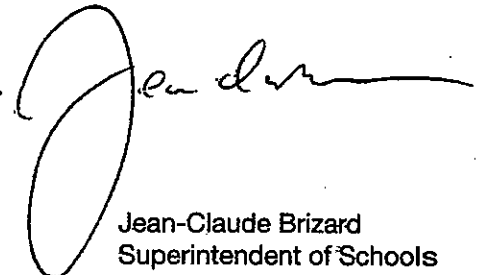
Emboldened by this belief, we are driven to face our challenges, embrace the changes we must make to our culture and practices, and hold ourselves accountable for the success of every student. Together, we can achieve our vision to create a masterpiece of every child, each a work of art, who we have the profound privilege and profound responsibility to educate and to prepare for success in college, work, and life.

This plan is the product of the work we began nearly two years ago to improve student success. It is the result of our efforts as a district and as a community. The plan was developed under the leadership of the Superintendent and his senior administrative team, with support from the Board of Education, and shaped through conversations with principals, teachers, parents, students, and others. The community played a critical and integral role in its development. Through your feedback on our online strategic plan survey along with your participation in meetings, focus groups, and public forums, you directly shaped this 5-year strategic plan. We look forward to continuing and strengthening our partnership with you in support of our students.

The strategic plan provides a roadmap for our work beginning with our accomplishments in the 2008-2009 school year and continuing through 2012-2013. It details the changes we must make at the district, school, and classroom level to ensure student success. Because our core work of teaching and learning takes place in the school and classroom, this is where we will focus our efforts, resources, and impact over the next five years. Our entire community, however, plays a role in helping us reach our goals.

The activities and timelines in this plan may change as we move forward and face new challenges. What will not change is our goal to ensure the success of every student.

Sincerely,

Malik Evans  
Board of Education President

Jean-Claude Brizard  
Superintendent of Schools



## Introduction

---

### **Our Vision**

Every child is a work of art. Create a masterpiece.

*At the core of our strategic plan is the belief that our work is about every child. Every child brings a wealth of talent and potential to us. We must embrace that talent and potential and equip every student with an education that draws forth the masterpiece that lies within each of them.*

---

### **Our Mission**

The mission of the Rochester City School District is to provide a quality education that ensures our students graduate with the skills to be successful in the global economy.

---

### **Our Core Values: Achievement, Equity, and Accountability**

*Our core values are based on our belief that every child can succeed. Every child can become a masterpiece.*

**Achievement** - Improving student achievement through a laser-like focus on teaching and learning with an emphasis on results

**Equity** - Distributing resources equitably based on the needs of schools and students

**Accountability** - Using data to ensure that we hold adults accountable for the success of all students

# What This Plan Means to You

This strategic plan is about ensuring that every child succeeds. Our entire community has a role to play in making it happen.

## *If you are a student, you can...*

- Have high expectations for yourself, learn what you need to do to grow academically and socially at school, and commit to doing that.
- Seek support from your principals, teachers, guidance counselors, and school staff on the academic and social issues you face.
- Expect a high level of respect from your teachers and schools.
- Expect and request high-quality customer service from the Rochester City School District when you need information or help.
- Communicate to the Rochester City School District, through your school, student leadership, and directly, when you need us to do something differently or better.

## *If you are a parent, you can...*

- Talk with school staff about your child's education and how you can support his or her learning.
- Emphasize at home the high standards the Rochester City School District sets for every one of its students.
- Expect to be treated with respect and a high level of customer service when interacting with any part of the district.
- Expect and request a range of high-quality school and program choices that reflect the diverse needs and interests of your child.
- Expect and request access to information about your child's school and your child's performance at school.

## *If you are a community member, you can...*

- Emphasize in the community the high standards Rochester sets for every one of its students.
- Consider ways in which you can partner with the Rochester City School District to further student success.
- Support the dissemination of accurate information about our schools and students in the community.
- Hold us accountable for supporting student success by reviewing our strategic plan progress reports and questioning us about our performance.
- Hold us accountable for how we use taxpayer dollars.

## *If you are a Rochester City School District school administrator, teacher, or staff member, you can...*

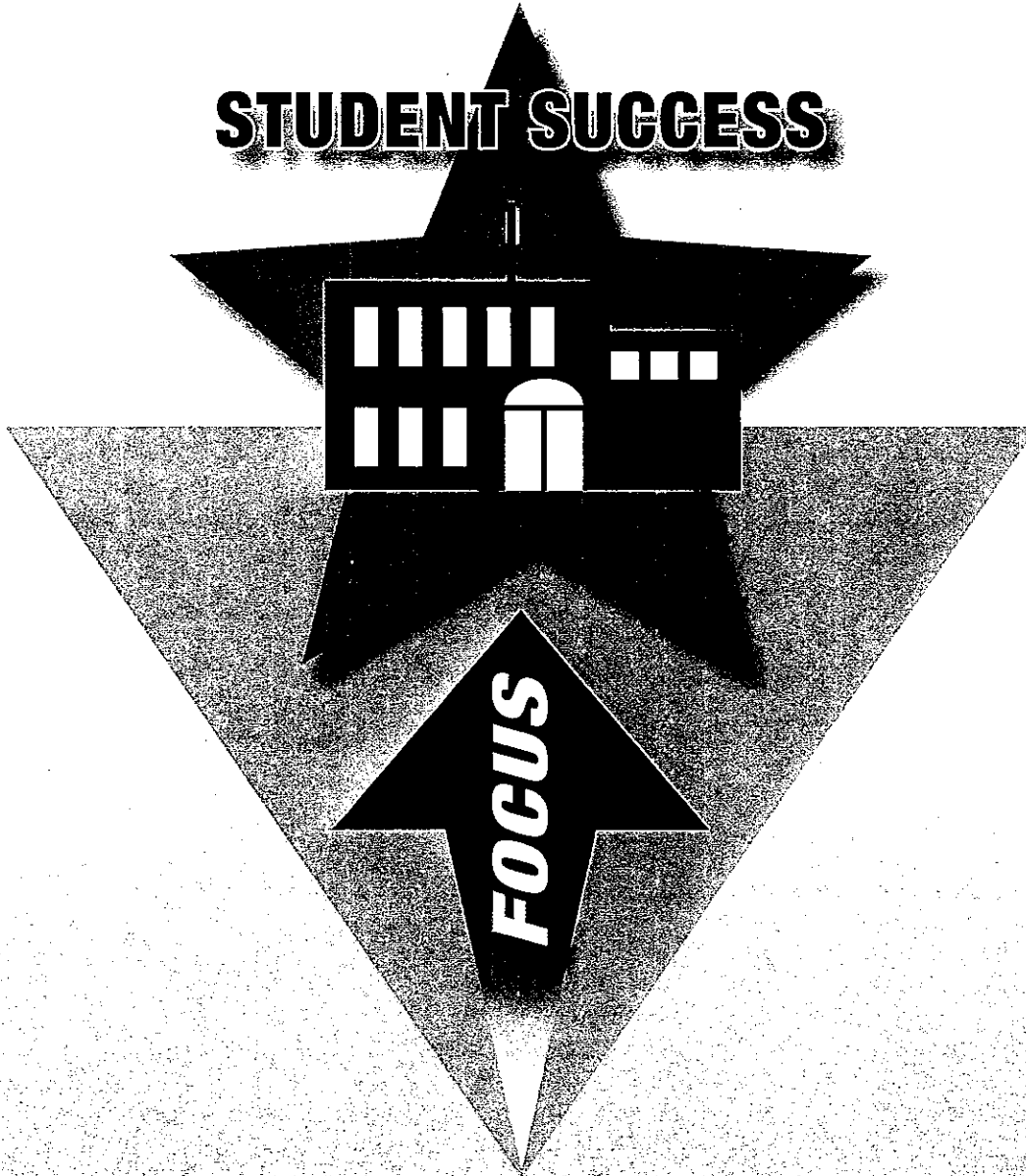
- Hold every student to high standards in your school or classroom.
- Empower students and families with knowledge of what students must know and be able to do.
- Hold yourselves accountable for adding to what every student knows and can do, every day.
- Collaborate with your fellow administrators, teachers, and staff to determine how to improve teaching and learning in your school.
- Be flexible and willing to adjust teaching to better accommodate diverse student learning needs.
- Expect and request a high level of professionalism, courtesy and high-quality professional development support from central administration.

## *If you are a Rochester City School District staff member who does not work in a school, you can...*

- Emphasize in your daily work the district's high standards for every student.
- Discuss with your supervisor and colleagues on how you can best contribute to student success.
- Maximize the time and effort you spend on supporting student and school success.
- Be flexible and willing to adjust to new and improved ways of doing work centered on students and schools.
- Expect and request a high level of collegiality, respect, and recognition for your contribution to the district.



# STUDENT SUCCESS



**FOCUS**



- ★ **AGILE**
- ★ **FLEXIBLE**
- ★ **RESPONSIVE**
- ★ **EMPOWERING**

# Achieving Our Vision

In January of 2008, guided by our core values of achievement, equity, and accountability, then-new Superintendent Brizard and members of his leadership team set out on an extensive listening and learning tour that involved meeting with hundreds of community members—students, parents, principals, teachers, district staff, and community partners. Your observations and insights combined with a detailed analysis of district performance helped to establish a clear picture of our current state and challenges to improving student success over the next five years.

What ultimately emerged was an ambitious agenda for change. At the heart of this agenda are two core strategies that will continue to focus and direct our efforts through 2013:

## CORE STRATEGIES

### ***Strategy 1: Proactively manage and support performance to empower schools***

Our core work as a district is teaching and learning. Since teaching and learning take place in schools, schools must be the primary focus of our efforts and resources. Central administration will manage and support school performance to ensure student success. Schools, in turn, will be held accountable for their performance.

Based on their performance and capacity, schools will receive different levels of support and flexibility.

Strong performers with high capacity will be empowered with the flexibility to make certain decisions, requesting support from central administration on an as-needed basis. These schools will be called **Autonomous Schools**. Schools that do not perform well will receive less flexibility and receive proactive, targeted support to improve their performance. These schools will be called **Dream Schools**, a concept we launched in 2008-09. Dream Schools and other schools that fail to improve over time will be phased out or closed. School leaders and teachers will both play a critical role in this new structure.

### ***Strategy 2: Create an organization and culture that is agile, flexible, and responsive to schools and students***

We will be a lean and efficient organization that makes it easy for schools and students to get the support they need. We will work toward continuous improvement and change our culture toward one in which support for schools and students is everyone's focus. If we all acknowledge that every student can succeed, they will. If we are motivated by the belief that every student is a work of art and can become a masterpiece, we can motivate them to believe this too.



## SNAPSHOT OF OUR DISTRICT TODAY

The district's current situation is a reflection of the current state of the nation and the struggles of the majority of the world's people.

- Nearly half of our students do not graduate from school in 5 years.
- We have significant achievement gaps that impact particular groups of students. For example, gaps in graduation rates are as follows:
  - African American and White students: 4 percentage points
  - Latino and White students: 9 percentage points
  - English Language Learners (ELL) and non-ELLs: 19 percentage points
  - Students with Disabilities and General Education students: 33 percentage points

## WHERE WE ARE AS A CITY

*Rochester faces mounting challenges, from poverty to a declining population to health issues.*

- Rochester ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation for child poverty. 36.9% of children under the age of 18 are in poverty and that number increases to 37.2% for children under the age of 5.
- We have the highest rate of poverty among NYS Big 5 districts; 50% of our schools are at 90% poverty or higher.
- Between 2000 and 2006, the population of Rochester declined by 5.3%. Enrollment in our school district has continued to shrink over the past ten years.
- In the 2000s, 14-15% of incoming RCSD Pre-K and K students were hospitalized in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at birth. That figure increased to 19.7% in 2007-08. This represents a change from every 1 in 7 to every 1 in 5 children.
- In 2007-08, over 15% of incoming Pre-K students had a parent who was incarcerated.
- In that same year, over 27% of incoming Pre-K students had experienced the death of a close family member.
- The estimated 2007 median household income in Rochester was \$29,329, over 45% lower than the NYS median of \$53,448.

## WHAT THIS MEANS TODAY AND TOMORROW

*If we don't change for the better, we are effectively saying to ourselves, our country, and the world that it is okay to have lower expectations for minorities and lower-income students.*

If we don't equip every student for college, work, and life, we are saying that it is okay for our children to be worse off than we are. We are contributing to a future in which our children will grow up to:

- Suffer from health issues as much or more than we do
- Struggle to find employment and be very likely to end up in poverty
- Earn hundreds of thousands of dollars less in their lifetime than their better educated counterparts
- Be more likely to engage in criminal behavior that will make our city and county a less safe and desirable place to live
- Lack the ability to take full advantage of their rights and freedoms as democratic citizens
- Be ill-equipped to understand and change the world around them for the better

## HOW WILL BETTER EDUCATING OUR STUDENTS HELP OUR CITY TODAY AND TOMORROW?

- Improve the health, well-being, and academic readiness of our next generation of incoming students
- Fulfill a moral, civic, and economic duty to improve ourselves, our children, and our society
- Prove that an urban education that provides every child with the opportunity to excel, regardless of race/ethnicity, disability, language proficiency or income level, can work.

# Change Is Possible: Year One

While our challenges may seem daunting, the progress and growth of our district demonstrate that positive change is very possible.

***We hit the ground running in 2008-09, year one of the 5-year strategic plan, and made the following key changes:***

- We completed the first phase of a district-wide reorganization, devolving people and other resources from the central office to schools. That set us on the path to begin concentrating our resources at schools and make our organization more agile and responsive to school needs.
- Through the Dream Schools Initiative and our new Office of School Innovation, we began to proactively support and manage school performance to provide our students with high-quality, competitive secondary school options.
- We eliminated the practice of sending suspended students home with the goal of maximizing time for student learning, re-focusing our organizational approach to school safety around student needs and academic rigor.
- We began the development and rollout of the Rochester Curriculum, empowering schools, students, and families with a common understanding of our high expectations of what students should know and be able to do in each grade.
- Through the first phase of an overhaul that increased transparency in our district budgeting process, we improved our understanding of how we can better focus our fiscal resources in service to our students.

***As the 2008-09 school year drew to a close, we reflected on the results of our changes, the progress we made, and the work that remains:***

- Four-year graduation rates for students who started 9th Grade in 2002, 2003, and 2004 continued to increase. The 2004 Total Cohort Graduation Rate (2008 graduates) is 52% (1,153 of 2,220).
- Achievement in Grades 3-8 on New York State Math Assessment continued to improve overall. The percent meeting NYS standards went from 55% in 2007-08 to 63% in 2008-09, an 8 percentage point increase.
- Achievement in Grades 3-8 on New York State English Language Arts (ELA) Assessment continued to improve overall. The percent meeting NYS standards

went from 47% in 2007-08 to 56% in 2008-09, a 9 percentage point increase.

- The graduation rate for our former English Language Learners (ELL) (76% graduation rate) surpasses both Non-ELL (52%) and ELL (33%) students by 23 and 43 percentage points respectively.
- The significantly low graduation rate for our Students with Disabilities at 24% supports our plan to overhaul Special Education.
- LEAN/6-Sigma training was conducted for the Superintendent's cabinet, eight Administration leaders and 20 additional personnel.
- \$1.4M in safety and security value (cameras, GPS and bus attendants) was added to our student transportation service through our new contract.
- Regulations for Intervention and Discipline were developed; suspensions dropped 32% and disruptive incidents dropped 40%.
- A reader-friendly budget book to improve the transparency of our fiscal operations was developed.
- Our School Food Services operation's financial performance improved by \$586,000 (4%).

## ***Public Input***

As we pushed our agenda for change forward, we also continued to solicit community input.

Over 1,300 members of the Rochester community—student, parents, district staff, and community partners—shaped our plan through participation in focus groups and by responding to our online Strategic Plan survey.

We cannot underscore enough the importance of community engagement with the district. It is simply critical to student success. Given the profound impact that the school district has on the community and vice versa, we cannot operate in isolation from each other; we must collaborate as partners. The community's critical insights and recommendations are integrated throughout this plan. We will continue to engage the community to support us and hold us accountable for meeting our goals for student success through 2013.



# Strategic Goals Overview

To clearly define our path and frame our agenda, we have established five goals:

- GOAL 1** We will ensure that each of our students is academically prepared to succeed in college, life, and the global economy.
- GOAL 2** We will create safe, engaging, and nurturing school environments that enable student success.
- GOAL 3** We will recruit, develop, and retain highly effective, diverse people dedicated to student success.
- GOAL 4** We will use world-class operational standards and practices to continuously improve how we support student success
- GOAL 5** We will create a culture in which we hold ourselves accountable for student success

Our actions to accomplish these goals will be focused by our two core strategies:

- STRATEGY 1** Proactively supporting and managing performance to empower schools, and
- STRATEGY 2** Creating an organization that is agile, flexible, and responsive to school needs.

## **Key Themes across the Strategies and Goals**

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** refers to making small improvements in processes that result in increased quality of products and services. "Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustment" is an educational practice based on the idea of continuous improvement. The idea behind this practice is fairly simple:

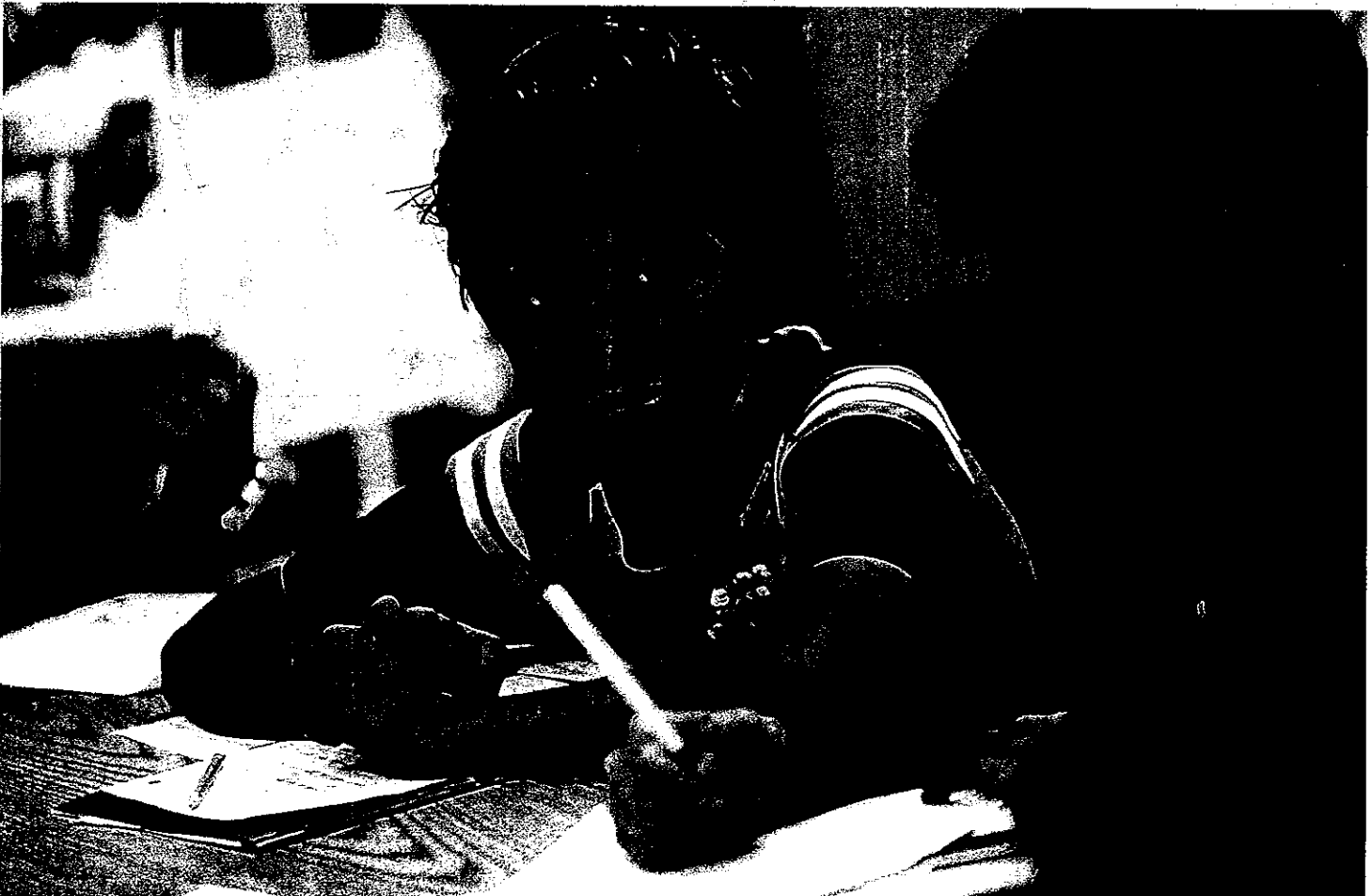
**Recognition:** Take stock of the results of your actions by looking at data to assess the impact of your practices or actions. Keep in mind the goals you're working towards.

**Intervention:** Based on your findings about what is and isn't working and keeping in mind what your goals are, select or develop an intervention based on prior evidence, research, or best practice.

**Adjustment:** Try the intervention. Check to see if it is changing results in a way that will help you achieve your goals. If so, determine how to sustain or accelerate your progress. If not, go back to "Recognition" and repeat the cycle.

**THE USE OF DATA** is essential to this cycle of continuous improvement. You can't simply rely on observations or your gut. You need to see what the data says. That's the "Recognize" step. You then need to use the data to help you determine what you'll do differently and how. That's the "Intervene" step. Finally, once you make the change by putting the intervention into practice, you'll have to monitor your data again to see if the change is working. That happens after you take the step to "Adjust."

These themes pervade the plan and our work. They will be fundamental to helping us change our culture to better support and drive student success.



# Performance Measures

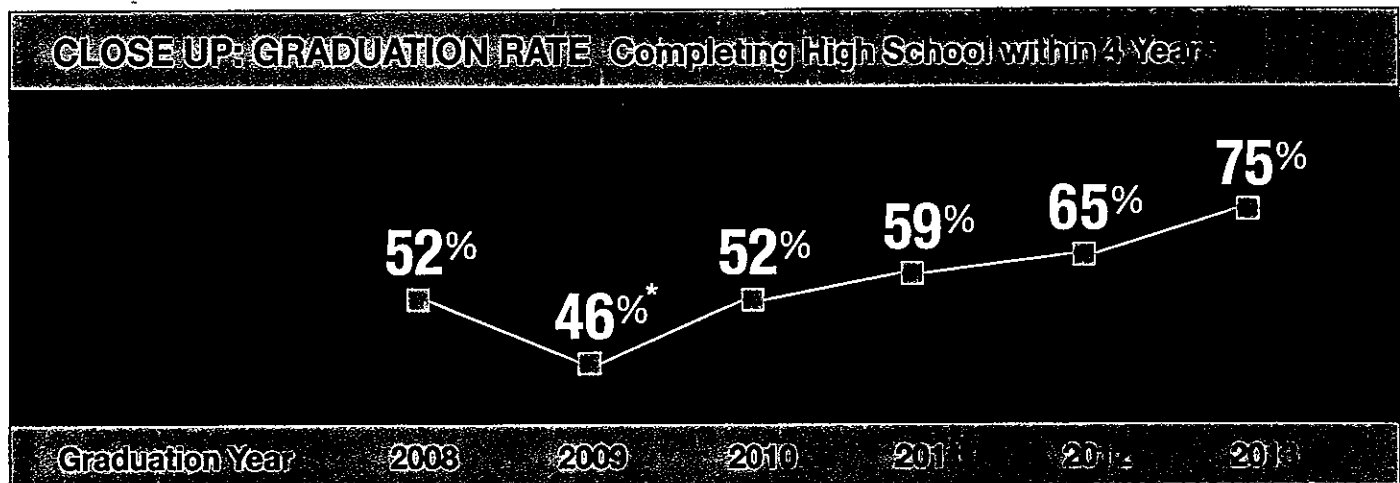
We have set performance targets for each of our goals. As we did in year one, we will continue to monitor our performance data to assess our progress toward achieving our goals. We will become more aggressive about our use of data and about reporting on our progress. (See the "Monitoring Implementation" section of the plan.) When the data demonstrate we are off track, we will intervene and adjust our practices. When it demonstrates we're on track, we will determine how to sustain or accelerate our progress.

*Note: Some of our performance measures indicate "TBD" rather than actual target metrics. In some cases, this is because we have not yet developed the metrics; in others, it is because a sub-strategy/initiative has not yet begun and thus does not yet have baseline data. As we move forward, we will publish the additional measures and metrics as part of our strategic plan progress reports. (NA=Not available.)*

## **GOAL 1** We will ensure that each of our students is academically prepared to succeed in college, life, and the global economy.

- OBJECTIVE I: Ensure Academic Rigor for Every Student
- OBJECTIVE II: Differentiate Student Supports to Meet the Needs of Every Student
- OBJECTIVE III: Focus on College and Career Readiness
- OBJECTIVE IV: Create an Innovative Portfolio of High Quality Choices for Families

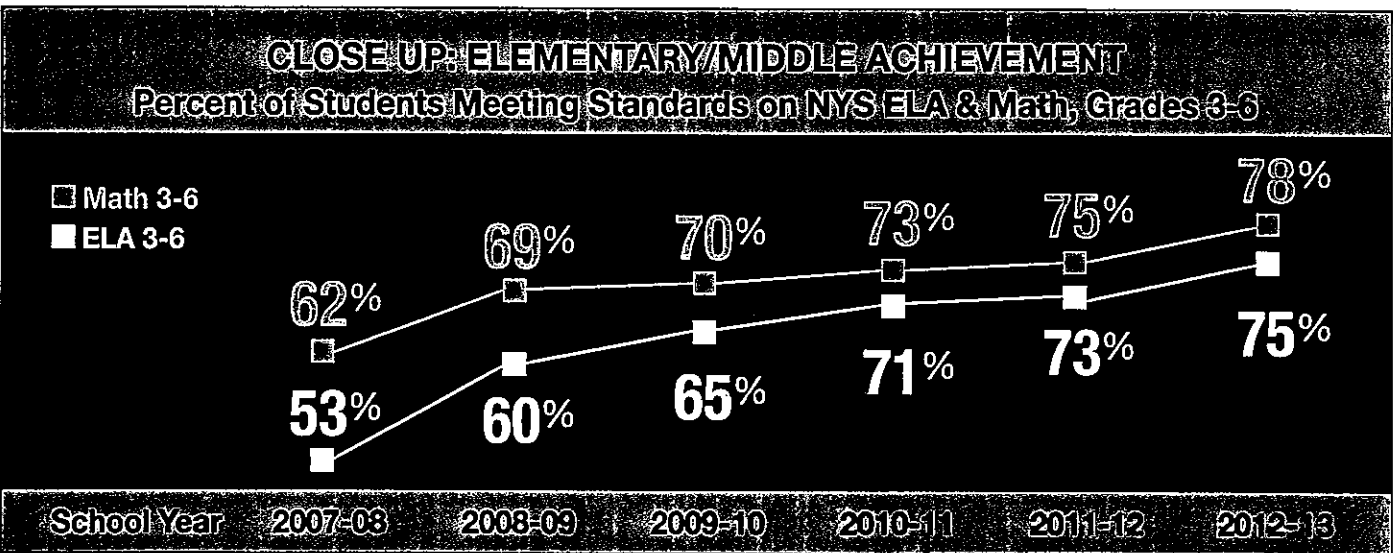
Graduation/College & Career Readiness	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
For Cohort Students Graduating in:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Percent of Cohort Students:	Cohort 2004	Cohort 2005	Cohort 2006	Cohort 2007	Cohort 2008	Cohort 2009
Completing High School within 4 years	52%	46%	52%	59%	65%	75%
Number of Regents Required to Pass	none	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Graduation with Regents Diploma	21%	21%	30%	25%	35%	50%
Graduation with Advanced Regents Diploma	7%	7%	9%	9%	11%	13%
Graduation with Local Diploma	24%	24%	14%	7%	0%	0%
Average PSAT Scores (Out of 240)	115	115	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Average SAT Scores (Out of 2400)	1228	1228	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD



\*Projected decline due to phasing out of NYS local diploma. Phase-out will be completed in 2012.

Graduation Achievement Gap	Baseline		Annual Targets			
<b>For Cohort Students Graduating in:</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Percentage Point Gap between:	Cohort 2004	Cohort 2005	Cohort 2006	Cohort 2007	Cohort 2008	Cohort 2009
African American and White Students	5	3	3	2	1	0
Latino and White Students	10	5	5	7	4	2
Students w/Disabilities & General Ed Students	34	28	32	25	22	20
English Language Learners (ELLs) and non-ELL students	20	15	19	14	12	10

Elementary/Middle Achievement	Baseline		Annual Targets			
<b>Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced (Level 3/4) on NYS Assessment in:</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
ELA Grades 3-6	53	60	65	71	73	75
ELA Grades 7-8	35	35	35	61	35	71
Math Grades 3-6	62	65	70	73	75	78
Math Grades 7-8	41	45	50	58	61	64



Elementary/Middle Achievement Gap	Baseline		Annual Targets			
<b>Percent Point Gap between General Education Students and Students with Disabilities Scoring Proficient or Advanced (Level 3/4) on NYS Assessment in:</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>
ELA Grades 3-8	39	35	41	33	35	37
Math Grades 3-8	33	30	30	30	25	21
<b>Percent Point Gap between English Language Learners (ELLs) and non-ELL Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced (Level 3/4) on NYS Assessment in:</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>
ELA Grades 3-8	28	25	25	25	25	20
Math Grades 3-8	17	15	15	12	10	8

**GOAL 1 (continued)**

Early Childhood	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Enrollment in Prekindergarten	1,826	1,872	1,872	1,900	1,950	2,000

Note: The current NYS cap for enrollment in the Rochester Universal Pre-K program is 1,872. We are lobbying to increase the cap; at the same time, Rochester is experiencing a decline in the Pre-K age population, so projections attempt to account for both the increase in the cap as well as the decrease in population projections.

School Choice/Enrollment	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<b>Percent Participation in Choice Process</b>						
Kindergarten Choice	60%	60%	70%	75%	81%	86%
Grade 7 Choice	79%	81%	95%	98%	100%	100%
<b>Satisfaction with Choice Process</b>						
Parents	NA	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Students	NA	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Elementary to Secondary Transition*</b>						
Metric to be determined.	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

\*Targets will represent the percentage of students making Rochester city schools their first choice.

**GOAL 2 We will create safe, engaging, and nurturing school environments that enable student success.**

OBJECTIVE I: Effective Safety Systems and Practices

OBJECTIVE II: Support the Whole Child through a Systems Approach to School Culture and Climate

Attendance/Suspensions	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Elementary School Attendance	92.8%	91%	94.5%	96%	96%	96%
Secondary School Attendance	87.5%	87%	90.4%	92%	94%	95%
Long-Term Suspensions	668	500	513	487	463	400
Short-Term/In-School Suspensions*	8,568	7,000	4,988	4,739	4,000	3,500
Hours Saved by Keeping Students in School	NA	1,500	29,928	28,451	24,000	21,000

\*The District eliminated out-of-school suspensions in 2008.

**GOAL 3** We will recruit, develop, and retain highly effective, diverse people dedicated to student success.

OBJECTIVE I: Develop and Support Highly Effective School Leaders

OBJECTIVE II: Develop and Support Highly Effective Teachers

Leaders/Teachers	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Enrollment in Rochester Leadership Academy	NA	N/A	65%	65%	81%	90%
Percentage of School Leaders Deemed Highly Effective*	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Percentage of Teachers Retained after 3 Years (Tenured)	83%	83%	88%	88%	88%	88%
Percentage of Teachers Deemed Highly Effective*	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Diversity Indicator TBD	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

\*We have not yet defined the term "highly effective" but are working to do so.

**GOAL 4** We will use world-class operational standards and practices to continuously improve how we support student success.

OBJECTIVE I: Learning Environment Supports Student Success

OBJECTIVE II: World-Class Standards of Efficiency and Customer Service

Operations/Administration	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<b>Efficiency/Customer Service</b>						
School Building Administrator Satisfaction with Customer Service	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>Transportation</b>						
Average Bus Ride Time Per Student in Minutes	NA	N/A	45	42	TBD	TBD
Cost Per Student	NA	N/A	\$1,750	\$1,650	\$1,500	\$1,400
On-Time Tier 1 and 2 Routes	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

**GOAL 5** We will create a culture in which we hold ourselves accountable for student success.

OBJECTIVE I: Stakeholder Engagement and Satisfaction

OBJECTIVE II: Use Data to Inform Decisions and Actions

OBJECTIVE III: Transparency and Equity in Resource Distribution

OBJECTIVE IV: Performance Management

Stakeholder Satisfaction	Baseline		Annual Targets			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<b>District Satisfaction Survey Results</b>						
Students	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Parents	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Community	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
School Leaders	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Teachers	NA	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD



## STRATEGIC GOALS

Each of our 5 goals has several objectives that further define the goal. Each objective then has a set of sub-strategies that will focus our work through 2013. In the section that follows, sub-strategies are listed in bold.

**Goal 1: We will ensure that each of our students is academically prepared to succeed in college, life, and the global economy.**



Remember the value of the arts in building culture and motivating students.

*-Public input from the strategic plan survey*

### OBJECTIVE I: Ensure Academic Rigor for Every Student

*Every student is a work of art. We must prepare each of our students for success. This work begins with academic rigor grounded in the belief that every student can meet or exceed high expectations.*

**The Rochester Curriculum Framework sets high expectations for every student.** The RCF is a comprehensive, aligned, culturally responsive curriculum that defines clear, uniform, and rigorous standards for what students in each grade are expected to know and do in ELA and Math. All schools must teach the Rochester Curriculum, supported by central office. While what they teach is non-negotiable and must be the same for every student, teachers have flexibility and latitude over how they teach it. Formative data from benchmark assessments will be used to regularly track student progress. School leaders and teachers will use this data to inform the interventions and adjustments needed to keep each student on track to meet or exceed expectations. This is the first time that our district has ever developed such a framework, and significantly, it was developed not by textbook publishers but by the classroom teachers who know our students and who teach these subjects in our district.

**Students with Disabilities who receive Special Education instruction and services will be held to the same high expectations as all other students in the district.** All schools must use the Rochester Curriculum Framework for teaching Students with Disabilities. We have developed a comprehensive plan to overhaul Special Education based on the findings from an audit conducted in Year One by the Council of Great City Schools and in Year Two by the University of Rochester. We have already begun to implement key changes to Special Education including hiring an Executive Director of Special Education who reports to the Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and sits on the Superintendent's Cabinet, the district's senior leadership team. Further changes in Special Education will build greater capacity and ownership among school leaders, Special Education and General Education teachers, and staff to effectively deliver instruction and support services to Students with Disabilities. Special Education Zone Chiefs will manage and support schools, while also holding them accountable for the performance of students with disabilities.

**English Language Learners will be held to the same high expectations as all other students in the district.** All schools must use the Rochester Curriculum Framework for instructing English Language Learners. A focus on ELLs will be integrated across Math and ELA in the RCF. Additionally, our growing ELL population currently has limited choices in high-quality programs across the district. We will provide more high-quality, differentiated options across our schools to meet the diverse needs of every ELL. Professional development aimed at increasing the rigor of ELL instruction will be provided to teachers of ELLs.

**Early Childhood Education, from Pre-K through grade 2, provides students with strong foundations that are critical to student success.** We will continue to deliver high-quality Pre-K instruction through our nationally recognized program and continue to use data to inform program improvements. We also seek to expand access to Early Childhood and are seeking policy and funding solutions at the state level. We will ensure there is strong alignment in curriculum and assessments from Pre-K through grade 2 to ensure that the benefits of Pre-K education carry through to elementary school and beyond.

**Physical Education is intimately linked to academic achievement among students.** Research continues to indicate that physically fit students outperform their less healthy counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Further, we know that many of our students suffer from a range of health issues common to children from urban areas. We will focus and align our physical education, school food, nutrition, and student health and wellness efforts and partnerships to better prepare our students to learn and to equip them to make healthier choices.

**Arts Education is critical to ensuring we develop the whole child.** Through a greater central focus on an aligned yet differentiated Arts curriculum, we will provide students with higher quality arts instruction that is better reflective of their interests and learning needs.

#### **OBJECTIVE II: Differentiate Student Supports to Meet the Needs of Every Student**

*While every student is a work of art, and should be held to the same high expectations for success, what every student needs to become a masterpiece may vary. With a shared culture of high expectations, schools will recognize and embrace the differences in how our students learn. They will use data to tailor the time, resources and supports every student requires for academic mastery toward college readiness.*

**Use of Data:** Research shows that the use of data is common to the highest performing districts in the country. Central office will support schools in the frequent use of data to inform instruction by providing them with a comprehensive set of tools and training to use the tools. Schools in turn will use the data to examine the performance of every student, not simply averages across students, to manage and deliver effective instruction.

**Response to Intervention (RtI)** is used to help every student who is struggling to learn and succeed in the classroom by adjusting instruction to accommodate his or her specific learning needs. This approach addresses student skill or performance deficits early and quickly. Each student is provided with the time and supports they need to improve. RtI acknowledges that although every child may be different, high expectations and quick, aligned responses can keep a student on track to meet or exceed expectations. With the use of RtI, we expect to see a decline in Special Education classifications and earlier improvements in language acquisition and proficiency among English Language Learners.

**Targeted Supports** will prevent student academic regression and accelerate student learning during key transition periods such as summers, after school, and from grades 7 to 8 and 8 to 9. We know that some students struggle during transition and that more time for instruction can help keep them on track. Students who are already on track can significantly accelerate their learning if offered additional time and support. We will provide summer school, after school, and other extended learning opportunities to as many students as possible.



<sup>7</sup> NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Press Release: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/pr2009/pr047-09.shtml>



“Work towards  
accountability at all levels  
from the top down.”

*-Public input from the strategic plan survey*

### **OBJECTIVE III: Focus on College and Career Readiness**

*College-readiness isn't about anticipating that all students will attend college; it's about preparing them to access a full range of options after graduation. It's not about restricting their choices; it's about broadening them. This is reinforced by national and state recognition of the fact that the knowledge and skills required for career readiness are increasingly the same as those required for college readiness, especially in the areas of Math and English.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of the path they choose after graduation, every student must leave us college-ready.*

**Empowering students with both knowledge and experiences that will prepare them for college is critical.** We will clarify the indicators and performance measures we monitor to know that our students are ready for college. We will create a clear college counseling curriculum, to be implemented by our guidance counselors, that families and students have access to online. And we will ensure that we develop and sustain strong higher education partnerships to expose and educate our students about college from an early age.

**Empowering students with both knowledge and experiences that will prepare them for careers is critical.** We will strengthen the rigor of our career and technical education offerings. We will partner with businesses to broaden students' awareness of the range of career opportunities available to them. We will provide students with meaningful career development and mentorship opportunities early in their education, giving them extra time to think about their future careers.

### **OBJECTIVE IV: Create an Innovative Portfolio of High-Quality Choices for Families**

We must view our schools as a system or “portfolio,” not as isolated places with no relationship to one another. This is especially true given the high mobility rate of students in our district. Taken as a whole, our schools must offer enough high-quality program choices that reflect the diverse talents, needs, and interests of every one of our students. Without high-quality choices, families will continue to leave us for other districts.

**To continuously improve the quality and rigor of our portfolio of schools,** we must open new schools fueled by innovative ideas that area also grounded in evidence and research. We must redesign existing schools by either expanding or shrinking them so they can better serve students. We must support schools, through the Dream Schools model, to improve their performance. Finally, if schools continue to fail, we must phase them out or close them. This requires will, commitment, and motivation. It is not easy to do, but it is necessary; we cannot be true to our vision without replacing failing schools with schools that work.

**Re-tooling our choice and enrollment process** is directly related to improving our portfolio of school choices. As we change the number, quality, and focus of our schools to better address the needs of every student, we must make sure that families have equitable access to these new and higher quality choices.

<sup>8</sup> American Diploma Project, “Making College and Career Readiness the Central Drivers of an Assessment System.” [http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/NCSEA09\\_191\\_MGandal.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/content/PDFs/NCSEA09_191_MGandal.pdf)

**GOAL 2: We will create safe, engaging, and nurturing school environments that enable student success.**

**OBJECTIVE I: Effective Safety Systems and Practices**

**Overhauling our student discipline policies and practices** to reduce disruptions to teaching and learning was a primary focus for us in Year One. We abolished the practice of sending suspended students home, drastically reducing the number of instructional hours lost for these students. We established In-School Suspensions and will continue to improve the supports we provide to schools. We also have clarified and developed standards for school discipline and will manage and support schools to use them. Finally, we will continue to partner with the RPD and use data to inform additional improvements to our safety and discipline practices.

**A school security plan focused on clear and effective intervention** is the next step. We need to delve further into evidence- and researched-based practices to develop a system-wide security plan that allows us to practice Recognition, Intervention, and Adjustment to prevent and address school safety and student discipline issues early. Once we develop the plan, we will roll it out with training and supports for schools and hold them accountable.

**OBJECTIVE II: Support the Whole Child through a Systems Approach to School Culture and Climate**

**A Youth Development Framework** that provides a comprehensive, systematic approach to addressing student health, attendance, behavior, adult connections, and teaching and learning is being finalized and piloted in a small group of schools. The framework is ambitious and intended to change school culture and practice. It focuses on prevention, early intervention, and intensive intervention.

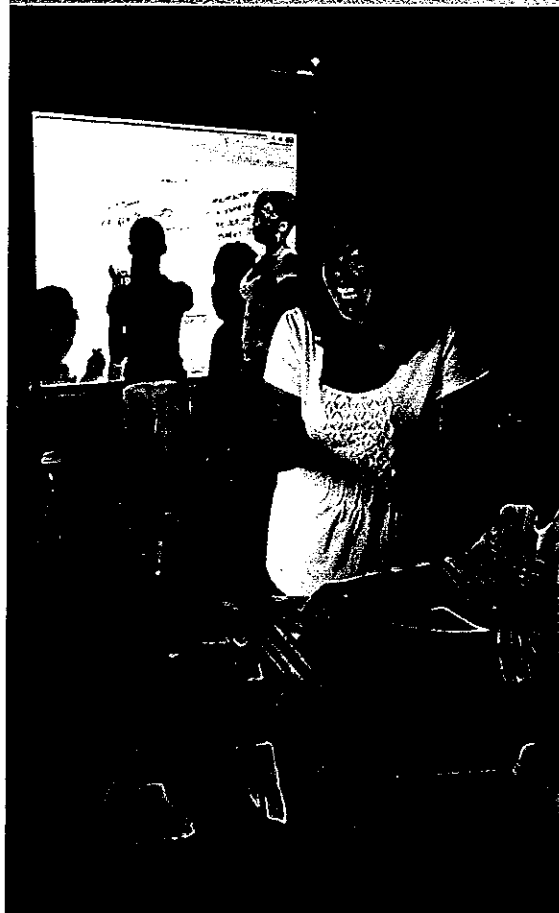
The framework will reinforce the use of Response to Intervention (RtI) and the district's Regulations of Intervention & Discipline, and will also pilot the use of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports in a broader group of schools. The result of the pilot will be used to inform improvements to the framework before schools adopt it districtwide and develop their own Youth Development plans based on the framework. Other key related initiatives involve clarifying and distinguishing the role of social workers from guidance counselors. Guidance counselors will primarily focus on student academics and college readiness. Social workers will play an integral role in youth development.

“Research and utilize the practices of other successful districts and use the honest feedback provided to you by students, parents, staff, etc.”

*-Public input from the strategic plan survey*



**GOAL 3: We will recruit, develop, and retain highly effective, diverse people dedicated to student success.**



“Highly qualified adults, given adequate resources and safe school environments, can produce superb results with children.”

*-Public input from the strategic plan survey*

**OBJECTIVE I: Develop and Support Highly Effective School Leaders**

We are establishing a comprehensive system to recruit and equip school leaders to assume increased autonomy and accountability for school and student performance. We will continue to recruit highly effective school leaders locally and nationally to ensure we have a strong pipeline of talent. Existing and aspiring school leaders will be developed through the Rochester Leadership Academy (RLA), an innovative professional development institute created in partnership with St. John Fisher College and the Wallace Foundation through the New York State Education Department's Cohesive Leadership initiative. RLA's purpose is to strengthen our existing leaders and build their capacity to assume greater autonomy and accountability.

**Hold school leaders accountable and organize central office supports around their needs.** This is a critical step we're taking to manage and support school performance and prepare school leaders to transition to the Autonomous and Dream Schools structure. Over the course of our multi-year transition to the new structure, our Chiefs of Schools will continue to supervise principals and serve as liaisons between principals and central office to coordinate the supports they need to succeed.

**Examine, strengthen, and align principal evaluation, tenure, and compensation structures.** In high-performing organizations, people know what they are expected to do, are evaluated on how well they do it, and are given rewards or consequences based on their performance. The Chiefs of Schools will conduct rigorous evaluations of principals, grounded in data and their expert observation of principals over the school year. Principals will be held accountable for performance. Schools that have weaker performance and school leader capacity will receive fewer freedoms, while those with stronger performance and more effective school leaders will get more. The school district will also continue to explore innovations in school leader compensation and performance management.

**OBJECTIVE II: Develop and Support Highly Effective Teachers**

The district will continue to recruit and support talented and effective new teachers. We use the term “highly effective,” not “highly qualified.” Efficacy goes beyond having the right certification or qualification to teach a student. It extends to commitment, capacity, and a belief in every student. We will continue to recruit diverse, effective teachers capable of providing high-quality instruction to every child. Our teachers will be committed to acknowledging the link between their practice and student outcomes and be willing to adjust their practices based on what will move their students forward. Based on the high retention rates of teachers supported through our nationally recognized Career in Teaching (CIT) Mentor program, we will continue to support first-year teachers through the program.

**Equip teachers to deliver effective instruction to support student and school performance.** The district will manage and support instruction by providing job-embedded professional development in using the Rochester Curriculum Framework. We will help also schools to embrace their role in our learning organization by supporting the establishment of professional learning communities (PLCs) that center around the Rochester Curriculum

Framework. The PLCs will provide teachers with structures and supports so they can focus on learning and the use of data to support learning, results, and working collaboratively to support effective instruction.

**Examine, strengthen, and align teacher evaluation, tenure, and compensation structures.** As with school leaders, teachers must be held accountable for student performance. In the entire school system, they have the most direct relationship to and impact on students. School leaders will support and hold teachers accountable for providing rigorous instruction for every student and for their overall performance. School leaders will conduct rigorous and timely evaluations of teachers grounded in data and their expert observation of teachers over the school year. The school district will also continue to explore innovations in teacher-distributed leadership, teacher compensation and performance management.

## **GOAL 4: We will use world-class operational standards and practices to continuously improve how we support student success**

### **OBJECTIVE I: Create Learning Environments that Support Student Success**

**Improve transportation safety and efficiency to reduce disruptions to instruction.** In making changes to our transportation system to achieve cost savings, we have remained focused on ensuring that students arrive at school safely and on time so they are ready to start the academic day.

**Provide students with high-quality, age-appropriate food to promote health and wellness.** Student health and wellness are intimately tied to academic achievement. The level of satisfaction with our food service was low and costs were high; it was clear that we needed to change. Working in partnership with Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, we will provide high-quality food in an efficient and effective manner that promotes student health and wellness.

**Modernize, maintain, and right-size our facilities portfolio to support student learning.** Research shows that clean, safe, and well-maintained facilities promote student learning. They also promote a sense of pride in our community and acknowledge the value we place on education in our community. Our work over the next five years involves continuing our work and partnership with the Joint School Construction Board to modernize, maintain, and right-size our portfolio of schools.

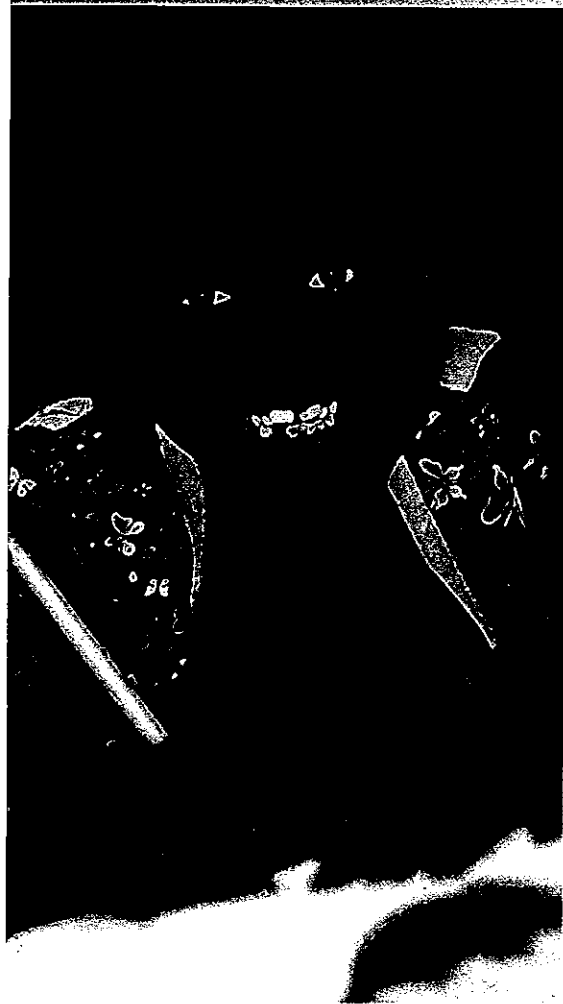
### **OBJECTIVE II: World-Class Standards of Efficiency and Customer Service**

**Organize central office (CO) around school and student needs.** As we analyzed our district in 2008, it was clear that our central office to student ratio was larger than any of the other NYS Big 5 districts. That fact combined with the strategies we developed to focus our agenda for change motivated us to significantly reorganize the central office in the fall of Year One. We will continue to focus and align our central structures and functions to school and student needs. This will likely continue to involve further reorganizations that reduce the size of central office.

**Continuously improve district processes, procedures and systems to better serve schools and students.** As a learning organization, we must examine our systems and processes and identify areas for improvement. This applies to everything from our Human Capital systems like PeopleSoft to food services to transportation. The goal is not to reinvent the wheel, but to rely on proven methodologies to improve our service to schools and students.



**GOAL 5: We will create a culture in which we hold ourselves accountable for student success.**



“Student achievement is of the highest priority; schools need the tools to assist students in reaching their full potential.”

*-Public input from the strategic plan survey*

**OBJECTIVE I: Stakeholder Engagement and Satisfaction**

**Engage parents as partners in the journey to student success.** It’s not enough to say that parent engagement is a challenge; we must be creative. Through surveys, we will solicit creative ideas from parents directly. Further, we will continue to offer Parent University courses to help parents further their own education and improve their ability to navigate the system, so they may help children to do the same.

**Hold ourselves accountable to parents and provide them with efficient customer service.** We are responsible for clarifying what their children are expected to learn and whether or not they are meeting these expectations. We are responsible for communicating timely and clearly to allow parents to make the best choices on behalf of their children. We are also responsible for helping parents and students understand their choices around school placement and running a smooth and equitable process that is efficient and centered around their needs.

**Establish a professional learning community with strategic partners.** We will model the behavior we expect to see in schools and classrooms at the central level by working closely with the myriad strategic partners who have furthered our development and progress. A snapshot of the much longer list of public and private partners we’ve been fortunate to work with includes PENCIL, United Way, Ibero, County of Monroe, Center for Governmental Research, City of Rochester, the Wallace Foundation, numerous faith-based organizations, the Hillside Work Scholarship Connection, Center for Youth, Rochester Business Alliance, Wegmans, and institutions of higher education including the University of Rochester, St. John Fisher College, and Monroe Community College.

**Hold ourselves fiscally accountable to taxpayers.** Taxpayers have a right to know how and how effectively their resources are spent on education. We are responsible for being transparent to the public with this information. To that end, in Year One, we published a “reader-friendly” budget book, our first attempt at increased transparency. We have further to go and will do so in the coming years.

**Communicate effectively both internally and to the Rochester community.** Again, in the spirit of transparency and accountability, we will continue to provide timely and clear communications within the district and to the community. We recently changed our website to improve the user experience and are now publishing a district newspaper, *The Rochester Educator*, three times per year. We will continue soliciting input from the community about public perception of the district; we encourage you to participate to help us improve.

**OBJECTIVE II: Use Data to Inform Decisions and Actions**

**Build formative and summative data tools and train district staff, schools and families to use them.** The use of data is integral to nearly every aspect of our change agenda, including our own culture transformation. As we have noted, the use of data to inform decisions will be essential to many of our practices, from effective use of the Rochester Curricu-

lum Framework, to Response to Intervention, to evaluating school leaders and teachers. We will build a comprehensive set of tools and structures to enable everyone in the district, from central staff to parents to schools to the community, to monitor student performance and hold us accountable for it.

### **OBJECTIVE III: Transparency and Equity in Resource Distribution**

***Implement a weighted student funding system aligned to the transition to the Autonomous and Dream schools structure.*** In weighted student funding, resource distribution is driven by “student need,” not by staff placement. Schools receive funding that is “weighted” on the basis of the characteristics of the students they serve. Those characteristics may include special education, poverty, limited English proficiency, and gifted education among others. More “weight” may be given to students with these characteristics, thereby increasing the dollars that a school that serves them will receive. We are developing the appropriate weights we will assign in our district.

***Weighted student funding gives school leaders greater autonomy in how they use their funds.*** They can decide how to best use the funds to drive student success. School leaders are also held more accountable given that they have more control. We will roll out the weighted student funding process parallel to our transition to the Autonomous and Dream school structure. By the time we have fully transitioned, Autonomous school principals will have much greater control over their budgets because of weighted student funding. We have not yet determined the specific level of control that either Autonomous or Dream schools will have over their budgets. That is part of our work over the next two years.

### **OBJECTIVE IV: Performance Management**

***Move to a differentiated school supervision, autonomy, and support structure based on performance.*** Ultimately, at the end of five years, all of the work we have done to build capacity across the system will have prepared us for the district-wide transition to the Autonomous and Dream School Structure. The Autonomous and Dream School models are based on successful models in other districts throughout the country, including San Francisco. The fundamental idea is to differentiate how we manage, support, and empower schools. Treating high-performing schools and low-performing schools the same is not effective. Similarly, a singular approach to school support and management doesn’t address what individual high- and low-performing schools really need to make significant gains.

***In this new structure, schools will be given additional freedoms and flexibility if they demonstrate strong performance and the capacity to use those freedoms and flexibility to improve student achievement.*** Schools that demonstrate weak performance and lack capacity will receive additional supports, be managed more closely by central administration, and have less freedom and flexibility. Concentrating more resources and power at the school level makes sense; of all parts of the organization, schools are best positioned to make decisions that impact teaching and learning in the classroom.

***Build district-wide performance management systems to ensure greater accountability for results.*** Our vision is for everyone in the district, working together to improve school and student performance, to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Empowered with knowledge of what they are working toward and what they are expected to do, they strive to perform to meet or exceed these expectations. They will work closely with their supervisors to assess and reflect on their performance and be held accountable for it through a clear process that involves a timely and effective evaluation for everyone in the district. Clear rewards and consequences, such as greater autonomy in the case of schools and school leaders, will follow from these performance evaluations and will motivate them to improve their work to ensure student success.



# Timeline

This section provides a detailed timeline of the actions and initiatives that have and will be taken each year through 2013 to achieve our goals.

**GOAL 1: We will ensure that each of our students is academically prepared to succeed in college, life, and work in the global economy.**

## OBJECTIVE I: Ensure Academic Rigor for Every Student

SUB-STRATEGIES	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
<b>Create and manage school adoption of a district-wide framework that aligns standards, curriculum, and benchmark assessments</b>					
Create and roll out the Rochester Curriculum Framework, a rigorous, standards-based, aligned, culturally responsive curriculum for Math/English Language Arts					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate research-based strategies for English Language Learners across curriculum</li> <li>Incorporate research-based strategies for Students with Disabilities across curriculum</li> </ul>					
Grades 5 to 9 Math/ELA	◆	◆			
Grades K to 4 Math/ELA		◆	◆		
Grades 10 to 11 Math/ELA			◆	◆	
Grades 11 to 12 Math/ELA				◆	◆
Create and roll out rigorous benchmark assessments aligned to Rochester Curriculum and NYS assessments	◆				
Establish protocol and metrics to exempt high performing schools from benchmark assessment requirement		◆			
Manage, support, and hold schools accountable for fidelity of school implementation of curriculum and benchmark assessments for every student	→				
Continuously improve Rochester Curriculum Framework based on school input, district level analysis, and changes in Council of Chief State School Officers/NYS guidance on standards	→				
<b>Overhaul and decentralize Special Education with focus on high expectations and rigorous instruction for students with disabilities</b>					
Complete comprehensive audit of Special Education	◆				
Create Cabinet level position, hire Executive Director of Special Education, and reorganize Special Education at Central Office	◆				
Provide professional development to build school leader capacity to serve students with disabilities and support effective staff delivery of Special Education (See also Principal Professional Development)		◆	◆		
Provide professional development to build school/staff capacity of general and special education administrators and teachers to deliver effective instruction and support services to students with disabilities (See also Teacher Professional Development)			◆		
Increase equity of distribution of high-quality Special Education Programs across schools/zones			◆	◆	
Roll out plan to decentralize Special Education and increase school ownership and accountability for the performance of students with disabilities			◆	◆	
<b>Improve English Language Learners' access to rigorous instruction</b>					
Select and roll out dual language, transitional bilingual, and maintenance bilingual programs to increase distribution of high-quality ELL/bilingual programs across schools		◆	◆		
Increase collaboration and training for central Curriculum Directors to better manage and support teaching and learning for ELLs across content areas	◆	◆			
Manage and support schools in teaching and learning for ELLs		◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Expand access to Pre-K and ensure strong transitions from Pre-K through Grade 2</b>					
Develop plan for expansion of nationally recognized Pre-K program from half to full-day and request additional state funding for program and transportation		◆			
Study impact of participation in Pre-K on K,1,2 achievement and performance		◆			
Study teacher attrition issue in K and develop plan to resolve			◆		

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

Use study results to strengthen structure of the K,1,2 programs; focus on alignment of curriculum and assessment and effective transitions, including better alignment of partners, from K through 2			◆	◆	
Ensure Pre-K program quality through continued use of program evaluation data to inform program improvement	→				
<b>Value and acknowledge the link between student health, wellness and academic success</b>					
Develop Physical Education Plan and align to revised Health and Wellness Policy		◆			
Evaluate and strengthen quality of Physical Education offerings in elementary schools		◆			
Align focus on student nutrition by strengthening partnership between Physical Education, Student Health Services, Food Services, and community health and agency partners	◆	◆	◆		
<b>Strengthen arts curriculum and practices district-wide</b>					
Develop Pre-K through 12 arts curriculum for art, music, theater, and dance		◆	◆		
Survey principals on current arts practices to inform improvements to the curriculum and practices		◆			
Provide professional development to keep art teachers current on practices and techniques		◆	◆	◆	◆
Identify partners to collaborate with RCSD to provide robust art program		◆	◆		

**OBJECTIVE II: Differentiate Student Supports to Meet the Needs of Every Student**

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

<b>Use data to inform improvements to teaching and learning for every student (See also Goal 5 "Use Data to Inform Decisions and Actions")</b>					
Train schools leaders and teachers to use formative data to proactively monitor student learning and adjust instruction		◆	◆		
Support schools effective use of data to inform teaching and learning			◆	◆	◆
<b>Adopt a district-wide model to recognize, intervene, and adjust instruction early and effectively for students struggling to learn</b>					
Create cross-functional team and develop multi-year plan to train and support K-12 school use of Response to Intervention (RtI) model	◆				
Identify pilot cohorts and implement RtI across cohorts I & II		◆			
Develop protocols and metrics to track and improve the model		◆			
Based on pilot, implement plan to roll out RtI district-wide			◆	◆	◆
Provide content area-specific professional development to Curriculum Directors supporting schools		◆			
<b>Target supports to accelerate student learning and to prevent academic regression and disengagement</b>					
Identify key PreK-12 transition points at which students are at risk for disengagement or regression (i.e. 7 go 8, 8 go 9, etc.)	◆				
Re-align extended learning offerings to target students most at risk for disengagement/regression including after-school, Saturday, and remediation courses for 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> grade students		◆			
Expand portfolio of summer school courses for acceleration and/or remediation	◆	◆			
<b>Create multiple pathways to for students to earn a high school credential</b>					
Create multiple pathways focused on preventive and recuperative strategies for students grades 9-12 to earn a high school credential					◆
Integrate Alternative Education into Multiple Pathways model					◆

**OBJECTIVE III: Focus on College and Career Readiness**

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Empower students with knowledge and experiences that prepare them for college</b>					
Systematize focus on college readiness by establishing a college readiness framework that includes defined college readiness indicators (e.g. Regents exam, PSAT, SAT and AP participation and performance) and college enrollment indicators (acceptance to 2 and 4 year colleges)		◆	◆		
Where possible, track student progress 2 years and 4 years beyond high school into college	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Build a college-going culture campaign to raise student/family awareness/knowledge of college		◆			
Expand access to pre-college and college instruction across secondary schools (including expansion of AP courses, AVID, Springboard, and Early College High Schools)	◆	◆			
Require and support every student to take the PSAT		◆	◆	◆	◆
Establish and strengthen partnerships that provide students/families with training on access to college and obtaining financial aid/scholarships		◆			
Establish and strengthen partnerships with higher education that provide students/families with exposure to and awareness of college through informational events and meaningful college visits		◆	◆	◆	◆
Develop, roll out, and publish online a guidance counseling curriculum that defines expectations for college counseling by month by grade for each school year		◆			
<b>Empower students with knowledge and experiences that prepare them for careers</b>					
Through college-going campaign and other communications, clarify the link between college and career readiness for students and families		◆			
Realign current CTE programs to NYS P-16/New Perkins IV standard framework to increase rigor			◆	◆	
Expand quantity and choice of CTE programs; Engage guidance counselors and business partners to identify new CTE programs aligned to labor market needs				◆	◆
Provide career mentorship for students in their chosen career field through partnerships with Virtual Enterprise/PENCIL		◆			
Identify and implement programs to provide student work-based experiences from 7-12			◆	◆	
<b>Align college and career readiness standards to NYS P-16 plan</b>					
Once available, align to NYS P-16 college and career readiness standards and data systems					◆
Begin to systematically monitor student progress 2 years and 4 years beyond high school					◆

**OBJECTIVE IV: Create an Innovative Portfolio of High-Quality Choices for Families**

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Seek and seed innovations to continuously improve the quality and rigor of our portfolio of schools</b>					
Create Office of School Innovation and hire Executive Director	◆				
Release New School Proposal Guidelines		◆			
Create innovative secondary schools		◆	◆	◆	◆
Release School Redesign Proposal Guidelines		◆			
Redesign/reconfigure existing schools		◆	◆	◆	◆
Establish criteria and stakeholder engagement process to close schools		◆			
Close underperforming schools that do not succeed in DREAM structure		◆	◆	◆	◆
Inform/collaborate with the Joint School Construction Board to modernize facilities and right-size the district	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Create, seek and seed innovative, cutting-edge initiatives and programs (focus on Secondary Schools)	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

<b>Re-tool and streamline enrollment/placement choice process to improve access and equity for every student</b>					
Audit existing Enrollment/Placement process and provide recommendations	◆				
Revisit Board of Education policy to inform redesign of elementary school choice process			◆		
Overhaul Secondary School choice process including creating a new 8 go 9 transfer process				◆	◆

**GOAL 2: We will create safe, engaging, and nurturing school environments that enable student success.**

**OBJECTIVE I: Effective Safety Systems and Practices**

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Overhaul student discipline policies and practices to reduce disruptions to teaching and learning</b>					
Abolish practice of sending students home for suspensions	◆				
Plan and implement In-School Suspensions (ISS) program	◆				
Revise and publish online new discipline code to reflect new suspension strategy, policy, and to clarify boundary between intervention and discipline	◆				
Support and hold schools accountable for fidelity of discipline code implementation		◆	◆	◆	◆
Make improvements to ISS to support individual school needs		◆			
Continue to identify schools where the Alternatives to Suspension program, focused on prevention and therapeutic intervention, should be opened		◆	◆		
<b>Develop and implement school security plan focused on clear and effective intervention</b>					
Develop plan to address system-wide security issues through collaboration between School Safety and Youth Development		◆			
Establish a partnership with the Rochester Police Department and collaborate on security issue resolution	◆	◆			
Train staff to ensure fidelity of security practices across schools		◆			
Train school safety officers on relationships to students as part of Youth Development Framework		◆			
Monitor incident report data to inform plan rollout and school supports needed		◆	◆	◆	◆
Manage system-wide security plan rollout			◆		
Monitor incident data and provide supports to improve implementation				◆	◆

**OBJECTIVE II: Support the Whole Child through a Systems Approach to School Culture and Climate**

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Establish and adopt a comprehensive youth development framework district-wide</b>					
Build a youth development framework focused on three tiers- prevention, early intervention, and intensive intervention across student development domains (social and emotional learning, adult connections, bio-psycho-social, positive behavioral supports, effective instruction)		◆			
Pilot YD framework as part of school improvement planning at a cohort of schools		◆			
Based on findings, adjust framework and roll out to larger cohort of schools			◆		
Support schools in the development of their individual Youth Development Plans aligned to framework				◆	◆
<b>Systematize and target student health services based on actual student needs</b>					
Pilot Alliance for a Healthy Generation, Healthy Schools initiative with first cohort of schools		◆			
Establish Wellness teams to support students (and adults) school-wide		◆			
Develop comprehensive student health report card for every student		◆			
In partnership with city health agency, explore possibility of expanding student health clinics		◆	◆		

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

Continue to analyze results from annual Student Risk Survey to inform focus and nature of health service offerings, integration per above on health/wellness	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Establish and refine systems to ensure effective engagement and social/emotional learning for every student</b>					
Conduct audit of district and school attendance policies and practices	◆				
Use audit findings to roll out revised comprehensive attendance procedures and protocols	◆				
Conduct staff training on procedures and protocols with focus on clean attendance data	◆	◆			
Develop/enhance attendance reporting and begin using to inform decisions	◆				
Pilot Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports and collect data on existing programs at a cohort of schools to inform expansion of district-wide rollout		◆			
Distinguish and define the role of Social Workers to clearly focus on student social/emotional development rather than counseling activities		◆			
Work with school leaders to ensure Social Worker and Guidance Counselor roles are clarified and distinguished in schools		◆	◆		
Develop plan to increase student leadership opportunities including service learning, and student congress/government in schools		◆	◆		

**GOAL 3: We will recruit, develop, and retain highly effective, diverse people dedicated to student success.**

**OBJECTIVE I: Develop and Support Highly Effective School Leaders**

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

<b>Establish a comprehensive system to recruit and equip school leaders to assume increased autonomy and accountability for school and student performance</b>					
Build a pipeline of leaders through local and national recruitment efforts	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Develop Rochester Leadership Academy to build capacity in practicing school leaders	◆				
Commence Rochester Leadership Academy for first cohort of existing school leaders		◆			
Provide ongoing, principal-driven professional development, mentoring, and coaching through RLA		◆	◆	◆	◆
Build pipeline of aspiring school leaders from within through the Leadership Empowerment Aspiring School leaders Program (LEAPP)		◆	◆	◆	◆
Commence LEAPP for first cohort of aspiring school leaders		◆			
Incorporate LEAPP into RLA structure			◆		
Continue to support new school leaders through mentor program	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Hold school leaders accountable and organize central office supports around their needs (See also Performance Management)</b>					
Support school leaders in School Improvement planning and goal-setting	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Coordinate central office efforts to respond timely and effectively to principal support requests	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Align Zone Chief support with DREAM Schools initiative		◆			
Train/support and hold school leaders accountable for completing timely staff evaluations	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Support and hold school leaders accountable for implementing Rochester Curriculum Framework	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Examine, strengthen, and align principal evaluation, tenure, and compensation structures</b>					
Continue to conduct timely evaluations for each principal	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Consider innovative opportunities to align and strengthen evaluations, tenure and compensation	◆	◆			
Implement innovations in accordance with transition to district-wide roll out of Autonomous and DREAM school structure			◆	◆	

**OBJECTIVE II: Develop and Support Highly Effective Teachers**

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

<b>Recruit and support talented and effective new teachers</b>					
Pilot/continue key partnerships and initiatives to build a pipeline of aspiring, diverse teachers	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Continue RCSD's nationally recognized mentorship program to support first year teachers	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Equip teachers to deliver effective instruction to support student and school performance</b>					
Create Professional Learning Communities of teachers focused on learning, results, and working collaboratively to support effective instruction	◆	◆			

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
Implement systemic, job-embedded, individualized professional development for teachers and increase school level-ownership over teacher PD		◆	◆		
Focus professional development on differentiated, data-informed, academically rigorous and relevant instruction		◆	◆		
Collaborate with higher education to provide standardized professional development curriculum that includes research based practices, instructional procedures, and current regulations for Special Education teachers		◆	◆		
Provide specific research-based professional development for Special Education teachers on how to teach the Rochester Curriculum to students with disabilities		◆	◆		
Provide specific research-based professional development for teachers on how to teach the Rochester Curriculum to English Language Learners		◆	◆		
Research effective models and practices of Teacher Distributed Leadership to inform professional development for teachers			◆		
<b>Examine, strengthen, and align teacher evaluation, tenure, and compensation structures</b>					
Train and hold school leaders accountable for conducting timely teacher evaluations	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Improve alignment between teacher evaluation and tenure recommendations	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Consider innovative opportunities to strengthen teacher compensation and incentives	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

**GOAL 4: We will use world-class operational standards and practices to continuously improve how we support student success**

**OBJECTIVE I: Learning Environment Supports Student Success**

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Increase transportation safety and efficiency to reduce disruptions to instruction and reduce cost</b>					
Issue RFP, select vendor, and realign transportation services from Single to 2 Tier system	◆	◆			
Use GPS/automated tracking systems to enhance transportation efficiency		◆			
Staff buses with security matrons and implement security cameras		◆			
Develop safety plan for students who walk to school		◆			
<b>Provide students with high-quality, age-appropriate food to promote health and wellness</b>					
Audit District food services and use findings to develop plan to overhaul district food services	◆				
Hire food services manager	◆				
Develop RFP for new food services contract with student health and nutrition experts from City agencies, and student health and wellness teams and identify new vendor	◆	◆			
Commence new food service operations		◆			
Continuously improve food services based on customer feedback			◆	◆	◆
<b>Modernize, maintain, and right-size facilities portfolio to support student learning</b>					
Revise capacity and facilities master plan based on school facility needs and changes to the school portfolio driven by school innovation work	◆				
Ensure ongoing collaboration between facilities and school innovation offices for effective portfolio improvement planning and implementation	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Execute facilities modernization program, as part of capital improvement plan, in-conjunction with the Joint School Construction Board/Rochester City Government to improve building conditions and right-size the district	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

**OBJECTIVE II: World-Class Standards of Efficiency and Customer Service**

<b>SUB-STRATEGIES</b>	<b>08-09</b>	<b>09-10</b>	<b>10-11</b>	<b>11-12</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Organize central office (CO) around school and student needs</b>					
Complete Phase I to reorganize central offices to be lean, agile, and responsive to school needs; devolve CO staff to schools.	◆				
Continue right-sizing and reorganization of district around school and student needs.		◆	◆		
Build customer service and job-specific capacity in non-school-central office and field staff through professional development.		◆			
<b>Continuously improve district processes, procedures and systems to better serve schools and students</b>					
Create operating processes and procedures to define, align, and streamline district operations.	◆	◆			
Determine how to maximize use of PeopleSoft to streamline procurement efforts.		◆			

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

Develop plan to increase MWBE procurements.		◆			
Assess current state of HCI systems, processes, and customer service.	◆				
Use diagnostic findings and apply Six Sigma/LEAN to inform improvements to codify and streamline HCI processes for employees, maximize use of HCI systems including PeopleSoft, and improve customer service.		◆			
Roll out training on continuous improvement (Six Sigma/LEAN) to HCI/Staffing, Placement, Transportation, and Food Services.		◆			
Identify other areas in the district where formal continuous improvement orientation/training can be leveraged to improve efficiency and effectiveness.		◆	◆		
Reorganize IT office with greater focus on customer service approach to all end users from schools to central office.	◆				

**GOAL 5: We will create a culture in which we hold ourselves accountable for student success.**

**OBJECTIVE I: Stakeholder Engagement and Satisfaction**

SUB-STRATEGIES	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
<b>Engage parents as partners in the journey to student success.</b>					
Survey parents to align engagement activities, including Parent University offerings, to their needs.		◆			
Make Parent University course modules available online; Improve alignment between Parent University and Adult Education offerings.			◆		
Align parent engagement efforts to School Improvement Plan.		◆			
Work with schools to improve school level parent engagement.		◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Hold ourselves accountable to parents and provide them with efficient customer service.</b>					
Improve use of communication tools; establish email listserv and publish RCF curriculum online, to increase access to and transparency of information for parents and students.		◆	◆		
Consolidate enrollment & placement center into a single location that serves as a "one-stop shop" for families and includes bilingual services and homeless liaison staff.		◆			
Assess feasibility of building newcomer welcome center to support new immigrant students/families.		◆			
Build family orientation center within new center to streamline services, improve quality and quantity of new student data collection, and set expectations with parents about their child's education.		◆			
Survey parents and assess relationship between parent engagement and enrollment/place-ment offices to inform reorganization.			◆		
<b>Establish a professional learning community with strategic partners.</b>					
Engage and sustain partnerships with business, non-profit, and government communities to advance progress toward strategic goals.	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Create structures and formalize mechanisms to engage and sustain partners to ensure accountability for results, mutual learning, and collaboration on strategic efforts to further success.		◆			
<b>Hold ourselves fiscally accountable to taxpayers.</b>					
Conduct thorough analysis of district fiscal position.	◆				
Begin to make resource allocation decisions transparent through Budget Book.		◆			
Be good stewards of taxpayer dollars through strategic alignment of resources to strategic plan.		◆	◆	◆	◆
<b>Communicate effectively internally and to Rochester community.</b>					
Revamp district website.		◆			
Implement new district-wide newspaper for distribution three times annually.		◆			
Build capacity in individual District departments and at school level to maximize use of communications tools to support stakeholder connections.		◆	◆		
Consider feasibility of plan to maximize use of district television stations for school and student communications and recognition.			◆		
As set forth in the plan for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan, provide regular communications updates about progress on the strategic plan.		◆	◆	◆	◆
Continue to issue timely and effective internal and external communications.	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

**OBJECTIVE II: Use Data to Inform Decisions and Actions**

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

**Build formative and summative data tools and train district, schools and families to use them**

Issue RFP and select vendor to build District dashboard to capture formative data, including benchmark assessment results, to monitor student learning in real time	◆				
Build Dashboard		◆			
Build School level scorecard that includes school climate and outcome indicators		◆			
Assess and continuously improve training and other supports to help schools use data to improve teaching and learning		◆	◆		
Begin to collect data and analyze data on high cost programs through a pilot to inform the development of a more robust program evaluation system		◆			
Based on results from pilot, determine how to best evaluate programs for the strategic allocation of resources			◆	◆	
Continuously improve central office capacity to use data to inform decisions and actions	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆

**OBJECTIVE III: Transparency and Equity in Resource Distribution**

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

**Implement a weighted student funding system aligned to the transition to the Autonomous and DREAM school structure**

Increase the transparency of the budget process	◆				
Build analytical and support level capacity around budgeting for weighted student funding		◆			
Develop weighted student funding model		◆			
Pilot weighted student funding model with 4-6 Pioneer schools			◆		
Continue to build capacity around use of weighted student funding through training and communications for central office staff and School Leaders through RLA			◆		
Rollout weighted student funding to all schools, Autonomous and DREAM				◆	

**OBJECTIVE IV: Performance Management**

**SUB-STRATEGIES**

08-09 09-10 10-11 11-12 12-13

**Move to a differentiated school supervision, autonomy, and support structure based on performance**

Analyze school level control over resources and begin to devolve resource to school and build capacity across school leaders	◆				
Define final vision for differentiated autonomies, support, and supervision		◆			
Build vision, initial capacity and, systems for DREAM schools model to identify, intervene, support and transform underperforming schools	◆				
Select, identify, begin transformation of first cohort of DREAM schools	◆				
Provide ongoing support to first cohort of DREAM Schools		◆	◆		
Select, identify, and begin transformation of second cohort of DREAM schools		◆			
Pilot new autonomies with "Pioneer Schools," a first cohort of "Autonomous Schools"			◆		
Use key findings from Pioneer Schools to improve Autonomous schools model for district-wide implementation			◆		
Build Autonomous/DREAM School support capacity to ensure readiness for move to new structure		◆	◆		
Move to district-wide structure of 2 performance levels: Autonomous Schools and DREAM Schools				◆	

**Build District-wide performance management systems to ensure greater district accountability for results**

Align central office staff performance management process to strategic plan		◆			
Clarify performance and progress measures for evaluation across district		◆			
Build capacity across district, from central to schools, to use staff evaluation tools effectively		◆			
Manage performance proactively utilizing formative and summative tools		◆	◆	◆	◆
Engage Center for Governmental Research to monitor strategic plan implementation		◆	◆	◆	◆





## Implementing This Plan

### ***Aligning Resources***

To achieve our goals, we must align our resources -- people, money, and time -- to ensure that they are used where they are needed most: in the classroom. A critical partner in this work has been Education Resource Strategies, a non-profit organization that works with urban public school systems to rethink the use of resources, supporting strategies for improved instruction and performance. This partnership along with our efforts at improving transparency in our use of funds has positioned us well for a more strategic alignment of our resources. The actions and initiatives noted in Year One of the timeline were funded in the 2008-09 school year and have been completed. The majority of the funding we need for activities and initiatives planned for Year Two, 2009-2010, is in place. For Years Three and beyond, resource allocation will be tightly aligned to the strategic plan.

### ***Managing Performance***

Performance management begins with the Superintendent, who is held accountable by contract to the Board of Education. To manage performance throughout the rest of the organization, the Superintendent implemented a performance management process with his Cabinet in Year One. Cabinet members set department-level goals that were aligned to the district goals and against which they were evaluated.

Cabinet members, in turn, implemented a performance management process within their departments. Department staff set goals and were evaluated against them. Moving forward, department-level goals will be aligned to the 5-year strategic goals.

Chiefs of Schools will continue to work with school leaders to support the development of school-level goals and performance targets, aligned to the 5-year strategic goals, through the School Improvement Planning process. Principals will continue to be evaluated against these goals and provided with formative feedback to help them progress. Principals will be supported and held accountable to conduct timely and rigorous teacher evaluations and provide formative feedback to teachers through observations and other feedback mechanisms throughout the school year.

“The focus of all decisions should be what is best, overall, for the child.”

*-Public input from the strategic plan survey*

# Every child is a work of art...

### **Monitoring Implementation**

The purposes of monitoring extend beyond transparency and accountability. Monitoring is a tool to support our efforts to change our culture and keep us on track to success.

Ongoing monitoring provides regular opportunities to learn, reflect, and take quick and informed actions to make progress. It will help us make a habit of using data to recognize, intervene and adjust in support of student achievement. It will help us to model the culture of learning we expect to see in schools and classrooms throughout the organization. It will also provide us with access to formative data, so that we don't wait until the end of a year or five years to discover that we haven't met our goals. Instead, we can assess our performance in real time, so that we can work smarter, making changes earlier and quicker to improve and accelerate our progress toward preparing every student for success.

Our commitment to transparency and accountability has led us to engage the Center for Governmental Research (CGR), an independent, external evaluator with a long history in Rochester, to monitor our implementation of the strategic plan. CGR will serve as the community's representative to hold the district and Superintendent accountable for effective execution of the reforms we initiate. It will support the ongoing documentation and communication of the results of our reform efforts. CGR will supplement and enhance, not supplant, our own monitoring effort. It is first and foremost our own responsibility to ensure the success of our plan in preparing every student for success.

*For updates on the Strategic Plan: [www.rcsdk12.org](http://www.rcsdk12.org)*



Create a Masterpiece.



*Every child is a work of art.  
Create a masterpiece.*

Rochester City School District  
131 West Broad Street  
Rochester, NY 14614

[www.rcsdk12.org](http://www.rcsdk12.org)

**Board of Education**

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Sarah DeLaus

**Superintendent of Schools**

Jean-Claude Brizard

December 2009

Bernard P. Pierorazio  
Superintendent of Schools  
Testimony – Joint Legislative Budget Committee  
February 2, 2010

Good morning. My name is Bernard Pierorazio and as Superintendent of the Yonkers Public Schools, I come before you this morning representing the 25,000 students and over 4,000 employees. I appreciate the opportunity to address the Joint Committee regarding the Governor's proposed Executive Budget for 2010 – 2011.

You have heard from other school districts about the catastrophic impact the Executive Budget 2010 - 2011 will have on those students most in need. The Yonkers Public Schools will be no less affected. The district has and is conscientious in regard to financial matters, putting forth a budgetary increase of less than one percent for the 2009-2010 academic year and building a modest fund balance in prior years which we used, along with federal stimulus dollars, to balance this year's budget.

We understand all too well that we must live within our means as we, the Yonkers Public Schools, do not have the authority to set a tax rate or assessment to pay for new mandates or disruptions in revenue. We have instituted systemic reforms to insure fiscal responsibility, maintained a lean central office staff and recouped a portion of employee health care contributions at the negotiating table. We have aggressively reduced supply and contract budgets over the years and remain vigilant about keeping downward pressure on those items.

The recitation of devastation that the Governor's proposed budget will visit upon the children of this State is clear and well known to all of you. But there is another path. You may join us in the journey toward excellence in education for our children, where college is an aspiration for every student and help insure that every student will compete and succeed in a global economy. Or you may ignore reality, and deny how short-changing our children today will unalterably cripple the foundation of their future.

The troubling miscalculation of the Governor's budget proposal is known to all of us, but it is often ignored because it is either too painful or simply too unsettling to admit:

It is a mistake to support the Governor's proposed budget, which will amount to \$22.33 million in cuts for Yonkers alone, when we all know that such draconian cuts will devastate an instructional program that has recently realized exceptional growth in student achievement.

<b>REDUCTIONS IN NYS AID</b>			
<b>Gap Elimination Adjustment</b>	\$ 15,803,033.00		
<b>Video Lottery Participation*</b>	\$ 1,960,000.00		
<b>Summer Tuition</b>	\$ 917,571.00		
<b>Loss of Discretionary Aid</b>	\$ 3,650,000.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 22,330,604.00</b>		
<b>*Yonkers is the only school district impacted in this way</b>			

The Yonkers Public Schools has a robust pre-kindergarten program; enabling students to far exceed their counterparts who do not attend district early childhood programs. Even the youngest of students are inculcated with the belief that "College is in My Future."

The four-year graduation rate has increased by 9% (highest of the Big 5) and the Class of 2009 earned over \$30 million in scholarships. The District has also implemented a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade model and is focusing capital on funding 300 million dollars for the remediation of health and safety issues in all of our school buildings.

It is a mistake to support the proposed Executive Budget because it makes severe cuts to dependent school districts, like Yonkers, while

ignoring the systemic reforms and budgetary discipline, we had begun to institute long before financial crises became front-page news. Dependent school districts like Yonkers had to plan ahead – unlike other businesses, we cannot limit our focus to particular “markets” or profitable sectors. So, we rebuilt our special education program while reducing associated costs, lowered our overtime costs by over 16% this year and have taken the first steps in a long overdue upgrade of our technology infrastructure. Two-thirds of our children live in poverty; they cannot “opt-out” of public education and we will not “opt-out” of their futures.

	BUFFALO	ROCHESTER	SYRACUSE	YONKERS	NEW YORK CITY
<b>10-11 Formula Total (doesn't include UPK)</b>	\$ 527,469,887.00	\$ 427,869,587.00	\$ 254,706,760.00	\$ 222,266,141.00	\$ 7,273,624,088.00
UPK	\$ 12,761,642.00	\$ 10,824,485.00	\$ 8,076,552.00	\$ 4,269,388.00	\$ 235,331,808.00
Building Aid	\$ 94,314,285.00	\$ 20,783,878.00	\$ 10,229,197.00	\$ 5,776,564.00	\$ 884,133,186.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$634,545,814.00</b>	<b>\$459,477,950.00</b>	<b>\$273,012,509.00</b>	<b>\$232,312,093.00</b>	<b>\$8,393,089,082.00</b>
<b>Gap Elimination Adjustment</b>	\$ (18,377,428.00)	\$ (19,106,586.00)	\$ (11,132,286.00)	\$ (15,803,033.00)	\$ (441,920,169.00)
<b>TOTAL AID 10/11</b>	<b>\$616,168,386.00</b>	<b>\$440,371,364.00</b>	<b>\$261,880,223.00</b>	<b>\$216,509,060.00</b>	<b>\$7,951,168,913.00</b>
TOTAL AID 09/10	\$ 635,637,714.00	\$ 459,955,984.00	\$ 270,642,686.00	\$ 231,588,567.00	\$ 8,354,460,290.00
Difference	\$ (19,469,328.00)	\$ (19,584,620.00)	\$ (8,762,463.00)	\$ (15,079,507.00)	\$ (403,291,377.00)
Percentage Reduction	-3.06%	-4.26%	-3.24%	<b>-6.51%</b>	-4.83%

It is a mistake to support the proposed Executive Budget and ignore the fixed costs of \$391.18 million of salaries and benefits (representing over 74% of our budget) not to mention utilities, fuel costs, debt service and emergency repairs that Yonkers Public Schools has no discretion to reduce. The following chart illustrates the increases in employee benefits.

<b>INCREASES IN EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>				
	FY 09/10	FY 10/11	Increase	Percentage Increase
Health Care	\$ 59,238,081.00	\$ 63,233,415.00	\$ 3,995,334.00	6.74%
Civil Service				
Retirement	\$ 4,342,211.00	\$ 7,382,782.00	\$ 3,040,571.00	70.02%
Teacher Retirement	\$ 12,215,565.00	\$ 18,121,116.00	\$ 5,905,551.00	48.34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 75,795,857.00</b>	<b>\$ 88,737,313.00</b>	<b>\$ 12,941,456.00</b>	<b>17.07%</b>

We had the foresight to negotiate relatively low increases in the out years of current collective bargaining agreements. But these agreements were negotiated when the expectation was that the state aid formula would be driving \$10 million more in Foundation Aid to the District than the Executive Budget proposes for 2010-2011. If we cannot rely on basic aid assurances, how can we reasonably plan for the future?

It is a mistake to support the proposed Executive Budget without dealing with, for once and for all, the unfunded mandates imposed upon us, such as those associated with the "No Child Left Behind" act and others initiated by the Board of Regents or State Statute, which burden the Yonkers Public Schools by tens of millions of dollars annually.

It is a mistake to support the proposed Executive Budget without first addressing the Foundation Aid formula. As I mentioned earlier, we did not receive the minimum 3% increase this year and will not receive it next year. But all of us in this room know that is the least of the Foundation Aid problem. The method New York State uses to fund our district is seriously flawed, resulting in an underlying inequity that has historically plagued the Yonkers Public Schools. The Yonkers Board of Trustees, Yonkers Mayor and City Council have spoken out against this continuing unfairness. Our State Senators and Assemblymen have been sympathetic but unable to enact change. I have made this perfectly clear in a position paper presented to legislative budget office staffs last year. Cautious and careful district management, award-winning schools, and progressive educational programs are no match for a flawed State formula. The Yonkers Public Schools is a District in Good Academic Standing, a positive designation we have just achieved after years of hard work. These cuts will precipitate the demise of our academic accomplishments by forcing the District to dismantle our school staff and programs. To add financial cuts to an already inequitable formula is unconscionable.

It is a mistake, and perhaps the biggest mistake, to support the proposed Executive Budget when every single one of you knows that the poorest students in New York State, in urban districts like the Big

5, will shoulder a disproportionate amount of the burden. This fact is clear and has been demonstrated. The Executive Budget 2010 – 2011 indicates a per student reduction that acts in inverse proportion to the Combined Wealth Ratio of a district. Put simply, districts serving the wealthiest students are hurt the least while those serving impoverished populations pay the most per capita.

This was illustrated most clearly in the January 23<sup>rd</sup> article in the New York Times written by Nicholas Confessore, “*Depth of School Cuts Depends on Who Gets Them*”. It illustrated a 24% cut to a wealthy Long Island district that amounted to \$170,588 which, in reality is easily surmountable by that district. In comparison, the Yonkers Public Schools will be reduced overall by 7.1%, the highest reduction of all the Big Five districts, which translates into 15.8 million dollars or the potential loss of 225 teaching positions. Is that fair? This amounts to a head tax, but instead of one amount being assessed for each student equally, the poorest students pay the highest amounts. The Gap Elimination Adjustment amounts to nearly \$660 for every student in Yonkers. The unfairness of the Gap Elimination Adjustment is breathtaking. Don’t place the greatest burden on the poorest and most underserved children; if budgets must be reduced, spread the burden equally among all the students in every district throughout the state.

	BUFFALO	ROCHESTER	SYRACUSE	YONKERS	NEW YORK CITY
<b>10-11 Formula</b>					
Total (doesn't include UPK)	\$ 527,469,887.00	\$ 427,869,587.00	\$ 254,706,760.00	\$ 222,266,141.00	\$ 7,273,624,088.00
<b>Gap Elimination</b>					
Adjustment	\$ 18,377,428.00	\$ 19,106,586.00	\$ 11,132,286.00	\$ 15,803,033.00	\$ 441,920,169.00
<b>09-10 Public</b>					
Enrollment (Without PreK)	39,722.00	33,679.00	20,940.00	23,959.00	995,962.00
Formula Aid per Pupil	13,279.04	12,704.34	12,163.65	<b>9,276.94</b>	7,303.11
GEA per Pupil	\$ 462.65	\$ 567.31	\$ 531.63	<b>\$ 659.59</b>	\$ 443.71
GEA as % of Formula Total	3.48%	4.47%	4.37%	<b>7.11%</b>	6.08%

None of us want to ignore the serious reality of this fiscal crisis, but we need a fighting chance. Several years ago, the Yonkers Public



Schools realized it could not make lasting change without facing the “brutal facts”. Facing those facts have allowed us to maintain and improve excellence in our schools while managing the district in a fiscally responsible way. In turn, there are brutal facts you must face about the Governor’s proposed budget for 2010 – 2011. This budget will cause massive personnel reductions in a district that is overpopulated (569 new students) and already understaffed by a loss of over 132 FTEs after last year’s reductions. Among the terminated will be the newest teachers, those with the brightest futures, who, like their more experienced colleagues, maintain a will and compassion for students.

It is easy to be cynical in these times, but none of you chose a life in public service to be cynics. On behalf of over 25,000 Yonkers Public Schools students whose hopes and dreams depend on a credible public commitment to keep your promise to fund education at specific levels, I implore you to choose hope and to stop the ruinous cuts that were proposed by the Governor. Support educational progress, fiscal responsibility, and fundamental fairness to the children we serve. Their future is the only future we have.

It is the district’s absolute responsibility to provide our children with excellence in learning, readying them to become adults who steadfastly contribute to their families, their communities, their country and their world. We cannot do this job without your help.

Thank you.

5D

*Conference of Big 5 School Districts*

*Budget Testimony Before*

*New York State Legislative*

*Fiscal and Education Committees*



February 2, 2010

Presented By:

Georgia M. Ascitutto, Executive Director  
Conference of Big 5 School Districts

Good afternoon. I am Georgia Ascitutto, Executive Director of the Conference of Big 5 School Districts representing the large city school districts of Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers. Thank you for the opportunity to address you here today.

I would first like to provide you with some brief statistics. The Big 5 school districts collectively enroll almost 41% of New York State's public school students. 75% of all English Language Learners and Limited English Proficient Pupils in New York State and nearly 70% of the State's pre-kindergarteners are educated in the Big 5. In addition, over 42% of the State's special education students (ages 5-21) attend schools in our districts. Student poverty rates in the State's large urban centers are staggering and the Big 5 school districts have high rates of student mobility, homelessness and students living in shelters. Furthermore, school buildings in the Big 5 average 70 years old and four of the five city school districts still utilize school facilities built before 1900.

Despite these challenges, all of the Big 5 have demonstrated significant gains in student achievement in recent years due, in large part, to

your commitment to providing additional resources. We urge the State to continue to work with us as we build upon our successes.

The State Education Department recently announced a new school reform agenda and released a list of the State's Persistently Low Achieving Schools. Our school leaders must be afforded the authority to manage their district-wide school improvement strategies. Furthermore, effective instructional plans, particularly those for low performing schools, necessitate granting school leaders discretion in making teacher placement decisions.

It is important to note that several schools cited on the Persistently Low Achieving Schools list have large concentrations of English Language Learners (ELL). Relief should be afforded for these schools from unfair testing protocols and unreasonable State and federal accountability requirements. The ELL students deserve a reasonable timetable for achievement of State and federal performance benchmarks.

The 2010-2011 Executive Budget fails to fulfill the promises made and jeopardizes the future of our State's large city school districts and the millions of children they serve. We recognize the enormous fiscal crisis

currently facing the State, however care must be taken to ensure that public education is not sacrificed during these difficult times. All children deserve a quality educational experience and a chance to succeed. The future of our State and the nation as a whole depends on it. Each of the Big 5 school districts are facing staggering projected budget gaps for the 2010-2011 school year due in large part to mandated escalating costs in areas such as pensions and health care.

We urge you to restore the \$1.4 billion Gap Elimination Adjustment cut to fulfill the promises of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity remedy for all school districts serving high need students. Furthermore, the Foundation Aid freeze must be lifted and the phase-in implemented now. Our districts cannot afford to endure an additional two-year freeze and to wait until 2016-2017 for full phase-in. The Governor's proposed freeze shortchanges districts experiencing enrollment growth as these additional pupils and the costs associated with them are not factored in for reimbursement.

In addition, the State must change the way the 2010-2011 AOE calculation is done to exclude grant funds which were rolled into Foundation Aid that were otherwise not used to calculate Approved Operating Expense

(AOE) for the Big 5 school districts. These grants include Magnet funds, Early Grade Class Size Reduction funds and Teacher Support Aid (TSA) in certain circumstances. Capturing these funds into Foundation Aid will elevate a district's AOE per pupil and prospectively inflate charter school payments while decreasing High Cost Excess Cost Aid. Both of these negative consequences were unintentional and would be avoided if these categorical funds were excluded from the formula.

We are pleased with the Governor's continued commitment to Prekindergarten but several of our districts will again be forced to turn back large portions of their allocation absent any additional flexibility. The UPK Program must continue to be expanded to meet increasing needs for full day programs in the urban centers without penalty. The State should permit UPK funds to be flexibly used to match local district Pre-K needs and the Transportation Aid formula should be revised to account for Pre-K pupils, particularly since full day Pre-K programs are an identified Contract for Excellence initiative.

It is imperative that schools are fully able to provide supportive learning environments for their students, teachers and staffs. Meeting the

higher standards demands adequate facilities. As I mentioned previously, the Big 5 school districts have some of the most outdated and inadequate school buildings in the State. Each of the Big 5 is moving forward with major capital construction projects to address these needs. These efforts would be compromised if the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Building Aid ratio choice were enacted. Furthermore, the Building Aid formula should be adjusted to allow for reimbursement for school based health and mental health clinics in our large urban centers. I want to thank Senator Velmanette Montgomery and Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan for their leadership on this issue. Facilities like this are essential in the State's large city school districts as they serve, in many cases, as a student's only provider of health or mental health services.

The Governor's proposed cost shift of Preschool Special Education expenses to school districts is extremely problematic. Under the Executive plan, county expenditures for approved costs exceeding two percent over the base would be shifted to school districts. Our schools have no control over these costs and cannot afford to absorb them. We urge you to reject this proposal.

In addition, the Executive Budget proposal to alter reimbursement for Summer School for Disabled Students must be revisited, as the current proposal would negatively impact some districts by shifting State costs to the districts.

The Executive Budget proposes changes to the dates on which Superintendent Conference Days may be held thereby penalizing districts for scheduling these critical professional development opportunities prior to the start of the school year. This language must be altered to permit districts to obtain credit for these days.

We are pleased with the provisions contained in the Executive Budget that would permit districts to subtract a percentage reduction of their Deficit Reduction Assessment off their Contract for Excellence maintenance of effort levels. We also applaud the Governor's inclusion of a number of mandate relief proposals including a moratorium on unfunded mandates, the streamlining of reporting requirements and WICKS Law reform.

We are also encouraged by the Governor's inclusion of funds for the Smart Scholars Early College High School program to support programs



designed to enable students to earn college credits prior to completing high school.

Lastly, while we are pleased that the Governor has frozen charter school payments for the 2010-2011 school year we would also ask that Charter School Transition funds be expanded to better offset the fiscal duress many districts are facing as a result of the current charter school funding formula.

In closing I would like to thank the Governor and the Legislature for your ongoing efforts on behalf of urban education in New York State. I implore you to keep the promises made and fully fund your commitment.

We look forward to working with you throughout the Legislative Session and we welcome the opportunity to provide you with any information that may be of assistance to you. Thank you.



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**NEW YORK ASSOCIATION  
FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

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**STATEMENT OF THE  
NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION**

**JOINT HEARING OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
AND THE ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**2010-2011 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2010**

**PETER F. MANNELLA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**JOHN J. M<sup>c</sup>CORMICK  
RIVERHEAD CSD  
PRESIDENT**



# NYAPT

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*Our future is riding with us!*

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION  
JOINT HEARING OF THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
AND THE ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

**2010-2011 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL  
FEBRUARY 2, 2010**

***HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY:***

My name is Peter Mannella and I serve as Executive Director for the New York Association for Pupil Transportation. We are pleased to offer our comments regarding the proposed Executive Budget and to share some simple facts about school transportation with you at this time.

The over 600 members of the New York Association for Pupil Transportation are the women and men who daily strive to ensure a safe and efficient ride to and from school for over 2.3 million of New York's children. Our members are proud of the safety record we have attained in New York State over the years and are constantly engaged in ways to improve on that record and to make our school buses safer and better for our children.

**School Transportation in  
New York State**

- ✓ 2,300,000 children ride yellow school buses
- ✓ 50,000 school buses
- ✓ 50,000 school bus drivers
- ✓ 1,656,000,000 times a child gets on or off a school bus each year

The work of the Legislature and the Governor over the years has been of significant benefit to this effort and we are appreciative of the appropriations of funds and the laws that have been passed in the interests of our children's safety.

Our members are cognizant of the difficult financial decisions and choices that this Legislature and the Governor must make in this budget. The serious financial difficulties that we face together as a state require all of us to find new ways to complete our work for the people. In transporting our CHILDREN, we understand that we must find new ways to manage the costs associated with the school bus ride. However, we caution the Legislature to avoid steps that could compromise the safety of the children and to avoid steps that result in increased burdens on parents and school communities.

*Our statement will address the following important points:*

- *Continued state support for school transportation*
- *Proposals for regional delivery of school transportation services*
- *Proposal for 'shared services' contracts*
- *Continued support of a \$400,000 appropriation for School Bus Driver Training Program and the need to reform Section 3650 of the Education Law that governs those funds*
- *Mandate Relief and Pre-Kindergarten Transportation Recommendations*
- *Simple Facts about Costs and Cost Savings in School Transportation*

**Continued State Support for School Transportation**

***Transportation Aid in the 2010-2011 Budget***

The Governor's budget includes sufficient funds to reimburse school districts for the state's share of the costs of school transportation. The Executive Budget includes \$1,646,660,000 in funding, an increase of \$99.72 million (6.45%) over the \$1,547,940,000 appropriated in last year's budget.

Recognizing the steady increase in the cost of diesel fuel and the increased cost of school buses and school bus safety technology (particularly emissions reduction technology) school transportation professionals are struggling to deliver safe and efficient transportation services in more cost effective ways. In fact, in recent years, our members have worked to reduce the percentage of local school budgets that go to school transportation costs. In a small sampling of our members, we found that most had reduced that percentage from the 6.5-7.0% level in 2003 to the 5.3-5.6% level in the last school year.

Transportation aid is an expense-based aid, meaning that the number that appears in the Executive Budget reflects the costs that were incurred by school districts in the prior school year. For this reason, it appears that Transportation Aid is receiving an increase in funding in this budget and that this 'increase' is at the expense of other educational needs. We know that is not the case. Most of our members are cutting services at the local level in ways that will likely be reflected in coming budgets. But we remain concerned about the kinds of service cuts being made. We are concerned that some cuts may adversely affect student safety because we know that the safest way to transport a child to school is on a yellow school bus. We are concerned that some changes will result in further burdens on parents to drive their children to school or force children to walk longer distances absent the infrastructure (sidewalks, road markings, traffic controls, and more) to ensure their safety.

Our members know that transportation is under the microscope and that many believe that Transportation Aid is an expenditure that should be reduced.

Our members know that others see Transportation Aid as taking needed money out of the classroom.

Our members also know that Transportation is most often the access point for children to their education. We are a means to an end.

Our members know the simple fact that it is an expensive proposition to transport 2.3 million children with various needs, picking them up and dropping them off from a variety of venues, traveling through varying local traffic and weather and getting them to school and back home again on time and safely.

Our members also are committed to collaborating with other school officials to identify ways to reduce the rate of that increase year-to-year, while not compromising safety and the quality of the school bus ride. We will share several real-life factors that affect the cost of school transportation. We will explain how these are entirely outside our control and we will request the Legislature and the Governor to explore solutions and alternatives that will help reduce those costs.

*At the end of the day, our job is to transport children to and from school and school-related activities, at the direction of others, in compliance with numerous laws and regulations, and in the safest, most efficient way possible. We don't create expenses; rather we respond to needs that are placed on our desks by our school leaders to ensure that our school children get where they need to be. We ask you to understand this fact and to eye change in transportation through that lens.*

### **Proposals for Regional Delivery of School Transportation Services**

The Governor has included two proposals for regional delivery of school transportation services. There has been much interest demonstrated in recent years for the regional delivery of services and for consolidation of school transportation services.

Our association has shared with numerous state officials our concerns about a cookie-cutter approach to delivery of these essential services. We have argued that regional approaches not be mandated or centralized through BOCES programs or other mandated systems. These proposed provisions do not mandate regional arrangements but seem to provide the opportunity for school districts to explore such arrangements to address their own needs.

While we support such flexibility, we are unclear as to how Transportation Aid will flow and encourage the Legislature to clarify this question by directing that the aid for transporting students in regionally based programs be allotted to the school district that holds responsibility for that transportation.

The second proposal in the Governor's budget proposal authorizes the Education Commissioner to establish one or more demonstration projects to review the effectiveness of regional transportation service strategies. We are concerned that there are no conditions or priorities expressed by the Legislature in terms of the information to be gained from the demonstration, how sites will be selected, what kinds of technical assistance will be offered to participating school districts and other factors. Nor is there any indication as to the desirable number of such projects. Moreover, we are concerned that there is no indication as to what criteria or considerations the Commissioner should observe in assessing the efficacy of regional demonstrations or interpreting the results of such activities.

We urge the Legislature to provide further specificity in the proposed language to ensure fairness and broad representation of school districts in such demonstrations, and to ensure that we garner the information needed to make smart and efficient decisions based on the results.

### *Proposals for 'Shared Services' Contracts*

The Executive Budget also includes an option to allow for sharing the services of private contractors through an approach we have come to refer to as "piggy-backing." This proposal would set conditions under which a school district could enter into a contract that exists between another school district and a private contractor.

We understand the intent of this provision but are concerned that – if it is not properly monitored – it could result in compromising the competitive school transportation bid process. The process described in the proposal is similar to the process described in Senate bill S5523. Essentially, it allows District A to sign onto a transportation contract that exists between District B and a private contractor despite not having been a part of the bid process that led to that contract.

In order to accomplish the intent of this provision, we would recommend several steps to customize the process. We could support provisions under which such arrangements:

- Would not extend past the end of the school year in which they were begun. This would ensure that the competitive bid process is allowed to play out before the next school year begins. This would provide some degree of protection for private contractors whose prices and service plans are based on the specifications of the bids on which the contracts are based;
- Would be limited to instances involving non-recurring circumstances such as, but not limited to the transportation of students with disabilities, students who are determined to be homeless during the school year, and others;
- Would be allowed where the competitive bidding process would unnecessarily delay the provision of needed transportation services.

It is important that flexibility be provided to local school districts but it is also important that the relationship between school districts and private contractors be allowed to function in accordance with sound market practices and not manipulated in any way.

### *Comprehensive School Bus Driver Training Program and Funds*

#### *School Bus Driver Safety Training Advisory Council*

In 1997, the Legislature and the Governor created the Comprehensive School Bus Driver Safety Training program in Section 3650 of the Education Law. That section established an advisory council to be appointed by

the Governor with nominations for several seats reserved to the Legislature. The intent was to develop a cohesive and long-term plan of attack to complete the training need by school bus drivers.

That Council has never met its potential – in fact it has met only once in its 13 year existence in law. We believe that reform and revitalization of this council will lead to more effective and more targeted services to our drivers and attendants, and those who are responsible for ensuring the safe and efficient transportation of our children. We believe that many of the concerns that are expressed by members of the Legislature regarding school bus safety and school bus driver preparation would be addressed more effectively if this Council had been in place and allowed to perform its responsibilities in this regard.

*We call upon the Governor and the Legislature to (1) amend section 3650 to bring it up to date in terms of responsibilities and in terms of expectations of the Council and (2) expeditiously appoint members to the Council to ensure that it can do its work on a timely basis. Such actions would ensure that the Education Department continues to provide timely and necessary training and training materials for school bus drivers, attendants and related personnel. Putting the Council in place will instill a cohesiveness and strategic planning discipline that would improve the design and delivery of these vital training services.*

#### Funding for School Bus Driver Training

The New York Association for Pupil Transportation is grateful for the continued appropriation of \$400,000 in funds for the Comprehensive School Bus Driver Safety Training program – which has been appropriated every year since 1997. We recognize and call your attention to the vital training materials and programs that these funds have supported over the years. *Accordingly, we urge you to support the appropriation of these funds in the final enacted budget.*

*We continue to work with the State Education Department to ensure timely release of these funds for training of school bus drivers and attendants in emerging training areas, including bullying, school bus security, special needs transportation, sensitivity and awareness of student needs and effective student behavior management. We have remain concerned over several years about the fact that these funds are not expended on a timely basis and are therefore not available to assist in training our school bus drivers.*

We are also hopeful that funds will be allotted for crucial new curricula for the preparation of the School Bus Driver Instructors who train our school bus drivers and attendants. We will call for a strengthening of this system to continue the tradition of excellence that has resulted in our state's stellar school bus safety record. That system cannot be allowed to weaken – it is the front line in our efforts to keep our children safe.

#### Flexibility in the Use of These Funds

One of the concerns we have shared with the Executive, this Legislature and the Education Department over recent years is the inability of the Department to expend the funds appropriated to it for this important purpose. Their failure to commit and expend these funds means that training materials and programs for school bus drivers are not being completed and made available---at a time when such training is needed more than ever.

We understand that competitive proposal processes take time and that the state's procurement system can be very deliberate. *Accordingly, we urge the Governor and the Legislature to take steps to allow the Department, within the appropriations made, to expedite and increase the flow of funds for the delivery of critical training services for our school bus drivers and attendants.*

We recommend that, on a limited basis each year, SED be allowed to purchase educational media, training guides, videos and other materials that have been developed for training and educating school bus personnel. We are aware of nationally-recognized manuals for school bus driver awareness of the needs of students with disabilities, and materials related to school bus security and emissions reduction. These materials currently cannot be purchased without a lengthy competitive bidding process. If the department were able to purchase

such materials during the course of the school year, it could enable the more efficient and effective use of these funds. *We urge the legislature to work with the industry and the Education Department to devise ways to accomplish this in the language included in this State Budget. One possible approach would be for the Legislature to qualify the appropriations language to say that, for example: "the department may, within this appropriation and upon the recommendation of the Comprehensive School Bus Driver Safety Training Advisory Council, expend up to XX% of the funds appropriated for the purpose of purchasing educational media, training guides, videos and related materials that have been developed specifically for the training and preparation of school bus drivers, attendants, monitors and related school transportation personnel."*

**Simple Facts About Costs and Cost Savings in School Transportation**

In recent years, school transportation costs have risen due to a variety of changes in the costs of school buses and school bus equipment, diesel fuel and related items, advanced and mandated emissions technologies, homeless transportation, and special needs transportation. Some of these costs are within our control, while others clearly are not.

In light of this, our association members have been considering all aspects of their work and working as professionals to identify opportunities for cost containment and for continuous improvement of their operations. This effort is uncovering ways (including reducing mandates) in which our operations can be made more efficient and cost effective without unnecessarily compromising safety.

**Finding Ways to Save**

- Sharing Special Needs Routes
- Re-Assessing Services
- Sharing Maintenance & Training
- Examining Bell Times
- Reviewing Routing
- Effective Use of Technology

There are examples across the state of measures that school transportation professionals have undertaken to reduce costs in the past year:

- One Suffolk County school district has reduced the costs of transporting nine special needs students to out-of-district programs by \$150,000 by providing those transportation services themselves rather than contracting with their local BOCES. We will encourage all of our members to review all of their operations looking for opportunities to deliver services in different ways that might be more cost effective.
- In the Capital Region, one school district has begun transporting students with and for neighboring districts to a special education school over 100 miles from Albany. This step has saved each of the school districts significant funding over the past year. We will be encouraging other districts to explore similar arrangements for transporting special needs students, students who are homeless and other special populations.
- Another group of Suffolk County schools and private contractors have worked with their BOCES colleagues to adjust 'bell times' in such a way as to reduce the number of buses needed to transport children to those programs, thereby saving as much as \$500,000 in this school year alone. We are encouraging other districts to carry out similar negotiating activities for this purpose.
- In the Dutchess County and Monroe County areas, school districts that are members of our local chapters have started to meet on an annual basis to identify where they might share services among them to cut down on the number of buses going to private and parochial schools, BOCES programs and special needs program sites.
- In Rockland County, one of our members from a mid-sized school district implemented a computer-based routing software program that was able to assist the district in reducing the number of routes and saving over \$400,000. The use of such technology is played out in hundreds of school districts in the state that utilize such cutting edge computerized programs.

These measures did not require state legislation or regulation and none of them required consolidation or steps to regionalize the delivery of transportation services to children in their communities. It took the creativity of well-qualified school transportation professionals with an understanding of how transportation works and can be made more efficient.

Our members will continue to find innovative ways to accomplish two objectives: (1) ensuring the safe transport of 2.3 million of New York's children each and every day; (2) implementing those services in the most efficient way possible without compromising that safety.

### Challenges in School Transportation

#### Effects on Costs

- Crude Oil Price Volatility
- Special Needs Means Custom Services
- Homeless Students Mean Longer Distances
- 15 Miles for Non-Public Transportation: Long Distance
- Calendar Inconsistencies Mean Extra Days of Operation

The Governor's budget proposal includes provisions that would encourage school districts to explore regional delivery of school transportation services. This proposal stems from numerous reports that draw attention to the increased costs of school transportation. What these reports do not address is the simple fact that transportation of our children is expensive....and that there are legitimate and on-going reasons for this reality.

As indicated above, school transportation professionals work every day to stretch the dollars available to them. But there are factors affecting school transportation services that are not entirely within our control and these need to be discussed openly because no effort to reduce transportation costs can be successful if it does not address these factors.

Our members are intent on reducing the costs of transportation where possible, but call the attention of the Governor and the Legislature to the fact that most of the factors that add to the high costs of transportation are not under our control. We believe that some of these factors should be addressed even while we explore other delivery methods like regional service delivery. They will deliver savings and efficiencies in and of themselves.

### *High Costs of Fuel and Petroleum-Based Products*

School districts as well as private school bus contractors are faced, especially in recent years, by great volatility and fluctuation in the price of crude oil. This has had a serious impact on the costs not only of diesel fuel (which some estimate will exceed \$3.30 per gallon in the coming year), but also of gasoline, lubricants, engine oils, cleaning solvents, transmission fluids, anti-freeze, rubber tires and belts, and even plastic school bus parts.

### *Homeless Students*

School districts all across the state have experienced a significant increase in the number of homeless students who have moved outside their district of origin and who, by federal and state law, must be transported back to that school district. Many of these students are transported to and from distances as great as 50 miles (or 100 miles round trip) each day. One of our members shared that they have three homeless students who must be transported 50 miles round trip each day. The cost for providing that transportation for those three children through the local BOCES was estimated at over \$90,000 per year. The district provided the services with existing staff at an annual estimated cost of \$16,000. The point is that our members know that these services are vital to the students and the students' families and they go out of their way to find creative and economical ways to resolve the needs.

While none of our members takes issue with the significant human needs being experienced by these students, we are concerned that there is no financial assistance available to support this extraordinary transportation activity and expense. Some of our school districts are transporting several hundred homeless students. This



transportation most often occurs outside established school bus routes, thereby resulting in increases to the overall cost of transportation to the district of origin.

We are working with advocacy and resource organizations as best as we can to find new ways to assist these students in their needs, but the simple fact is that it is costly to transport children over those distances outside the normal routing and schedules.

#### *Students with Special Needs*

Students with special needs are of particular interest and concern to our members as transportation professionals. There is no area in our profession that garners more interest for training sessions than programs that deal with the safe and effective transportation of students with disabilities. Transporting students with disabilities to and from school each day is crucial to their ability to learn. We believe we provide those children access to school and to education. But, again, the simple fact is that the transportation and related services required for many of these students are especially costly:

- It is costly to transport a medically-fragile child on a school bus or to accompany that student with a nurse or personal aide.
- It is costly to equip a school bus with climate controls that address a child's health needs or to limit the number of other students on a school bus to address a child's sensitivity to large numbers of people.
- It is costly – even though necessary – to send a school bus and school bus driver on extended trips, including overnight trips, to ensure the safe transport of students who receive educational services in schools hundreds of miles from their residence.
- It is costly to provide special training to school bus drivers and attendants who are responsible for transporting an emotionally disabled student who needs their support and cooperation.
- It is costly to equip a school bus carrying students with disabilities with preventive and reactive equipment related to fires, medical emergencies, illness and emergency evacuation.

Our drivers and attendants are literally the gateway to education for many of these students. We do our level best to get them to school on time so that they can arrive in class with all their peers and friends. We would not want to lessen the amount or extent of services to them. We are concerned that commissions and state officials do not recognize the simple fact that it is costly to transport these children safely --- and make no mistake: their safety is the most important factor we consider.

#### *Private and Parochial Schools: 15 Miles Is a Long Way*

In New York, unlike most other states, public schools are required to provide transportation to students who attend non-public schools up to a distance of 15 miles. This is a significant distance and it becomes costly because most often a special bus is sent out to accommodate those students who are at the furthest distances. Any time a school bus is sent out for small numbers of students at considerable distances, the cost is greater than transporting within a more concentrated and route-based area.

NYAPT has long opposed proposals to increase this 15-mile distance to 25 miles and it is with some hesitance that we suggest that reducing the mandatory distance to 10 miles would dramatically reduce the overall costs of school transportation. Some districts in the Westchester County area are able to estimate that between 15-20% of their total transportation costs can be attributed to the transportation between the 10-mile boundary and the 15-mile boundary. This is significant distance that represents a significant cost – therefore it must be honestly and constructively discussed by all involved.

## *Standardized Annual School Calendar*

NYAPT members are unified in believing that the one bold step that the Legislature could take would be to standardize the annual school calendar. The cost of providing transportation to small numbers of students at a limited number of schools on days that public schools are otherwise closed is significant.

This includes transportation to BOCES occupational and special education programs and regular school classes at private and parochial schools. It is vital that this issue be addressed. If this step is taken, it would save schools and the state several million dollars per year. Absent action, it is clear that those same millions of dollars would continue to burden local and state taxpayers unnecessarily.

In addition, the Legislature is urged to clarify in law a prohibition on providing transportation to students in non-public schools prior to the opening day of school for public schools who are responsible for transporting the non-public school students. There is apparently a lack of clarity on this matter. This would be addressed in a standardized school calendar but we ask that it be addressed separately pending any action to standardize the school calendar.

### **Mandate and Administrative Relief Recommendations**

The members of our association believe that there are areas that should not be cutback in difficult times. These involve vehicle maintenance and inspections and training and skills development particularly among drivers, attendants/monitors, but also inclusive of technicians, dispatchers, trainers and managers.

However, we do believe that there are numerous ways to streamline and lower the costs of school transportation management without compromising safety or the integrity of the school bus ride.

#### **Examples of Mandate Relief**

- ✓ Reduce reporting and paperwork requirements
- ✓ Go electronic for contract filings
- ✓ Eliminate new and freeze equipment mandates
- ✓ Eliminate duplicative fingerprinting

Our recommendations for mandate relief include but are not limited to the following:

- Eliminating the regulatory requirement for preparing reports related to the extent to which school bus drivers are complying with anti-idling regulations. This requirement exceeds the provisions of Section 3637 of the Education Law that calls for school districts to impose anti-idling policies and practices. The reports are neither statutorily required, necessary nor productive;
- Introducing electronic protocols for school transportation contracts and school bus purchases to alleviate burdensome paperwork, delays in processing, errors in processing and related problems;
- Eliminate requirement that RFP materials be submitted to the Education Department as part of the transportation contract approval process;
- Eliminate the requirement that school bus drivers who have already completed the criminal background check required under Section 509-cc of the Vehicle and Traffic Law be required to complete a criminal background check under Section 305 of the Education Law in order to assume additional responsibilities as a school bus attendant/monitor;
- Eliminating the requirement for the SCHOOL BUS sign on yellow school buses to be a backlit apparatus, which adds to the purchase cost and maintenance costs of the vehicle. New York remains one of only a small handful of states with this mandate;
- Placing a freeze on all new mandates for school bus equipment without 100% funding for such equipment;
- Placing a freeze on all new mandates for training of school transportation personnel including school bus drivers and attendants.

### Transportation of Universal Pre-K Students

We add an additional cost and budget item that warrants your attention and action. We would note that many school districts are engaged in the State's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program and that many of those districts are providing safe transportation for those children by transporting them in yellow school buses. The cost for that important transportation for our youngest students is not eligible for state aid under current law. We urge the Legislature and the Governor to join with the Universal Pre-K programs and advocates, along with our association, in addressing this gap in ensuring the safety of our children.

### Closing

In closing, we again appreciate the opportunity to share this information and our comments with you. School transportation is an essential part of the education enterprise. School transportation employees – school bus drivers, attendants and monitors, dispatchers, technicians and mechanics, trainers and safety specialists, managers and supervisors – are integral parts of the school family. School transportation managers are hard-working, creative and committed professionals dedicated to the proposition that *every child is entitled to a Safe ride to school.*

We are available to discuss any and all elements of our statement and are eager to share in discussions about school bus safety and school transportation. Thank you.

Peter F. Mannella  
Executive Director

*(For further information or to discuss this statement, please contact Peter Mannella, Executive Director, at 518-463-4937, or you may email Peter Mannella at [peter@nyapt.org](mailto:peter@nyapt.org). You may also want to visit our website at [www.nyapt.org](http://www.nyapt.org))*



94 Central Avenue  
(518) 432-5315

Testimony to the Joint Assembly Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees

Marina Marcou-O'Malley  
Policy Analyst, Alliance for Quality Education

February 2, 2010

Good morning, my name is Marina Marcou-O'Malley and I am a Policy Analyst with the Alliance for Quality Education. I wish to thank Chairman Farrell and Chairman Kruger for the opportunity to testify today on the proposed education cuts.

AQE is comprised of 230 community organizations representing parents, students, and community members – on behalf of AQE I urge you to reject the \$1.4 billion cuts proposed to education in the executive budget. In the current economic context, schoolchildren are being asked to make the largest contribution to closing the budget deficit than anyone else in the state. And, this contribution they are asked to make, is on top of the contribution they made last year when they endured the breaking of the state's promise to them with the delivery of no Campaign for Fiscal Equity money. I urge you, don't make more cuts on top of this broken promise; every student deserves the opportunity to learn. These cuts will negate the progress students have made so far.

As speaker Silver has said, "[the governor's] budget proposal cuts school aid by \$1.4 billion and leaves the state \$4.2 billion below what we originally pledged under our CFE commitment...Four years after the Court of Appeals found that New York was shortchanging the education of our highest-needs children, the Governor's proposed cuts go too far."

It feels like we are back to the early '90s, when the Campaign for Fiscal Equity was first filed. Back then, we were talking about how under resourced our schools were. After fifteen years of court battles, the state's highest court ruled that indeed our schools were so under resourced that they were failing to provide a sound basic education, every student's constitutional right. The state did the right thing, the legislature took action through the 2007 education reform and promised schoolchildren that it would implement accountability measures and add \$5.5 billion in foundation aid – basic classroom operating aid-over four years to ensure that they had the opportunity to learn by enacting the 2007 education reform. We all thank you for that.

The 2007 education reform was a good step forward. We had two years of increased accountability and funding. Students had increased access to programs and smaller classrooms that helped them do better in school and achieve more. In all big 5 school districts, students scored higher in math and English language arts. And then, the promise was broken. In last year's budget, we went from two years of increased funding to flat funding which essentially translated into cuts.

Even with the flat level funding, school districts resorted to some layoffs and program cuts. One can only imagine what will be on the chopping block this year. Mayor Bloomberg already announced that he will have to lay off 8,500 teachers. Albany city school district stated that they will have to cut 100 positions. And, I am sure, many more will follow.

It is not just jobs that will be lost. Programs for the neediest students will be slashed as well. Buffalo has 2600 English Language Learners. Through the Contract for Excellence funding Buffalo was able to invest \$1 million district wide for innovative programs such as hiring support personnel that speaks the native language, native language instructional materials, native language social emotional support personnel, in order to extend learning opportunities for students and parents. Buffalo is facing more than \$18 million cut which is roughly about \$460 per student. These programs could be lost if the legislature doesn't reject the governor's proposed \$1.4 billion education cuts.

Syracuse has implemented a teacher and principal quality initiative that will provide the ongoing, consistent professional development and coaching in research based practices across all classrooms, grade levels, and schools. Instructional Support Teachers for English Language Arts and math will provide ongoing support that will ensure a clear direction for each school. The district of Syracuse will lose more than \$11 million, approximately \$500 per student. The aforementioned program could be on the chopping block if the legislature doesn't reject the governor's proposed \$1.4 billion education cut. For every school district, particularly high-needs districts, there are examples of programs that are working today that are being threatened with elimination tomorrow. Without the resources, teachers and programs we are dooming our school children with wider gaps in educational and learning opportunities. Our schoolchildren began to make some progress and now there is a proposal to reverse that progress. Make no mistake; we are nowhere near where we need to be. The Board of Regents, recognizing this fact and the fact that the fiscal economic climate is difficult, proposed a modest increase of \$523 million for education. We fully support the Board of Regents proposal and we urge you to do the same, reject the cuts, provide some funding to help New York keep the pace towards meeting its obligation to its schoolchildren. The governor of our neighboring state of Massachusetts, a state that is also facing fiscal problems, recognized the significance of education and proposed a budget that included no cuts to schools. Massachusetts students far outperform New York's students. Yet, they are not cutting education funding. If we make these cuts, we will fall further behind and shortchange our kids' future. And the kids that will suffer the most are those with the highest need. They will continue in the perpetual cycle of inequity and lack of access to quality education which will only lead away from college to a life with low paying job and poverty. In the

words of our President said in his State of the Union *"In the 21st century, one of the best anti-poverty programs is a world-class education. In this country, the success of our children cannot depend more on where they live than their potential."* New York cannot afford anything less than a 21<sup>st</sup> century, educated workforce.

We are cognizant of the fact that the legislature needs to find ways to save money and raise some revenue in order to close the budget deficit the State is facing. Here are a few:

1. **Make permanent the Personal Income Tax restructuring. The PIT is set to sunset in 2011.** This option will not raise any additional revenue. It will however ensure that the state has this revenue every year.
2. **Create two higher brackets of personal income tax for people with annual income exceeding \$1 million and \$5 million respectively.**

3. **Elimination of Empire Zone Program- \$600 million in savings**  
Elimination of the Empire Zone (EZ) program: it provides tax breaks to businesses in the name of job creation but has been ineffective and fraught with abuse. In practice, the EZ program has given benefits to many firms that have not created the number of jobs promised and some of which have not created any jobs. Eliminating the Empire Zone program would save the state approximately \$600 million (Fiscal Policy Institute, Citizens Budget Commission, and others).

4. **Taking Advantage of Lower Interest Rates to Refinance State Debt –savings \$500 million**

Refinancing outstanding state debt. Senate Majority estimates that refinancing the state's outstanding tobacco settlement securitization bonds alone could save as much as \$500 million. New York City has saved over \$200 million recently.

5. **Bulk Purchasing of Prescription Drugs- \$100 million in savings**  
Bulk purchasing of prescription drugs by conservative estimates would save between \$100 million and a few hundred million dollars.

6. **Prescription Drugs Self-Insurance**

New York State should consider self-insurance for prescriptions drugs. A 2007 study of states by Bucks Consultants found that by replacing traditional health insurance programs for state employees with state self-insurance states typically realized savings of 3% to 7%.

7. **Collection of Sales Tax on Tobacco Products Sold to Non-Native American Purchasers**

Collection of hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes that are due from non-Native Americans on tobacco products sold at Native American retail outlets. Native Americans should be provided coupons to ensure their unfettered right to purchase these tobacco products tax free, but the state should be collecting taxes due from other purchasers (Fiscal Policy Institute, American Cancer Society, and others).

8. **Energy Savings in Schools and State Agencies**

NYSEERDA estimates that the Energy Smart Schools Program energy bills can be reduced up to 30%. New York taxpayers spend \$1 billion on energy for schools. Energy Smart Schools Program could save \$200 million.

- a. **Energy Smart Schools Program examples of cost savings to date:**  
***Rochester City School District*** (49 schools) - During the 2003-2004 the

District saved \$750,000. Since 2007, Rochester's energy program has expanded and now saves the school district more than \$1,000,000 per year in utility and maintenance costs.

- i. *Indian River Central School District* (8 schools) -- From 2006-2007, saved well over \$100,000.
  - ii. *Cohoes City School District* (6 schools) - Between 2004 and 2006 saved \$130,000.
- b. Increase participation in statewide energy efficiency programs through collaborative efforts of state entities such as:
- i. Purchase "green" products and services directly through the state
  - ii. Use the low interest loans available to purchase green products and implement green policies.

**9. Reduce Use of Costly For-Profit Consultants-\$730 million over three years**

**Contracting Out:** In SFY 2007-08, the state spent \$2.78 billion on consultants and paid them an average annual rate of \$126,503. Consultants charge 54% more than state employees who do the same work including the cost of state employee benefits. Consultant spending for the first half of this year is at the same rate as last year. The state should reduce the use of these high priced consultants before any state employee loses their job or pay. Replacing half of these consultants with state employees will save the state over \$730 million over the next three years (Fiscal Policy Institute).

**10. Close underused correctional and juvenile detention facilities- \$75 million in savings**

Closing four underused prisons would save tax payers over \$30 million annually in operating costs, plus nearly \$30 million by avoiding prison capital expenditures. Closing additional underused juvenile detention facilities is estimated to save \$16 million annually. All together over **\$75 million** could be saved through this action.

These are just a few options. We are still in the process of identifying further savings and revenue generating options. Our schoolchildren have been giving for many years. The state listened to the courts and provided two years of the court ordered funding. But then, the state broke its promise and wants to treat schoolchildren as special interests. Our kids are special (or a public interest), not special interest. They have endured enough. Don't make these cuts on top of a broken promise. Say no to the proposed \$1.4 billion cuts to education.

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**New York State Joint Legislative Public Hearing On 2010-2011-Executive Budget for Education**

**2/1/10**

Thank you to the Senate Finance Committee, the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, and the Senate and Assembly Education Committees, for holding this hearing today and offering the opportunity to testify. The Nutrition Consortium of NYS is a statewide, nonprofit organization dedicated to alleviating hunger for residents of NYS. To do this, the Nutrition Consortium focuses on maximizing participation in federally-funded nutrition assistance programs. Twenty-three percent of New York's households with children struggle with hunger, according to data released last week by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Hungry children cannot learn, and we believe that ending childhood hunger is essential to the educational success of New York's children. Child nutrition programs are critical to the goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015, which we, along the other members of the NYS Council on Food Policy, have recommended that NYS adopt as a priority.

The School Breakfast Program, School Lunch Program, and Summer Food Service Program are the federally-funded child nutrition programs which are administered through the State Education Department, and receive funding in the Education budget.

**New York State Funding for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program**

We would like to commend NYS for supplementing reimbursements for breakfasts and lunches served through the federally-funded school meals programs. Nine-hundred thousand low-income children depend on this nutrition at school every day. For many of them, these are the only meals they receive. Since federal reimbursements are only \$2.68 per lunch, the additional 6 cent state reimbursement is very important to ensure that healthy foods can be included in the meals. As we all know, healthy foods cost more money. Per-meal reimbursements must support the costs of running the school cafeteria, including labor, equipment, and all non-food supplies, in addition to the cost of meal itself.

New York's additional reimbursement rate also allows schools to serve reduced-price breakfasts and lunches for 25 cents rather than 40 cents, which is the national price for reduced-price meals. This is important because often, even the reduced price is too much for families at that income level to pay, so local school districts wind up footing the bill, or children go without meals.

**New York State Funding for the Summer Food Service Program**

We also commend NYS for supplementing reimbursements for the Summer Food Service Program, which provides federally-funded meals at no-charge to almost 280,000 children in the summer at nearly 2,500 schools, parks, camps, churches, and other locations across the state. If not for this important program, so many more children would go hungry during the summer



months. Because the federal reimbursement rates are very low, the state supplement is critical to keeping these programs afloat.

### **Direct Certification for School Meals**

The Nutrition Consortium recommends that New York State improve its “direct certification” by implementing a statewide direct data matching system that connects children who receive food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with free school meals. There is federal money available from the United States Department of Agriculture for the development and implementation of this simplified, streamlined approach, which has proven successful in other states. New York State currently uses the “letter” method of direct certification; a method that often results in households unnecessarily completing a complicated application and sometimes results in eligible children not receiving free school meals at all.

Although NYS ranks well in national data on direct certification, this is due in large part to New York City and other large cities that do direct data matching, whereas the majority of upstate New York is not using this streamlined and efficient approach. Using a statewide data matching system would simplify and streamline direct certification, enroll more children in free school meals thus bringing more federal reimbursement dollars into our state, and reduce the administrative costs on school districts. Ultimately, this would save money for both the state and local school districts.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

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**RICHARD E. BARNES**  
Executive Director

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
THE NEW YORK STATE  
CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
and  
THE COALITION FOR  
INDEPENDENT AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS**

**REGARDING THE 2010-2011  
EDUCATION BUDGET**

**BY  
JAMES CULTRARA  
DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION  
NEW YORK STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE  
AND CO-CHAIRMAN,  
COALITION FOR INDEPENDENT AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS**

**Albany, New York  
February 2, 2010**

**Health, Safety, and Security Funds:** Independent and religious schools comply with a number of mandates and provide a number of health, safety and security-related services for which they receive no funding. These include equipment for access and control of buildings and classrooms, annual fire inspections; triennial asbestos inspections; the purchase and training in the use of defibrillators and security equipment; elimination of mercury and dangerous substances used for cleaning and maintenance; radon and lead testing; etc. The health, safety and security needs of students are no less great in difficult fiscal times and we urge you to include authorizing statutory language to enable schools to be reimbursed for their expenses in these areas.

**Nursing Services:** More and more school children have acute and chronic health problems that require the daily attention and care of professional school nurses. Yet the shortage of school nurses leaves school administrators and teachers in the untenable position of having to respond to health emergencies and manage chronic health problems. School administrators and teachers are not health professionals and simply cannot and should not be forced to manage and respond to their students' asthma, diabetes, food allergies and other health conditions.

In some cases, these health conditions can be life-threatening. A child who ingests or is otherwise exposed to a food allergen, for instance, can experience anaphylaxis and die without the timely and professional administration of an epipen injection. An asthmatic student can easily experience respiratory distress requiring the administration of nebulized medication. Typical playground, athletic and even classroom accidents and injuries often require immediate professional medical attention.

The protracted nursing shortage is well documented, both nationally and in New York State. The shortage of school nurses is due, in large measure, to inadequate pay. In some cases, the salary of school bus drivers and custodial employees exceeds that of school nurses. For parents, as well as for the school staff to whom children have been entrusted, there is nothing more important than the health and safety of their children. It is simply unconscionable to put the lives and well-being of children at risk.

We urge the Governor and Legislature to ensure that a full-time nurse is available for every public, independent and religious school that needs one.

**Facilitator Center for Independent and Religious Schools:** The Facilitator Center serves a number of religious and independent schools in the delivery of Academic Intervention Services as well as the services provided under a number of the federal education title programs. By coordinating the administration of these services and programs through a central entity, public schools are relieved of the burden of administering these programs for the religious and independent schools. Likewise, the religious and independent schools benefit from greater flexibility and economies of scale in the use of these funds to meet the particular needs of their students. Formally codifying the Facilitator Center in statute and expanding the list of programs that could be coordinated through the center, in a way similar to that of BOCES, would enable a greater number of religious and independent schools to participate, and, as a result, would relieve even more public schools of the burden and expense of administering these programs.

**Academic Intervention Services:** Currently only \$922,000 is appropriated annually to independent and religious schools to implement the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) regulations promulgated by the Board of Regents – far below the \$20 million that is needed. Without adequate funding now, these at-risk children may easily fall behind even more - thus requiring more expensive academic interventions later. AIS funding should be increased so that, like public schools, our schools are able to provide these services to our children who are most in need.

**Transportation:** Next to their ability to afford tuition, the second most common challenge faced by parents in enrolling their children in religious or independent schools is their ability to have their children transported to school. When parents are denied their choice of a religious or an independent school because transportation services are not available, are unreasonable or are unreliable, the burden on taxpayers increases to accommodate these children in public school. It makes financial sense to enable more parents to enroll their children in religious and independent schools and thus we strongly urge the following: (1) Return to the long-standing practice of 90 percent state reimbursement of school district transportation costs; (2) increase the maximum distance school districts are required to transport children to school from 15 to 25 miles; (3) allow parents the option to pay for the cost of transportation beyond 25 miles; (4) ensure that transportation is not denied to religious and independent schools when public schools are closed or when they make mid-year calendar changes; and (5) require small city school districts to transport children up to the maximum mileage limit rather than city limits.

**Teacher Training and Mentoring:** The Regents have mandated 87.5 hours of continuing education every five years for certified teachers employed by independent and religious schools. In addition, the regulations of the Board of Regents require new teachers to obtain a mentoring experience in their first year of employment. Despite the difficult fiscal situation, it is imperative that we provide the means for all teachers to obtain and maintain the highest level of professional competence. We urge you to include \$10 million in Mandated Services Aid to reimburse independent and religious schools for their expenses in providing the mandated continuing education to certified teachers and \$5 million in funding to reimburse schools for their expenses in mentoring new teachers.

**Learning Technology Grants:** The Governor proposes only \$2.3 million for Learning Technology grants. The limited funding for this valuable program, however, serves only some 50 school districts along with their independent and religious school partners. We strongly urge you to restore and/or increase the appropriation beyond \$3.29 million to a level sufficient to enable all schools to benefit from this program.

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## Budget Hearing Testimony

John Blowers, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake CSD

February 2, 2010

Assemblyman Farrell, Senator Kruger and other members of the committee:

My name is John Blowers and I am the Vice President and Finance Chair for the Burnt Hills Ballston Lake Board of Education. Thank you for this opportunity to share a bit about our district and the fiscal realities we are operating within.

The district motto at Burnt Hills is culture, team, data. Let me share with you some details about each.

### Culture

I am a lifelong resident of the district, a graduate of the school and I currently have three children attending one of the district's elementary schools. To say that I am vested in the continued success of this district is a fair statement. But to say that I'm unique would be inaccurate. Burnt Hills is full of people just like me. People who have chosen to live within the district because of the proud heritage of the community, its people and its schools. Burnt Hills has become a destination district for families and educators alike.

### Team

Burnt Hills is a high performing district. Consistently ranked among the top 10 school districts in the Greater Capital Region by the *Business Review* newspaper and one of four schools in this area last year to be listed by Newsweek as top 5% in the nation, we are proud of what we have been able to accomplish as a team of staff, students, parents and school board. We are proud that more than 90% of our students graduate with Regents diplomas annually and 90% go on to college, while less than 1% fail

to complete high school. We are proud of our many academic and extracurricular achievements that are too numerous to mention here.

Yet these accomplishments are achieved with fiscal prudence and strong oversight. According to the Office of the State Comptroller, Burnt Hills is ranked 56th out of 76 schools in New York's capital region when comparing instructional costs per pupil. In administrative costs, BH-BL spent less per pupil than 74 out of 76 districts in our region. Our district has undergone numerous financial audits during the past 18 months and our business office has been ranked among the top 5% in the state. Our sports program was ranked #1 in the State for districts of all sizes by the NY Sportswriters Association, yet we have the lowest athletics budget of the Suburban Council school districts we compete against.

Members of the committee, I am here to inform you: The sustainability of this high level of achievement is acutely at risk.

#### Data

Over the past few decades the burden of funding education has shifted from government to the taxpayer in unprecedented proportions. In 1970, 68% of our budget was supported by state aid. By 2009, this had dropped to 36%, and the outlook for next year is lower still. Unfunded mandates continue to strain already depleted resources. Outdated legislation continues to hinder efforts at the district level to respond to more contemporary challenges.

Any business person can tell you, when one of your revenue streams declines, you are faced with two options: decrease spending or increase another revenue stream. Let's explore these for a moment.

Decreased spending means reducing programs and/or staff. We have steadily been doing this at the district level. For more than two years, the budget codes for books, supplies, equipment & services have been frozen at Burnt Hills. Additionally, last year, we reduced our staff of less than 600 by more than 3%

(17 FTEs) resulting in reduced student safety (more crowded buses, fewer security monitors), reduced educational offerings (limited speech remediation, library services cut 20%, reduced art classes) and reduced extracurricular activities (4th level of sports eliminated).

Despite these cuts, we still had to increase our tax levy by \$800,000 (2.4%). This is the school's other revenue stream. The voters in Burnt Hills are among the most supportive of constituents when it comes to funding education, but they have sent a clear message to the Board of Education: we cannot shoulder any more of this burden. Our budget passed with the slimmest of margins last year and two of our three bond referendums were defeated in December.

In some ways, our challenges are not unlike other districts across the state. Our residents are not immune to the current financial crisis. Many have lost their jobs, seen their hours reduced or had expected pay raises and bonuses frozen. A significant portion of the community is on fixed incomes. Our residents simply cannot shoulder a larger portion of the cost of education than they currently are.

Burnt Hills also has some unique challenges. 85% of our tax base is residential...we don't have a mall or GE to help shoulder the tax burden. The largest employer located within the district is the district itself. Cuts to staff have a compounding effect because many of these individuals are our homeowners and taxpayers. Therefore, it is the same population that has had to cope with difficult budget challenges at home that is being asked to make up the portion of the school budget when the state reduces funding. The Governor's budget proposal would reduce funding to the Burnt Hills school district by \$1.6 million.

The state has asked districts to access their general fund balance to help cover this difference. This so-called "rainy day fund" is intended to cover district emergencies. Ladies and gentlemen, it has been raining in our district...sometimes literally. Our district headquarters was flooded 14 months ago, causing over \$1 million in damages. We are still exploring fiscally responsible options for housing our administration team. In 2009 DEC regulations forced the district to spend over half a million

unbudgeted dollars to install a new wash bay for our buses. We also had to unexpectedly replace three gym floors in our secondary schools so our students could exercise safely. The "rainy day fund" in Burnt Hills was intended for when it rains in the Burnt Hills school district, not for cloudbursts in Albany.

Okay, let's cut to the chase. What can you do specifically to make a difference for school districts? I have 5 items for you to act on and, since the state is theoretically broke, I'm pleased to tell you that none of these will cost you a penny.

#### Repeal the Wicks Law Immediately

Congratulations to the Governor for including something in his proposal for this year's budget that our Board of Education has been lobbying for for many years. This outdated legislation has increased construction project costs at school districts by 15% or more with no discernable value to the districts. The voters of many districts, Burnt Hills included, have recently passed bond referendums to make much needed, overdue repairs to our schools. In Burnt Hills, we have \$13M worth of projects authorized by our voters we would like to start bidding in April so construction can begin this summer, while children are on break. Immediately implementing the Wicks exemption would allow us to complete nearly \$2M of additional work...at no cost to the government or our taxpayers.

#### Pass an On Time Budget

The impact to school districts is tremendous when the budget is delayed. Uncertainty about aid payment amount and timing causes districts to initiate additional borrowing, increasing the cost to operate the district. It causes school boards and administrations to present budgets to communities without all the necessary information. The ambiguity introduces tremendous opportunity for miscalculations.



I recognize you have difficult decisions to make...we all do. But the rest of the world has deadlines. As a taxpayer, I have to pay my taxes by April 15. As school board members, we have to present a budget to our voters by May 18. Is it really that hard to do the job you were elected to and provide an on time budget to the people of New York so we can fulfill our responsibilities?

### Mandate Relief

The Governor's proposed budget promises mandate relief and no new unfunded mandates, yet also features new mandates with unclear funding! Here is what is very clear to those of us involved in school governance. Once again funding for more mandates won't come from Albany and school districts will be forced to absorb the costs in their budgets. Then the options are either pass higher taxes on to the taxpayer or eliminate a program or service within the district. This is not pessimism. This perspective is steeped in reality. It's happened more than 100 times during the past two decades.

True mandate relief means two things:

1. saying no to any and all new unfunded mandates. If a mandate is presented without a clear and irrevocable funding mechanism, then the answer is "no". A mandate should be vital and important and, if it is, then we should have little difficulty finding the money to support it.
2. challenging all current, unfunded mandates. Let's make sure each of these is truly important and, if so, let's link it to the proper funding mechanism.

### Member Items

We are in unprecedented times and it's time to vote with our wallets. There is arguably nothing more vital to the recovery of a state than investing in its future. Funding education has to be a priority. I encourage you to take the time and review your already-budgeted member items and consider

redirecting these funds to the critical funding gap districts are experiencing. We need your help desperately.

### Eradicate Triborough

Next year, our contract with the teacher's union will expire and we will be negotiating a new contract. The Triborough Amendment reduces the incentive for one of the bargaining parties to actively negotiate, since a key aspect of the negotiations, pay increases, is already largely guaranteed regardless of the outcome. New York is the only state to have such a provision. This creates a playing field that is not level. Education is a people business and, as a result, our biggest expense is compensation and benefits. And the largest portion of this expense is, not surprisingly, teachers. Let contract negotiations with teachers unions have the same parity other labor negotiations enjoy. Return fairness to the bargaining process by eliminating the Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Law.

I'll close with this quick formula:

Cost to the Burnt Hills school district of the Governor's proposed budget: \$1.6 million.

Cost to you to implement the suggestions just proposed to help us deal with this: \$0.

Value of a great education for the students of Burnt Hills and other districts: priceless.

Thank you for your attention. I will be happy to field any questions you may have at this time.

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**\*TESTIMONY\***

**New York State School Administrators  
Consortium (NYSSAC)**

**Presented to**

**Assembly Ways and Means Committee  
&  
Senate Finance Committee**

**Joint Hearing on  
Education Proposals for SFY 2010-2011  
Executive Budget**

**February 2, 2010  
Albany, New York**

## **Introduction**

Good afternoon, Chairman Farrell, Chairman Kruger, Assemblymember Nolan and Senator Oppenheimer. Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony concerning the education proposals contained in the Executive Budget for fiscal year 2010-2011.

My name is Alithia Rodriguez-Rolon and I am Assistant Director for Government Affairs for the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA) and the New York Federation of School Administrators (NYSFSA). With me is James Viola, who is the Director of Government Relations for the School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS). On the behalf of our 23,000 members across the state, we thank you for your continued advocacy and support for public education. We also applaud you for recognizing the critical importance of school leadership in our public schools.

The New York State School Administrators Consortium (NYSSAC) is a joint legislative effort between our two associations – NYSFSA and SAANYS. Our collective goal is to advocate for and support New York State's public school leaders so that they have the tools and means to improve student achievement. Our membership includes Principals, Assistant Principals and a broad array of other Administrators. Together, we offer your committees the perspectives of urban, suburban and rural school leaders from across New York.

We would like to thank Governor David Paterson for his open and direct manner in keeping the public informed about the budget deficit and his proposed initiatives to address it. We, too, have worked to keep our members informed of current and projected state fiscal considerations.

## **NYSSAC Supports:**

**Foundation Aid Formula** – While New York State has established an equitable system of standards, assessments and accountability for all school districts and students; NYSSAC believes that state aid continues to be inequitably allocated to support education programs and services. We recognize the fiscal challenge facing New York State, but we believe that maintaining “flat funding” for a second year and third year, 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively, and extending the full phase-in over a more protracted schedule, merely maintains the fiscal status quo and disadvantages school districts including the Big Five and the students they serve. Additionally, it constitutes a broken promise in regard to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Therefore, NYSSAC recommends that for 2010-2011, the year in which the Foundation Aid formula was to be fully implemented, that it be increased by \$170 million (1.1 percent). We also recommend that the formula be adjusted and re-run with current school district demographic information to more equitably allocate the funds that are available.

**Reduction of Mandates Set for School Districts** – NYSSAC strongly supports legislation to address the current system of burdensome state mandates. Such an initiative, including a four-year moratorium on unfunded statutory mandates, is a smart and strategic approach to help contain costs and facilitate school district multi-year budget planning and program planning.

**Repeal of the Wicks Law** –The multiple bidder requirements set in the Wicks Law are wasteful and inefficient with regard to both fiscal and human resources. NYSSAC believes that repealing this law will provide long-term capital and debt service savings to school districts and the state. In addition, we feel that there is no public benefit resulting from the multiple bidder requirements. The law’s goals can, instead, be achieved through appropriate local controls and generally accepted accounting procedures (GAAP).

**Reform Procurement Practices** –NYSSAC supports allowing school districts greater flexibility to purchase from existing contracts held by other government entities. In addition, we feel that they should be permitted to purchase based on “best value” in consideration of the most advantageous balance of price, quality and performance.

**Universal Pre-Kindergarten** – NYSSAC appreciates the ongoing financial support provided for UPK programs. But NYSSAC feels that mere maintenance of the current funding level is neither strategic nor in keeping with Race to the Top principles. It is recommended that UPK be increased by \$53 million, recognizing that such programs are an equalizer, instilling in students the orientation, skills, and early learning experiences that serve as the foundation for future success. In fact, quality preschool programs, especially full-day programs, with highly qualified administrators and teachers is an investment that not only benefits students and society, but also may result in future cost savings by reducing the incidence of students “at risk” and referrals to Committees on Special Education.

**Early Childhood Education** – NYSSAC is committed to working with the legislature and the Governor to ensure that local and state governments enact strong and smart policies regarding early childhood education. Ultimately, we hope that the state will include early childhood education and day care into the P-16 educational framework in a manner that is truly “universal.”

Moreover, in order to strengthen and maintain a highly trained, early learning workforce NYSSAC recommends that the Legislature establish:

- More rigorous standards for providers, including a comprehensive certification process and an ongoing professional development requirement,
- Leadership recruitment initiatives such as school loan forgiveness programs and tax incentives,
- Funding for professional development and mentoring opportunities to provide the essential training needed by administrators and staff to improve services,

- State-funded grant program available to subsidized day care providers who want to make capital investments, and
- Specialized and recognized leadership credentialing to support differentiated compensation for administrators of such programs.

In addition, NYSSAC believes that quality full-day early childhood education requires the commitment of adequate funding, especially in New York City. NYSSAC estimates that the annual cost of quality full-day programs per child in NYC far exceeds the amount of funding allocated. The city-funded day care centers in which our members work cannot cover their operating expenses at the lower funding level. For this reason, it is recommended that the state better stipulate funding allocations to alleviate these types of issues.

**Contracts for Excellence** – NYSSAC believes that school district Contracts for Excellence should continue with the understanding that the amount locally allocated to provide such services may be reduced commensurate with any percentage reduction in the Gap Elimination Reduction. School districts have acted expeditiously and responsibly in designing and implementing gap closing services in targeted schools for students most in need. As part of the state’s response to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity court decision, a commitment was made to fund Contracts for Excellence. These contracts provide additional support for the district’s highest need, lowest performing students. This funding is not to be supplanted. We understand that monitors from the state education Department were generally impressed with the extent of full implementation, and even more so, with the strong conviction of local administrators and instructional personnel that the services meet student needs and will help improve performance. In fact, seven school districts will no longer be required to implement their contracts in 2010-2011, as these schools have addressed academic needs effectively and are now in good standing. Continuation of such contracts in the 25 remaining school districts is clearly appropriate.

**Paperwork Reduction** – NYSSAC believes that the number of reports, plans, and applications required of school districts on an annual basis is extraordinarily burdensome. Certain reports are, of course, necessary to ensure the provision of quality educational services. But virtually all agencies and stakeholders agree that many reports serve no purpose at all and are a waste of time. NYSSAC would like to work with the legislature and the State Education Department to identify reports, plans and applications that could be streamlined or eliminated, and to identify more efficient procedures for the submission of required documents. Such an initiative is especially timely in light of the additional accountability measures and reporting being contemplated for the Race to the Top program.

### **NYSSAC Opposes**

NYSSAC opposes provisions of the Executive Budget that would result in personnel reductions, the reduction of quality professional development for school leadership, or the dismantling of programs and services that have contributed to building student engagement in school and have supported student success. The state’s investment in

education has paid off so far in closing the achievement gap; in the percentage of students performing at proficient or advanced levels in state assessments; and in improved graduation rates. The momentum must be sustained and the state's enormous investment in public education protected.

**Reduced State Aid to Public Schools through the Gap Elimination Adjustment –** NYSSAC understands the need to phase-in the Foundation Aid Formula over a greater span of years, but decreasing school district state aid by \$1.1 billion will seriously jeopardize educational quality – especially in large city school districts and small rural school districts. Accordingly, we recommend a \$469 million increase in general support for public school in 2010-2011. We challenge Governor Paterson's contention regarding the amount of reserves available to school districts, as well as the appropriateness of using such funds as a one-time budget measure. Many school districts, even with federal stimulus funds, were forced to excess personnel and discontinue or streamline services for the current school year. A few examples of how the Executive Budget would impact school districts are illustrated below:

New York City's Mayor Bloomberg testified recently on the proposed cuts and stated that the NYC Department of Education stands to lose \$500 million in state funding if the Governor's budget is enacted. The mayor says that he will have to cut 8,500 teachers by September. Our NYC schools leaders are already dealing with school budget cuts that range from \$100,000 to nearly \$1 million. As a result, school leaders are forced to cut after-school programs, support staff and professional development.

The Syracuse City School District is 80 percent state aid dependent, it was necessary to lay-off 60 personnel for the current school year (Without federal stimulus funding, the school district would have exceeded 300 personnel.), and 70 personnel for the 2008-2009 school year. The negative impact of the Governor's proposed reduction of \$8.7 million is compounded by other unavoidable costs such as the TRS contribution increase (\$8million), health insurance (\$3-5 million), and salary increase (\$8million). Taken together, the district faces a \$20 million funding gap. The school district plans to use 50 percent of its fund balance, but still projects the need to excess the equivalent of 150 personnel for 2010-2011.

Small city school districts will also be severely cut. In the capitol region, Albany would be cut \$6.8 million (7.8 percent), Schenectady would be cut \$5.5 million (5.6 percent), and Troy would be cut 2.5 million (4.8 percent).

The fiscal situation is also austere in small, rural school districts which have limited options for addressing state aid reductions. For example, the Dundee Central School District located in Yates County serves 887 students. The Governor's proposal would cut the school district by \$333,000; but coupled with other school district costs contained in the Executive Budget (e.g., preschool special education costs would increase by \$25,000 to \$27,000) and other non-discretionary costs such as those presented for the Syracuse School District, Dundee projects a funding short-fall of \$500,000. Recognizing that a one percent in the tax levy yields only \$45,000 the school district is considering all

alternatives in balancing the need to maintain program quality against maintaining a reasonable tax rate. (For the past three years, the school district tax rate increased by approximately 3 percent annually.) There are 158 rural high need school districts in New York State.

The cuts would have serious ramifications in schools statewide. If these proposals are enacted, schools will have to:

- Reduce course offerings and increase class size;
- Reduce elective courses, which may impact student acceptance to highly selective colleges;
- Reduce counseling personnel and services;
- Reduce library and arts programs;
- Reduce transportation services so that some students will no longer receive free transportation and other students may have longer rides to and from school;
- Reduce extra-curricula activities and sport programs/competitions.

In fact, under the Executive Budget, the only things that will increase are local tax levies and tax bills.

**Contingency Budgets** – NYSSAC recognizes the need to address the issue of negative spending growth for school districts that operate under a contingency budget. To appropriately address this situation, and to control for sharp economic shifts in the future, we recommend the implementation of a five-year rolling average approach, effective for the 2010-2011 school year.

**Shifting Preschool Special Education Costs to School Districts** – NYSSAC believes that it is inappropriate to shift county costs for special education to school districts at the same time that the county share for preschool special education is increasing by more than two percent on a year-to-year basis. The Committee on Preschool Education is responsible for completing appropriate reviews of children referred to it and for recommending appropriate programs and services for those children determined to have a disability. Such a provision acts in large measure as a tax or as a “punishment” for school districts that fully and appropriately complete their responsibilities. School districts cannot control their demographics; for example, one disabled preschool child can easily result in a cost increase of over two percent. NYSSAC does not think it is the intent of the Governor that school districts would withhold or reduce necessary services from students who need help.

**Shifting Summer School Special Education Costs to School Districts by Reducing Reimbursement** – When appropriate, on a case-by-case basis; school district IEP teams are required to recommend 12-month special education programs, and school districts are required to provide them. NYSSAC believes that the requirement that school district wealth be considered in determining the amount of reimbursement is tantamount to a tax upon school districts.



**Elimination of Grants to Schools Under Registration Review (SURR)** – These grants provide financial assistance to aid districts with the implementation of a corrective action plan to improve student performance in schools identified as low performing. It is our understanding that the SURR program is being converted into the persistently lowest achieving system. Recently, the State Education Department announced 57 schools identified as persistently lowest achieving. Funding from Race to the Top might be available to assist school districts in implementing plans to turn around a school's performance by executing one of the four federal turn around strategies. However, approval of this award is pending and New York is not expected to know if they were successful until the spring. Elimination of SURR funds without the guarantee of federal dollars is incomprehensible. How can we expect school districts to develop and successfully implement a plan of action to enhance student performance without the needed financial assistance? We urge the legislature to restore this funding.

**State Resource Officers** - As Governor Paterson has made clear, his proposed budget includes reductions in financial support across all program areas. In some instances, reductions in other areas will have a trickle down impact in further reducing educational support for students. For example, NYSSAC has received information that the State Police is in the process of discontinuing the State Resource Officer (SRO) program. This program has been demonstrated to be highly effective in identifying and meeting student needs in a proactive manner, bolstering school and community engagement and averting behavior that would be dangerous for the school community as well as for the students themselves. It is strongly recommended that discontinuation of this program be reconsidered, and evaluated against the intended purposes for which SRO personnel would be redeployed and reassigned.

#### **NYSSAC Recommends:**

When there is a budget imbalance, there is often the inclination to immediately identify programs and services which may be reduced or eliminated with minimum detriment. However, it is just as important to identify efficiencies and additional revenue sources that will minimize the need for reductions. In this regard, NYSSAC raises the recommendations below for consideration.

**Reduction of State and School District Costs for Special Education** – New York State has established many special education requirements that exceed federal mandates. In many cases, NYSSAC believes such requirements may be discontinued or streamlined without any adverse impact upon students or programs.

**Use of State "Rainy Day" Funds** – NYSSAC understands the concern Governor Paterson Has expressed about the use of "rainy day" funds. Although New York State's financial challenges will span several years, we contend that the Governor should consider at least the targeted (categorical) use of such funds to maintain effective programs that would otherwise take years to re-establish.

**Scheduling Flexibility** – A year ago, the Senate Education Committee held hearings regarding flexible school schedules. Although not all school districts may desire such an approach, NYSSAC recommends that the state establish a pilot program based upon a school district plan and application that the State Education Department approves. In the current era of reform and innovation, it is time to try a new approach to the traditional school week.

**Utilization of BOCES to Achieve Taxpayer Savings** – NYSSAC believes that the BOCES system has a long history of providing quality educational, administrative and managerial services in a cost effective manner. Based on this record of success, NYSSAC has long advocated the expanded use of the BOCES model to provide shared services to school districts (including large cities), municipalities, libraries, charter schools and institutions of higher education. The extent and types of services to be made available will likely be different from BOCES-to-BOCES, depending on local needs, just as is currently the case for school districts.

**Early Retirement Program** - In December of 2009, the legislature approved Pension Reform legislation, Chapter 504 of the Laws of 2009. In Part B, Section 15, the legislature indicated the intent to enact an early retirement program for a period of three months during the 2010 calendar year. The program is intended for employees at least 55 years of age, with 25 or more years of service. NYSSAC supports such an incentive program, but has the following two recommendations in regard to its implementation:

First, the contemplated eligibility requirement for NYSUT affiliation should be deleted. The same cost savings and cost containment rationale for making such a program available to NYSUT members would be equally applicable to school administrators and other school employees.

Second, we recommend that the three-month window for the program be established as soon as practicable so that retirees are identified prior to the establishment of school budgets for 2010-2011.

### Closing

The tremendous approval rate of school district budgets in 2009 is strong evidence of the priority status accorded education by the general public. Just as noteworthy as the approval rate was the very conservative approach used by school districts in presenting budgets that were educationally sound with minimal tax burden over the prior year. But education is a “people business”, both in terms of our work force and our product - - - well educated students. In this way, the degree to which education is cut or supported affects us all. We feel that New York State would do well in modeling the example provided by President Obama in his State of the Union address. The president clearly indicated that job growth and the economy will be his top priority, but he also maintained that a world class education is part of the solution. Accordingly, federal support for education is to be increased 6.2 percent (\$4 billion.).

We very much look forward to working with all of you over the next few months to help craft a budget that is fiscally responsible and fair to children. We appreciate all that you and your colleagues do for public education in the state, and we are grateful for this opportunity to share our observations and recommendations.

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**TESTIMONY**

**OF**

**AILIN CHEN**

**SENIOR POLICY ASSOCIATE**

**PRESENTED TO THE**

**NEW YORK STATE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**AND**

**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**REGARDING THE**

**NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR**

**EDUCATION**

**STATE FISCAL YEAR 2010-2011**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2010**

Good Morning. My name is Ailin Chen and I am the Senior Policy Associate for Education, Juvenile Justice and Youth Services at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 66- year old privately supported, independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization. CCC does not accept or receive public resources nor do we provide direct service or represent a sector or workforce. For 66 years CCC has undertaken public policy research, community education and advocacy activities to draw attention to what is or is not working for children in New York and to advance budget, legislative, and policy priorities—all with the goal of ensuring that children are healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairman Farrell and Chairman Kruger and members of the Assembly Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees for this opportunity to testify on the Governor's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

It is clear that New York's troubled economy and staggering budget deficit demand long-term structural budget changes and not short-term fixes. That said, while all New Yorkers are reeling from the downturn, few are likely to be hit harder than poor children and their families. We must not allow this year's budget to eliminate the safety net that is needed to ensure a generation of vulnerable New Yorkers reach their full potential.

Governor Paterson's \$134 billion Executive Budget proposes to close a \$7.6 billion gap by raising revenue and reducing state expenditures. While the budget protects many essential programs for children and families, we urge you to negotiate an Adopted Budget that goes further to ensure that needed investments in programs that produce positive outcomes for children, are maintained in these difficult economic times.

We urge the legislature to negotiate a budget that uses fairness as a guiding principle and considers the effectiveness of programs to make deliberative choices about where the expense side of the budget needs to be reduced. For example, instead of zeroing out all programs currently funded by TANF dollars, we urge you to look at those programs individually and restore those that are cost-effective and produce outcomes that will save the state money in the long-run—including home visiting programs, alternative to detention and incarceration programs, the Advantage After School Program, Summer Youth Employment, child welfare

preventive services, and homelessness prevention services. All of these programs have demonstrated that they are effective at preventing more costly interventions later such as special education, foster care, juvenile detention and the need to live in homeless shelters.

Fairness also requires that the State's 2010-2011 Budget is not balanced by shifting costs to counties in general, and New York City specifically. Mayor Bloomberg has estimated that the Executive Budget would impose \$1.3 billion in cuts and New York City and lead to almost 19,000 layoffs to a workforce providing critical services to New York City residents. Please do not forget that this is a very difficult budget year not only for the State but for the counties as well - it is unfair and disingenuous for the State to balance its budget by shifting costs for essential services to the counties. CCC urges the State Legislature and the Governor to negotiate a budget that maintains a balance of shared responsibility so that counties are not forced to cut essential services. We strongly urge you to reconsider proposals that would eliminate New York City's AIM (the only county for whom this is proposed), shift \$51 million in mandatory summer special education costs, and shift \$55 million for adult homeless shelters.

In addition, we urge you to support revenue-generating proposals, particularly those that will improve the health and well-being of New Yorkers. CCC strongly supports imposing an excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages as a means to take a critical step towards addressing childhood obesity and the associated illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease. In addition, we support increasing the tax on cigarettes by \$1 per pack, which is estimated to prevent 100,000 children from becoming smokers. We also urge you to consider increasing the excise tax on beer, a beverage often marketed to youth and a contributor to alcohol-related illnesses and addictions.

Turning to SFY10-11 Executive Budget proposals for education, we appreciate the state's fiscal crisis, but urge you to adopt a budget that ensures all New York children receive a quality education.

While the full phase-in of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) funds has been delayed from 2013-2014 to 2016-17, CCC is pleased to see that funding for UPK remains at \$400 million for SFY2010-11. Preparing 4-year olds for kindergarten is critical for their later academic success.

While half-day (2 ½ hours) UPK is beneficial for these young children, full day UPK has demonstrated even greater success. We urge you to negotiate an Article VII bill that would allow counties that have achieved a standard of universality for half-day UPK, to be given the flexibility to use the state's funds to expand their programs to full day UPK.

CCC is pleased to see that the Executive Budget proposes to add \$222 million for school construction, which represents a total of \$2.5 billion in state support. We are also very encouraged by the proposed \$600,000 increase in funds for the School Lunch and Breakfast programs, for a total of \$32.2 million.

Yet, with regard to school aid, the SFY10-11 Executive Budget includes a number of proposals that would chip away at the Campaign for Fiscal Equity's hard-won fight to provide equitable resources for New York City's approximately 1 million school children.

We urge the Legislature to reject the following proposals:

- A 5% reduction or \$1.1 billion on a year-to-year basis which, would result in the loss of \$500 million in aid to New York City schools and trigger the elimination of 8,500 teaching positions.
- Limiting state reimbursement for summer school special education, which would save the state \$68 million but result in a \$51 million cost-shift to New York City.

We also ask the State Legislature to work with the Governor and Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to prioritize the restoration of state subsidies for free student MetroCards. Without this critical student resource, the 584,000 city students who receive free or half-fare MetroCards would all receive half-fare cards beginning next September and be responsible for paying the full fare in September 2011. This adds up to an additional expense of nearly \$700 per

student in a school year.<sup>1</sup> This cut would disproportionately impact low-income students and families as well as families with multiple school-age children who may already be struggling to meet the ever-increasing cost of living in New York City. Most alarmingly, these cuts place students who are already at-risk for truancy and dropping out in greater jeopardy of being disconnected from the school system altogether, by taking away a basic resource that supports full attendance and positive school engagement.

In closing, we ask the Assembly and the Senate to negotiate a budget with the Governor that protects our youngest New Yorkers from paying for this economic downturn for the rest of their lives. While we appreciate that very difficult choices about revenue increases and expense reductions that need to be made, we urge you to protect the services that will ultimately be less costly to the children of today and the taxpayers of tomorrow.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2008, the cost of the student \$239 million MetroCard subsidy program was shared between the city and state at \$46 and \$45 million respectively. In 2009 however, the state share fell to \$25 million then \$6 million. "Students See Hard Future If Free Fares Are Ended." New York Times, December 17, 2009.



*Submitting Only*

***Budget Testimony Before  
The New York State Legislative  
Fiscal and Education Committees***



***Presented February 2, 2010 by:  
James A. Williams, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Buffalo Public Schools***

Distinguished legislators, a new decade is upon us. Sadly, as I sit here today we face the same challenges as when I was here a year ago and the same challenges my predecessor faced at the beginning of the last decade. Significant reductions in state aid are being proposed and we face the same structural budget issues today as ten years ago. The structural budget deficits are beyond the District's immediate control and require legislative action. You can make a difference and bring long needed change to the major cost drivers that not only affect Buffalo, but all of New York, its taxpayers and most importantly its children.

The Governor's Executive Budget letter refers to the need to put the State's "fiscal house in order", yet it takes no actions to help its municipalities with their "fiscal houses". This is particularly true for large urban dependent school districts such as Buffalo since we have *no means to raise our own revenues*, but instead rely on state aid for 80 percent of our operating budget. Reductions in state aid result in reduced educational services to a population that needs *extra services* to be successful, *not less*.

While our suburban counterparts have gone on record stating they will increase property taxes to maintain educational programs, the District has no taxing authority. Without increases in State aid, the District must cut costs elsewhere to fund structural cost increases. I am very proud to state that we have done so successfully in the current fiscal year. There were no forced layoffs but only because of the Federal stabilization stimulus funds. We were also able to continue expanding successful academic programs and offset the structural cost increases through the reduction of other operating costs and the use of \$5.5 million in "rainy day" reserves.

That being said, reductions that impact the classroom are inevitable when we are faced with no revenue increases year after year. We estimate that 86% of our budget is mandated or fixed in nature. The Governor is currently proposing an \$18 million Gap Elimination Reduction to Buffalo in 2010-11 and no Foundation Aid increases until 2012-13. Couple all of this with operating costs that increase by approximately \$30 million annually for which we have no immediate control over and the result is the dismantling of public education.

The \$18 million slashing of state aid brings the projected budget deficit to \$50 million for next year. Other than the state aid reduction, the four major expenditure increases driving the deficit include annual compensation steps guaranteed by law of \$7 million, health insurance premiums of \$11 million, pension contributions of \$7 million and charter payments of \$5 million for the increase in charter pupils. I believe you can take legislative steps to assist in the structural deficit drivers.

I am deeply concerned about the negative impact of proposed budget cuts on the children of the Buffalo Public School District. An \$18 million cut in state aid which contributes to the \$50 million deficit would cripple our urban district, increase class sizes, and ultimately harm children. It will also negate the great accomplishments the District has had over the past four years through the collaboration and the hard work of the Teachers,

Administration and Board of Education of the Buffalo Public School District, including:

- A four year growth of 142% in the number of students meeting or exceeding standards in 3-8 Mathematics
- A four year growth of 83% in the number of students meeting or exceeding standards in 3-8 English language arts
- City Honors School ranked the 11<sup>th</sup> best school in the nation by Newsweek
- U.S. News & World Report ranked Leonardo da Vinci High School and Hutch Tech High School in the top 1,000 in the nation and ranked City Honors School the 35<sup>th</sup> best school in the nation
- Council of Great City Schools named the Buffalo City School District as a top performer nationally in financial management
- Expansion of district foreign language programs to include Mandarin Chinese, currently taught at three schools for students from elementary to high school age
- Extension of the school day one hour and school year by 20 full days at 17 low performing schools
- Extension of the school year by 20 half days for all other district schools
- All High Schools now offer Advanced Placement (AP) or college level courses
- Replaced two large low performing high schools with two College Board Schools, with assistance from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, with an intensive college preparatory curriculum
- Uniforms worn at 31 schools across the District
- Expansion of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program to the Stanley Makowski Early Childhood Center School #99 (candidate school)
- Removal of 7 schools from the state SURR list, with more removals anticipated later this year

For the first time in decades the Buffalo Public School District is heading in the right direction. What's best for children is for the District to "stay the course" through the Academic Achievement plan and continue on this path to success. In four short years; Buffalo Public Schools were able to improve academically and financially after decades of decline.

We do not want the Buffalo Public School District to return to the dark days of massive deficits leading to teacher layoffs and low test scores. I implore you to work collaboratively with school administrators, union leaders, and fellow legislative leaders to

solve this fiscal crisis and hold the children of the Buffalo School District harmless. The Governor's proposed budget cuts that will result in a \$50 million deficit for the Buffalo Public School District are simply unacceptable.

I would like to give you a brief description of how the Buffalo Public School District turned the tide both academically and financially and how we are prepared to confront this continuing fiscal crisis. I will then offer specific structural changes necessary to reform and restructure our District for the better now and for years to come.

The Buffalo Academic Achievement Plan was developed and approved by the Buffalo Board of Education in 2006. This plan has grown over the past four years and now addresses literacy from the pre-kindergarten years through meta-cognition and higher order thinking in the high schools. It is this plan that provides the structure for all Buffalo Public School initiatives. In order to implement the plan, the district needed to strengthen the skills and knowledge base of its educators. A focus on professional development targeted to the Academic Achievement plan has helped develop district staff into the experts they need to be. On-site support from reading and math coaches and consultants on the district's curricular programs, assist in translating that training into classroom practice. Buffalo educators are developing into one of the finest teacher corps in the country.

Structurally, we focused on the need for more time for Buffalo students. The district instituted an Extended Learning Opportunity Program, 20 additional days in the summer to prepare students for the up-coming school year by front loading the skills that will be needed. At the District's lowest performing schools the district, in partnership with the Buffalo Teachers Federation, was able to lengthen the school day by one hour during the regular school year. Professional development for teachers has been strengthened and supported by on site expert assistance.

This strengthening of the work force and lengthening of the school day and year are two of the structural changes essential to providing the best education possible to Buffalo's children. It is these very changes that have contributed to the academic growth we have seen over the past four years. These programs must continue in order to make certain the academic gains in place are sustained and strengthened. Devastating cuts will put this progress at risk.

Our financial team implemented conservative budgeting practices and numerous reforms to build the District's fund balance not just to a respectable level, but also to a level where the Buffalo Public School District would be on sound financial footing. We have \$37 million reserved for the pending wage freeze litigation that could ultimately cost the District \$55 million in the initial year and \$18.5 million annually thereafter. The Buffalo Public School District's "rainy day fund" totals \$43 million. A portion of this rainy day fund can and will be used to close the deficit in 2010-11. However, it would be the height of fiscal irresponsibility to use the entire "rainy day" fund this year to offset budget cuts for a number of reasons. The Government Finance Officers Association

recommends, at a minimum, an unreserved fund balance of no less than five-to-15 percent of regular general fund operating revenues. The GFOA also recommends having no less than one-to-two months of regular general fund operating expenditures.

It is also important to note that the District's largest unions' collective bargaining agreements have been expired since 2004. However, due to the Taylor Law, employees continue to receive their incremental salary "step" increases, following the lifting of the wage freeze by the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority. These step increases cost the District \$7 million annually.

It is critical to keep cuts as far away from the classroom as possible and we certainly don't want to destroy four years of financial and academic growth with one disastrous budget. But we will be forced to do so if the Governor's proposed budget cuts remain "as is." I bring to you a plan to preserve academic programs, keep class sizes low, and to maintain a responsible workforce who helped raise the bar academically in schools across the City of Buffalo.

*First*, I will use \$15 million, 35 percent, of our rainy day fund – to offset a portion of our projected \$50 million deficit. While I am not a proponent of using funds from our "rainy day" savings account to pay for operating costs, desperate times call for desperate measures and now is the time to use a portion of that fund.

*Second*, I need your help to save the District money without any impact on state aid. While we are thankful that the Executive Budget froze charter tuition payments, we believe that reducing aid to public school districts while leaving funding for charter schools intact, which comes directly out of district budgets, is not only inequitable, but unethical. Applying the same Gap Elimination Adjustment percentage of 3.48% to the charter tuition payments will save the Districts \$3 million. I must also take this opportunity to state that the increase to charter schools would have been \$19 million, taking the annual payments to over \$90 million, had the payment amount not at least been frozen.

I have continually stated that I support charter schools. However, there needs to be serious reform of how charter schools are funded. The current formula is flawed in three primary ways:

1. It applies an inflationary increase based on statewide expenditure increases that have averaged 15%, yet Buffalo's expenditures have only increased an average of 5%. This disparity resulted in \$12 million more in tuition charges to the District.
2. There is no adjustment for legacy costs (retiree health insurance and higher average salaries due to a more tenured work force) that become part of the charter tuition, yet the charter schools do not have to pay these costs out. These two legacy costs added approximately \$1,500 to the per pupil tuition and resulted in an additional \$9.6 million being paid to the charter schools. In effect, the District pays a portion of these legacy costs twice.
3. The current formula assumes that the Districts costs follow the student when they transfer to a charter school. However, the Districts costs are more fixed than variable. This combined with the fact that students leave the District from

varying grades, schools and classrooms spread across the District make it impossible to immediately recognize savings by students leaving. The District previously shared an extensive study on this point with the Regents.

This is part of the necessary structural changes needed to level the economic playing field between charter schools and public schools. Simply put: it is not fair to drastically slash aid for public education and urban school students while aid to charter students are held harmless.

I am asking the Legislature to treat charter school funding and district funding the same. Let me be clear: the danger of doing nothing during this fiscal crisis we share will devastate Buffalo Public Schools and cripple our urban district. Children will suffer and hundreds of workers will lose their jobs, further sending our economy into an ever declining tail-spin.

I also ask an impartial analysis be done on the long term funding options for charters that explores direct payments from the state, the tuition formula and the financial impact the tuition payments have had on the traditional public schools. We have never stated that we can educate students cheaper than charter schools, the legacy costs that have accumulated, in part due to mandated expenditures, prevent that. We need your help in addressing this inequity.

**Third**, is the issue of health insurance. The Buffalo Public School District will spend almost \$100 million of its budget on health insurance. The general fund spends more money on retiree health care costs than we do for employees currently on the payroll. All of this is in spite of the District switching to single carrier health insurance in 2005. Consider if all current employees contributed 20% co-pay toward the \$43 million we will spend on their health insurance. That would decrease the deficit by almost \$9 million. If that was equated to jobs, it could save 180 jobs. Currently such contributions can only be negotiated.

**Fourth**, I am asking that further legislative action be taken on the current pension laws that will allow for alternative funding methods and contribution rates to avoid 50% rate increases in a single year.

**Fifth**, I ask that you restore the Teacher Center Grants. The professional development provided by these funds is essential to continued learning of our teachers and is an integral part to continuing our academic progress.

**Sixth**, I am asking legislative action be taken to amend Education Law section 3020a that obstructs our ability to terminate certain groups of employees. The current law is not only costly, but is an impediment to academic success.

In the middle of this critical time I recognize opportunity. We can work together: administrators, legislators, and union leaders to solve this long-term economic crisis. These three entities must collaborate and come to the table to preserve public education

in the Buffalo Public School District. Please be courageous and make structural changes to avoid these annual "Dooms Day" budgets and take steps that will make us all financially stronger in the long run.

In closing, I would like to state that the Buffalo Public School District educates a diverse population of approximately 34,000 students that come to us with varying levels of English comprehension, special needs and high poverty levels. *We must and do educate all children.* Cutting funds to public education is not only a bad idea for an economy that needs an educated workforce to compete with the nation and the world, it is just wrong.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my passionate plea to preserve public education. I will gladly discuss the issues with you further to close this budget gap and do what's best for children.

The following pages provide some information about the District that I hope you will find useful.

# Buffalo Public Schools at a glance



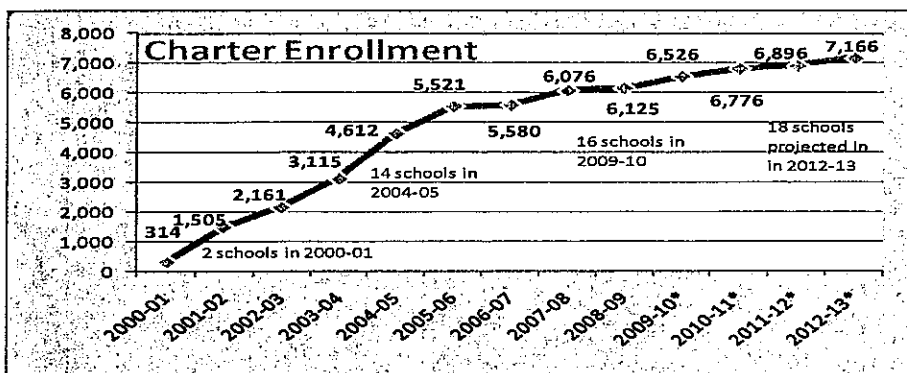
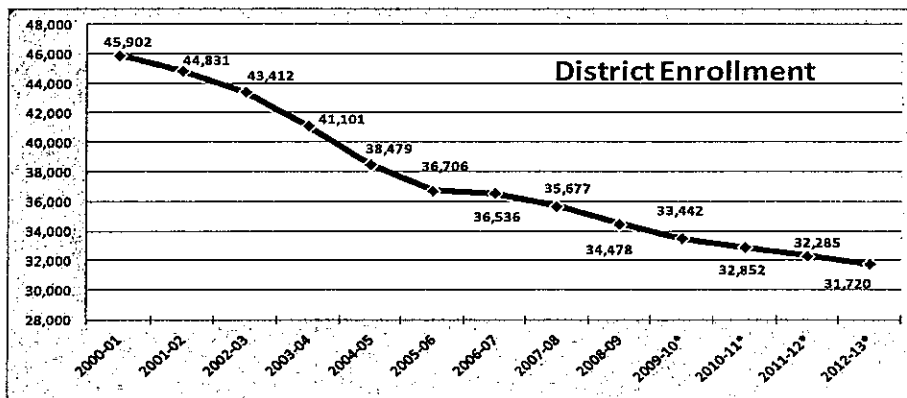
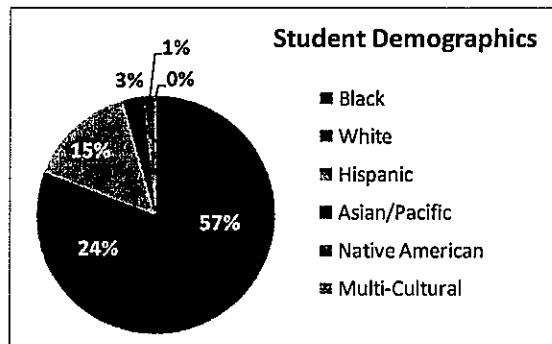
The Buffalo City School District is the second largest district in the State of New York and had 34, 478 students in 2008-09 and has projected to have 33,442 in 2009-10. District students speak over 70 languages.

The City of Buffalo has a population of approximately 270,000 and was recently ranked as the third poorest city in the United States, with an estimated 30.3 percent of residents living in poverty.

The District has 41 elementary, 17 secondary and two special schools and is 42 square miles.

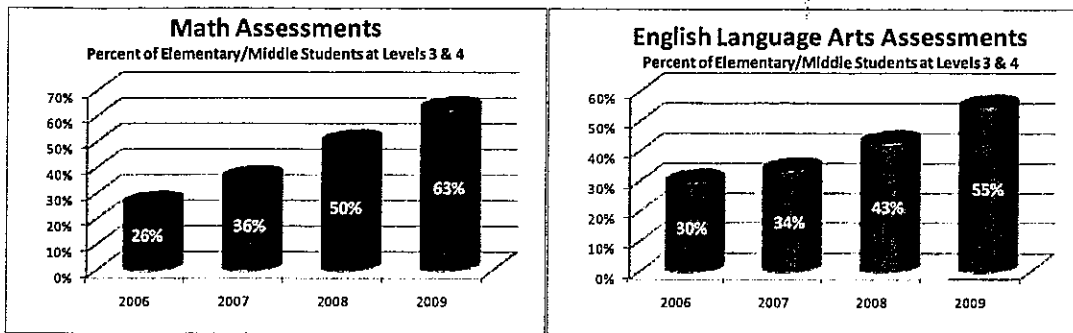
Student Enrollment	Actual 2008-09*	Projected 2009-10*
Pre-K	1,807	1,760
Kindergarten	2,585	2,370
Grades 1-6	14,842	14,741
Grades 7-12	15,244	14,571
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>34,478</b>	<b>33,442</b>

\*Actual data based on the BEDS report; Projected data based on January 2009 Demographic study

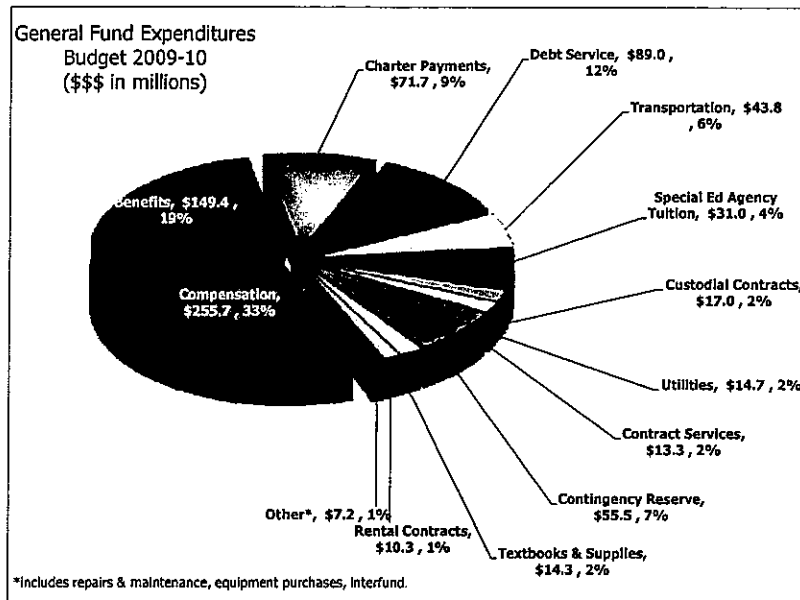




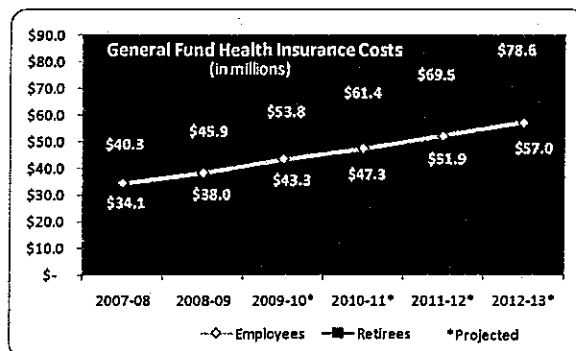
The Charts below show the percent of students at the two highest levels, three and four, in state Math and English Language Arts assessments.



This pie chart shows where our dollars are invested in 2009-10 General Fund budget:



The structural challenge of ever increasing retirees and benefits is a concern, even with a single carrier plan implemented by the District. The chart below shows the escalating disparity between the districts costs for employees in the General Fund, compared to retirees.





New York State  
School Boards  
Association



# OVER THE CLIFF

School District Finances on the Edge

*The Impact of the 2010-11 Executive Budget*

February | 2010

# Over the Cliff: School District Finances on the Edge

## Introduction

New York schools are teetering at the edge of a funding cliff. Gov. David Paterson has proposed a \$1.1 billion cut in aid to schools for the 2010-11 school year at a time when local school boards face tapped-out property taxpayers, the looming expiration of federal stimulus dollars in 2011 and double-digit employee pension costs on the way.

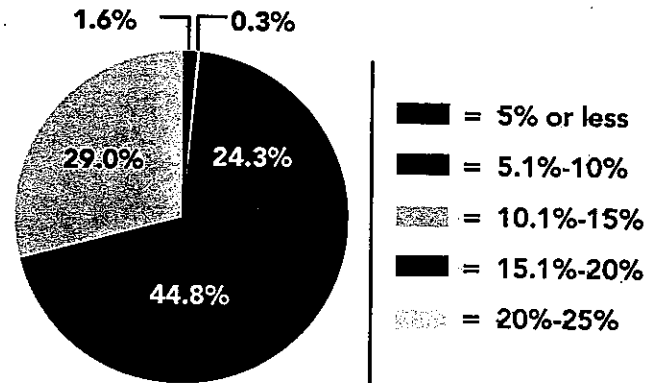
A NYSSBA analysis reveals that if these cuts were enacted, they could set into motion several "cliffhangers," or factors that could threaten the long-term economic well-being of public schools in New York State and potentially push school district finances over the cliff.

## Few School Districts Are Spared

Under the governor's 2010-11 Executive Budget, 99 percent of school districts in New York State (672 out of 679 districts) would see state aid cuts in the 2010-11 school year, compared to 2009-10 funding levels. The cuts average 6.7 percent statewide, but go as high as 24.5 percent (see Appendix A, back page).

More than three-quarters of New York school districts (76 percent) will see state aid cuts of greater than 5 percent, while nearly one-third (31 percent) will see state aid reductions of more than 10 percent (see F-1).

**F-1 Percentage of districts with state aid cuts of varying magnitudes**

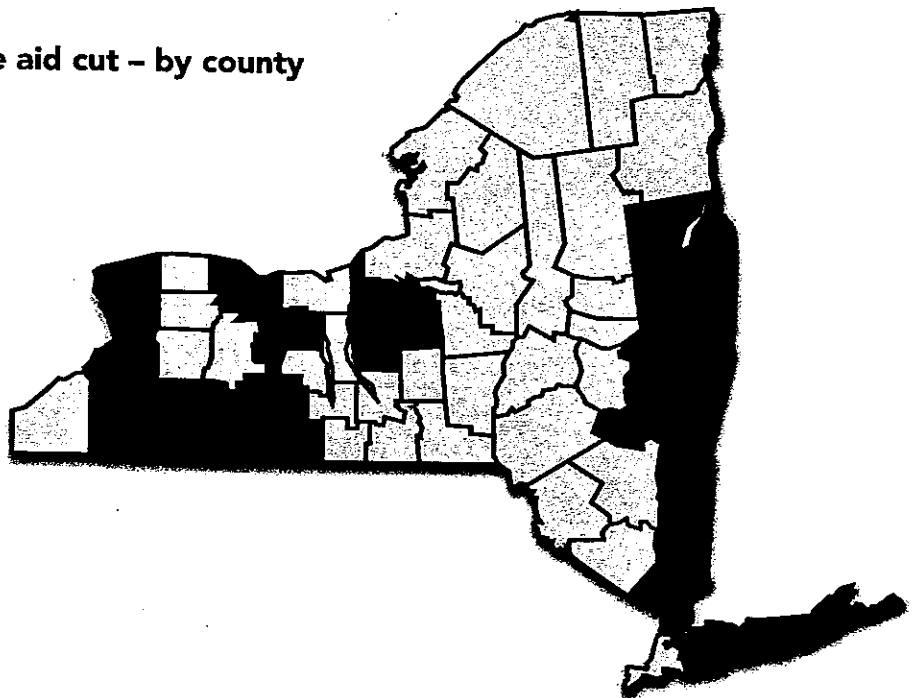


Source: NYSSBA Analysis of 2010-11 Executive Budget

The magnitude of the state school aid cuts vary among regions of the state (see F-2). For instance, school districts in Schenectady County will see the largest average cut: 11.2 percent. Saratoga County school districts are close behind; they will see an average reduction of 11.1 percent. Meanwhile, school districts in Steuben County will see the lowest percentage decrease in state aid; schools there will receive 2.7 percent less. Even there, however, districts such as Corning (10.1 percent), Arkport (7.5 percent), Hammondsport (5.7 percent) and Prattsburgh (5.4 percent) will see substantial decreases.

**F-2 Average size of 2010-11 state aid cut – by county**

- = less than 4%
- = 4.1%-8%
- = 8.1%-12%



Source: NYSSBA Analysis of 2010-11 Executive Budget



SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

*SINCE 1896, THE VOICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERSHIP*

**Testimony of the  
New York State School Boards Association  
to the  
Joint Legislative Fiscal Committees  
on the  
2010-2011 Executive Budget**

**February 2, 2010  
Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York**

Thank you for this opportunity to share the perspective of the nearly 700 member school districts of the New York State School Boards Association and the over 5000 locally elected school officials who govern them.

We recognize that the Executive Budget proposal is the first step in the budget process. And we fully grasp the severity and gravity of the fiscal crisis gripping our state. We don't envy you the responsibility of striking the right balance between our state's many competing priorities in the face of recovering revenues to fund them. But know this; our state's future most assuredly hangs in that balance. In the information age, our state's future rests on education.

The world presses forward. Our high school graduates will apply to colleges and universities that are becoming more and more selective. They will work in businesses that demand higher-order critical thinking skills along with proficiency in science, math and technology. Our schools must prepare them for these challenges, but they need resources to do so. Our commitment to this effort will define our state's competitive position into the next generation.

**State School Aid Funding Reform: Kids First**

But it is more than a commitment we speak to. It is a constitutional obligation to our children. We have made great strides together in adopting new state school financing and accountability approaches. Now that emerging success story is threatened by our dismal

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Latham, New York 12110-2125

economy. Will you preserve public education as the state's top priority in difficult fiscal times? **We currently stand at \$4.2 billion below the amount promised by the state to settle the CFE lawsuit.** Last year school districts were asked to operate without any additional operating aid. They were asked to restrain local taxes, improve programs and services, save jobs and absorb these responsibilities without additional state operating resources. Now the governor would have them absorb \$1.4 billion in operating aid cuts on top of that already Herculean effort. How is it that some of our state leaders can in good conscience demand local school property tax relief and yet pull the rug out from under our school districts as we strive to raise the student achievement that our economy (both state, national and world) demands? Local property tax increases statewide plummeted the past three years. Test scores have been improving. There is a nexus between state aid, student achievement, and local property tax relief.

Will you ultimately find the ways and the means this year and next to provide universally adequate, equitable and predictable resources for all of our school districts? Doing so is essential to the success of our educational mission and to the property taxpayers whose support is vital to that mission.

We applaud the governor's commitment to fully funding reimbursable school expenses like BOCES, transportation and building aid, as schools have already paid out this money based on a statutory promise of repayment. But I urge you to moderate the governor's \$1.4 billion dollar proposed reduction in Foundation Aid and to not bind yourself to yet another aid freeze. I also urge you to preserve the Foundation Aid formula, but not be so quick to accept the governor's proposal to stretch out its full implementation so long as to functionally jeopardize adequate funding for yet another generation of children. If school districts are to keep their promise of improved academic achievement of our students and wise fiscal stewardship of public funds, you must keep your promise of predictable and adequate funding. And finally, we take strong exception to the unwise premise that school districts should completely exhaust their financial reserves in the face of an uncertain future when even the state is not offering to use any of its own reserves to offset the state's deficit. We object for the same reason as the governor: Complete depletion of reserves places school districts at risk in an emergency, it increases the cost of borrowing and it lowers our bond ratings. More importantly, it misuses funds that are largely locally generated. Asking school districts to replace state aid with local emergency funds is confiscatory and certainly defeats at the outset any call for relief from unfunded mandates. The loss of \$1.1 billion magnifies the impact of all state mandates on local taxpayers.

All of this takes place within the historical context of last year's freeze and the imminent future loss of federal aid. Were it not for your heroic intervention, even the present would have been tainted by the destabilizing influence of mid-year aid cuts. **Simply put, Governor Paterson would force schools to live paycheck to paycheck and then repeatedly threatens to hold up the checks!** If school districts are forced to deplete reserves, how would they cope with the governor's efforts to delay aid payments? In the final analysis, this deliberation must ultimately determine the allocation of limited state resources. NYSSBA certainly recognizes the importance of many state functions, but

few carry with them either a constitutional imperative or hold the very future of the state within their charge. Last year combining federal stimulus funds and local resources saved an estimated 28 thousand jobs in a time when (in many locales) the schools are the economic engine of the community. To do that with flat state aid, schools were forced to withhold new contributions to the reserve funds that help mitigate local tax increases.

There are natural disasters whose impact is exacerbated by their lack of warning, a lightning strike. But there are other calamities that provide more than adequate warning, like a hurricane building several hundred miles away (or the elimination of federal stimulus funding following two years without a state aid increase). Would you willingly fail to prepare, risking placing children in harm's way, in the face of such a certain threat?

In other words:

Last year, **in year one** - the state failed to contribute, the federal government provided increased funds and school districts both restrained job loss and local tax increases. To do this, they were forced to forego contributing to their emergency fund balances.

This year, **in year two** - the governor proposes not only freezing but cutting aid, the federal government will provide some additional funding and school districts would be forced to completely deplete emergency fund balances while attempting to restrain both job losses and local tax increases. They will not succeed.

Next year, **in year three** - the state will hopefully provide additional resources, but the federal funding that has averted disaster in the past years will be exhausted and school districts will be faced not only with attempting to recover from multiple years of diminished state funding, but will be forced to adjust to the loss of billions in lost federal aid. They will be devastated. Programs and services will suffer, thousands of jobs will be lost. Many will be teaching jobs that will affect the educational opportunities our children receive. Taxes will escalate and education will suffer. As a result, the economic future of our state will decline. The public, already fatigued by high taxes will no doubt continue the backlash against its elected officials-both local school and state. The consequences, for good or ill, will be attributed to state legislators.

The public's frustration will also be expressed at the one opportunity they have to vote against higher taxes; the local school district budget vote. While such frustration is always injurious, the defeat of local school budgets this year or next will be catastrophic. Current laws determining the school district contingency budget cap will force schools to actually spend less than the previous year. To ask this in the face of double digit, uncontrollable costs like health insurance and retirement system contributions is unconscionable. When the only option available to school districts (to accomplish such an onerous task) is to eliminate the jobs of those who prepare our state for the information age, that result is irresponsible. This year the difference between the cost to provide existing educational programs and what is allowed under a contingency budget is the highest in history; with the most severe consequences. You must authorize a five

year rolling average of the consumer price index to determine contingency budgets for school districts. For the same reason that "smoothing" was implemented for retirement system contribution rates, a degree of rationality must be restored to the dire conditions imposed by a contingency school budget.

### **When Will You Make Mandate Relief Real for Schools?**

We have long argued that a whole host of cost-saving measures could mitigate the need for state and local tax revenue to support our operations. We have provided innumerable studies, recommendations and lists of suggestions for making schools more efficient and cost effective. We have testified before a myriad of legislative and governor's commissions to convey one simple message. There are two sides to the ledger: expenses and revenues. If you can lower your expenses then you can lower the revenues you need. But this does not magically happen at the wave of a wand. A penny saved is a penny unappropriated. There must come a time (and we would argue that the nation's highest combined taxes and dramatically reduced state revenues dictates that now is that time) when the political forces that ushered in an era of greater public employee salaries and benefits than is available to the state residents who must pay them must yield to the economic reality that presently confronts us. Adherence to the old laws that hamstringing public employers in bargaining more reasoned salary and benefits for public employees confounds any attempt at stemming rising taxes, or creating an attractive economic environment. Public education is a labor intensive enterprise, with personnel costs comprising over 70 percent of all costs. Any legitimate effort to address school spending with diminished resources will take political resolve from both state and local officials. Any other path unerringly leads to a dismantled educational delivery system or economically injurious local tax rates. Simply put, untie our hands or lose the future. To prepare for a prosperous future, you must free the schools.

To his credit, Governor Paterson is advancing a handful of cost saving measures for your consideration. There is much that we can support in the governor's budget proposal: A Wicks Law exemption. Removal of legal barriers to health insurance cooperatives. Help with energy conservation. Paperwork reduction to eliminate redundant reporting requirements and to streamline planning. Procurement flexibility allowing us to piggyback on state and municipal contracts. Buffer us from suddenly enacted newly mandated costs. Surely, there must be some ideas among them that you in the legislature can embrace, plus others that you can advance. Dollars saved here can be redeployed to the classroom and to spare our taxpayers.

Extraordinary times call for extraordinary leadership. And such times also provide rich opportunities for systemic improvement. We cannot think of a better time to finally allow school districts to operate free of outdated and burdensome state strictures. Our school boards and property taxpayers need relief from externally imposed mandates that unnecessarily drive up the cost of providing an education. We urge you in this year of fiscal crisis to own up to the cost drivers that our state laws and regulations serve to unnecessarily and wastefully burden our schools and our taxpayers. It is time for you to

ensure that our education dollars are going to education as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

Schools continue to face dramatic increases in health care premiums. Fuel costs are totally unpredictable. School districts in fact face a multitude of expenses that are rising beyond the simple rate of inflation. (School districts are not individual consumers and comparisons to the CPI or "rate of inflation" are misleading and inappropriate. For instance, consumers do not pay the employer rate for retirement and health care—both typically increasing by double digits each year. Nor do consumers run fleets of diesel powered buses, heat multiple buildings, pay Workers Compensation Insurance, large scale liability insurance and a multitude of other costs that have nothing to do with the "rate of inflation.")

If we expect our schools to hold the line on local costs (to restrain property tax increases), they must be given the means to put a halt to cost increases that are currently beyond their control. This is more critical than ever under the current fiscal circumstances. We cannot justify one unnecessarily wasted cent any longer. The dollars we are given must go further than ever before. If you can't reduce the mandates and clear the statutory and regulatory obstacles to efficient management under these fiscal circumstances, then there is truly little hope for the vitality of our state's future.

For years we have been asked to name the mandates that inhibit cost effective operation and we have done so, repeatedly. Then you asked how much could be saved by eliminating those mandates. We now have a figure for you. According to a sophisticated study conducted by the school business officials and superintendents of the nine member school districts of READ in the Lower Hudson Valley, fully 16.3 percent of their budgets are spent on mandates. Extrapolated statewide, this equates to nearly \$9 billion; a figure that dramatically eclipses even the governor's harmful aid cut proposal. Mandate relief would provide real fiscal relief.

### **Cost Shifts to Local Taxpayers**

In this year's executive budget, the governor has not only proposed cutting \$1.4 billion in state school aid, but he has proposed much more in cost shifts to local property taxpayers.

***Pre-School Special Education*** – The governor proposes shifting millions upon millions in costs to school district taxpayers for this program for pre-school age children with disabilities. Currently this program is funded by the state and counties. Contrary to misinformation being circulated, this is not a school-based or school-managed program. It is strictly a federally mandated program. This is a new and undeniably large unfunded mandate for local taxpayers. The governor's rhetoric indicates that schools control this program and so it is only fitting that local school taxpayers pay for any county cost increases beyond the arbitrary figure of 2 percent. To shift this cost from one local tax bill to another does nothing for the taxpayer. This is a singularly inept response to county officials who naturally want to relieve pressure on their own taxes, but the focus should be on real relief and not redirecting where the bill goes.



**MTA Tax** – The fiscal impact of this tax on our school districts is astronomical and frankly we are mystified that one level of government is imposing such a tax on another, especially given the questionable nexus between its purpose and our employees. By definition local school employees in suburban counties do not regularly use the services of the MTA. They live and work outside of the City. Why would the state tax its schools to support commuter operations unless it is to shift the cost of those operations away from the state and onto the backs of the local property taxpayer? BOCES and special act school districts pay this tax in full and pass on that cost to local school districts. All schools must be permanently exempted from this tax.

### **Other Issues of Importance**

**Allowing Districts Access to Certain Reserve Funds** – We strongly support the governor's proposal to allow districts to withdraw funds certified by the State Comptroller to be in excess of the amounts required to fund employee benefits accrued liabilities in order to maintain educational programming in the 2010-11 school year. Given the severity of this fiscal crisis, making use of these funds to offset program cuts and higher local taxes is of paramount importance.

**State Education Department (SED)** – Sadly, two thirds of SED funding is tied directly to federal programs and requirements, leaving precious little staff to actually be of service in supporting schools. This problem would be compounded under the governor's plan by cutting several million dollars from SED's budget in the coming year. Innovation, consolidation of services, efficiencies in operation and implementation of best practices would all be fostered by sufficient resources for SED. We request that you restore SED funding.

**School Resource Officers** – These state troopers provide an invaluable service to our schools, our children and our communities by mentoring, modeling proper behavior, buffering and protecting our children. To allow the governor to remove these officers from the schools is to put those students and communities at greater risk. The stories of crime and catastrophe prevented by their presence are legend. They must be allowed to remain in force in our schools.

**Retirement Incentive** – While early retirement of teaching staff assists school districts in controlling costs and managing their budgets, that process must be completed in a timely fashion. Schools are presently preparing their budgets for community consideration. They must provide 45 days notice to their communities of the amount to be requested. Potential retirees must inform their school of that decision in a time period that allows schools to avoid unnecessarily elevating budget figures, needlessly raising taxes or laying off staff and cutting programs. Any early retirement incentive legislation must include a window of notification that coincides with the school budget calendar for it to be of use to schools and taxpayers.

**Combined Instructional Materials Aid** – In an era of diminished resources, schools must be given the flexibility to utilize remaining funds in the manner that most efficiently addresses their most pressing needs. Combining existing aid categories like textbooks, computer hardware and software allow school districts to allocate funds to those most immediate needs. This re-designation costs the state nothing and affords tremendous flexibility for schools. It is the type of efficiency that difficult fiscal times demand.

**Special Education Summer School** – For those districts offering a summer special education program, current state aid is 80 percent, with district picking up 20 percent. Governor Paterson would base the state's payment on the Foundation Aid State Sharing Ratio. This presents a severe disincentive for districts to provide this vital service to our most disadvantaged children. It also represents the very kind of cost shift the governor pledged to eliminate. We respectfully request that you reject this unwise proposal.

Finally, we would ask that you examine what our schools have accomplished in the midst of such adversity. Last year school districts collectively imposed the lowest tax rate in seven years. They did it with the lowest amount of state aid in six years. Everyday they are finding new ways to become more efficient and more effective. They are attempting to adjust to a new era of a stagnant tax base and fluctuating resources. They must succeed and they can succeed with your continued support. While it is true that the future of our children is up to us, it is also true that our state's future is up to them. If only in our own self interest, we must equip them to compete, to attract opportunity and to build anew.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment at this crucial juncture in the future of public education and indeed, our state.

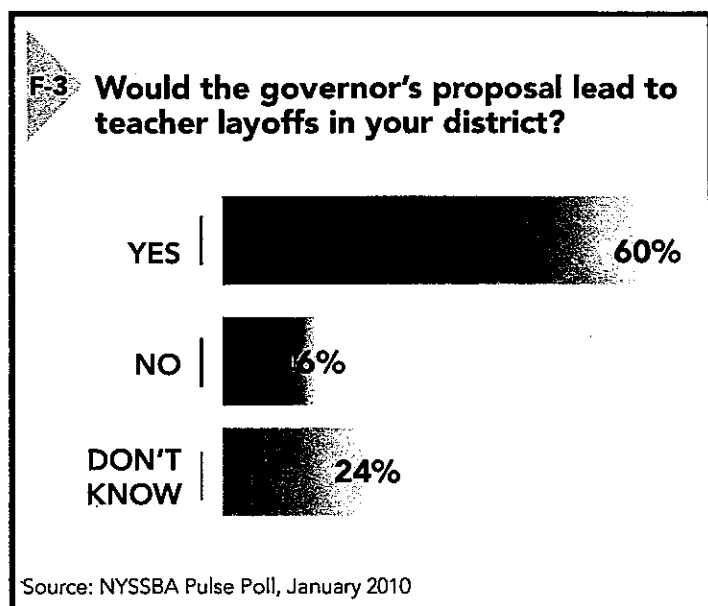
Respectfully submitted,  
DAVID A. LITTLE, Esq.  
Director  
Governmental Relations



## Impact on School Districts

These state aid cuts will likely result in program cuts, staff layoffs or property tax increases. In fact, 60 percent of school board respondents to a NYSSBA poll in January said that the governor's proposal would likely lead to teacher layoffs in their districts (see F-3).

Another 51 percent held out the possibility of cuts in school programs, most likely due to the fact that districts are still relatively early in the budget development cycle.



In addition, 42 percent of respondents said their district would have to raise property taxes to make up any shortfall in state aid. Nearly two-thirds of school board members (66 percent) indicated their districts would need to dip into their reserve funds to address any state aid shortfalls. The poll results suggest that school boards will use a combination of strategies to deal with any shortfall in expected state aid in the coming school year.

## Recommendations

The governor's 2010-11 spending plan is \$4.6 billion less than what was pledged to schools for foundation aid to settle the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit. If the 2010-11 Executive Budget were enacted, school districts would have to choose among several painful choices, including staff layoffs, program cuts, and maintaining dangerously low reserve funds for emergencies.

**NYSSBA recognizes the funding challenges facing New York State. However, education must remain the state's number one funding priority. Education is New York State's road to economic recovery in an information age.**

We ask that the governor and Legislature take the following two-pronged approach to state school aid funding this year:

- Restore the \$1.1 billion state aid cuts proposed in the 2010-11 Executive Budget. School districts in New York are already facing the loss of \$2 billion in federal stimulus dollars under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that are scheduled to run out in 2011. A cut of \$1.1 billion would be a double whammy to already cash-strapped public schools.
- Enact meaningful mandate relief. Governor Paterson has proposed a four-year moratorium on unfunded mandates to help keep property taxes down and ease the burden on local governments during an unprecedented fiscal crisis. The governor has also proposed eliminating some costly mandates. This is a sensible and long overdue approach. In fact, according to a January poll of school board members conducted by NYSSBA, 53 percent of school board members said they would support reduced state aid if the state Legislature adopted mandate relief proposals such as Wicks Law reform.

**We urge the governor and Legislature  
to do the right thing for our schoolchildren.**

**Otherwise, our schools – and our future –  
could fall off the funding cliff.**



New York State  
**School Boards  
Association**

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## Appendix A. 2010-11 Executive Budget School Aid Appropriations - County Averages

County	2010-11 state aid	2009-10 state aid	\$ change	
			2009-10 to 2010-11	% change 2009-10 to 2010-11
ALBANY	\$ 16,473,512	\$ 18,356,467	-\$ 1,882,955	-10.4%
ALLEGANY	\$ 7,131,832	\$ 7,395,986	-\$ 264,154	-3.6%
BROOME	\$ 18,371,508	\$ 19,487,828	-\$ 1,116,320	-5.6%
CATTARAUGUS	\$ 11,940,912	\$ 12,379,960	-\$ 439,048	-3.6%
CAYUGA	\$ 11,697,129	\$ 12,901,348	-\$ 1,204,219	-9.1%
CHAUTAUQUA	\$ 10,268,776	\$ 10,824,019	-\$ 555,244	-5.7%
CHEMUNG	\$ 33,590,435	\$ 35,448,621	-\$ 1,858,186	-5.6%
CHENANGO	\$ 12,163,893	\$ 12,659,216	-\$ 495,324	-4.2%
CLINTON	\$ 12,756,413	\$ 13,831,592	-\$ 1,075,179	-7.4%
COLUMBIA	\$ 8,072,920	\$ 8,902,540	-\$ 829,620	-9.6%
CORTLAND	\$ 12,322,386	\$ 13,186,505	-\$ 864,120	-5.9%
DELAWARE	\$ 4,726,823	\$ 5,019,243	-\$ 292,420	-7.0%
DUTCHESS	\$ 17,361,499	\$ 19,004,862	-\$ 1,643,363	-9.8%
ERIE	\$ 34,932,042	\$ 37,262,660	-\$ 2,330,617	-9.6%
ESSEX	\$ 2,713,112	\$ 2,882,033	-\$ 168,921	-6.8%
FRANKLIN	\$ 11,250,550	\$ 11,858,602	-\$ 608,053	-5.8%
FULTON	\$ 10,519,418	\$ 11,338,196	-\$ 818,778	-7.8%
GENESEE	\$ 9,859,890	\$ 10,617,750	-\$ 757,860	-7.6%
GREENE	\$ 7,123,708	\$ 7,803,364	-\$ 679,656	-8.4%
HAMILTON	\$ 695,274	\$ 749,570	-\$ 54,296	-7.6%
HERKIMER	\$ 8,291,003	\$ 8,659,909	-\$ 368,907	-5.2%
JEFFERSON	\$ 13,894,321	\$ 14,591,775	-\$ 697,454	-7.2%
LEWIS	\$ 8,665,804	\$ 9,091,435	-\$ 425,631	-4.5%
LIVINGSTON	\$ 8,658,273	\$ 9,269,522	-\$ 611,249	-7.1%
MADISON	\$ 8,151,563	\$ 8,863,583	-\$ 712,020	-7.3%
MONROE	\$ 44,681,213	\$ 48,166,828	-\$ 3,485,615	-10.2%
MONTGOMERY	\$ 13,164,043	\$ 13,771,744	-\$ 607,701	-5.3%
NASSAU	\$ 13,596,172	\$ 14,734,097	-\$ 1,137,925	-9.7%
NEW YORK CITY	\$ 7,067,035,727	\$ 7,532,963,815	-\$ 465,928,088	-6.2%
NIAGARA	\$ 23,802,406	\$ 25,968,968	-\$ 2,166,562	-8.3%
ONEIDA	\$ 19,245,192	\$ 20,480,509	-\$ 1,235,317	-7.8%
ONONDAGA	\$ 28,968,705	\$ 31,252,450	-\$ 2,283,745	-10.3%
ONTARIO	\$ 11,589,460	\$ 12,778,089	-\$ 1,188,629	-9.1%
ORANGE	\$ 26,423,584	\$ 28,123,997	-\$ 1,700,413	-6.4%
ORLEANS	\$ 13,291,604	\$ 13,821,701	-\$ 530,098	-4.6%
OSWEGO	\$ 20,284,868	\$ 21,804,043	-\$ 1,519,176	-6.7%
OTSEGO	\$ 5,915,723	\$ 6,341,535	-\$ 425,812	-6.2%
PUTNAM	\$ 11,982,659	\$ 12,849,941	-\$ 867,282	-8.6%
RENSSELAER	\$ 14,097,392	\$ 15,245,767	-\$ 1,148,375	-8.4%
ROCKLAND	\$ 20,357,026	\$ 22,199,648	-\$ 1,842,622	-9.0%
ST. LAWRENCE	\$ 9,613,274	\$ 10,035,788	-\$ 422,514	-4.9%
SARATOGA	\$ 13,414,975	\$ 15,115,587	-\$ 1,700,612	-11.1%
SCHENECTADY	\$ 23,748,311	\$ 26,176,371	-\$ 2,428,061	-11.2%
SCHOHARIE	\$ 7,206,343	\$ 7,797,016	-\$ 590,673	-7.6%
SCHUYLER	\$ 9,550,183	\$ 10,105,359	-\$ 555,177	-5.2%
SENECA	\$ 10,429,746	\$ 10,874,679	-\$ 444,933	-4.3%
STEUBEN	\$ 12,269,536	\$ 12,693,540	-\$ 424,005	-2.7%
SUFFOLK	\$ 22,503,103	\$ 24,179,366	-\$ 1,676,263	-9.2%
SULLIVAN	\$ 11,426,525	\$ 12,295,312	-\$ 868,787	-6.9%
TIOGA	\$ 12,126,536	\$ 12,733,377	-\$ 606,841	-4.4%
TOMPKINS	\$ 11,841,178	\$ 12,619,919	-\$ 778,741	-5.5%
ULSTER	\$ 17,807,739	\$ 19,233,882	-\$ 1,426,143	-7.5%
WARREN	\$ 6,087,266	\$ 6,775,774	-\$ 688,509	-9.3%
WASHINGTON	\$ 7,500,577	\$ 8,173,928	-\$ 673,351	-9.1%
WAYNE	\$ 11,714,172	\$ 12,641,216	-\$ 927,044	-7.1%
WESTCHESTER	\$ 13,231,670	\$ 14,434,438	-\$ 1,202,768	-10.5%
WYOMING	\$ 8,581,829	\$ 9,302,294	-\$ 720,465	-6.7%
YATES	\$ 9,823,282	\$ 10,702,643	-\$ 879,361	-7.5%