

**TESTIMONY**  
**Joint Legislative Hearing of the**  
**NEW YORK STATE**  
**ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**  
**&**  
**SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Executive Budget Proposals for Education**



**Wednesday, February 8, 2023**

**THE COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATORS**

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Good afternoon, Assemblymember Weinstein, Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Benedetto, Senator Mayer, Senator Liu and your honorable colleagues. It is a pleasure to be with you today, and we are grateful for your continued support and over the years.

My name is Henry Rubio and I am the President of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators (CSA). CSA is the labor union representing 6,100 in-service and 10,500 retired Principals, Assistant Principals, Education Administrators and Supervisors working in New York City public schools and three charter schools. CSA is also the collective bargaining unit for 200 Early Childhood Directors and Assistant Directors who work in city-subsidized Early Childhood Education Centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding the Executive Budget for State Fiscal Year 2024.

**School Aid & Foundation Aid** – CSA strongly supports the Governor’s historic proposal to fully fund Foundation Aid and increase State Aid across the board. The FY 2024 Executive Budget provides \$34.8 billion in total School Aid, the highest level of State aid ever. While CSA will always advocate for increasing the resources allocated to keep our schools safe havens of learning, making sure that our schools have the resources they need should be our collective goal.

**Charter Schools** – Notwithstanding the Governor’s proposed Foundation Aid increase, we are nonetheless deeply concerned with the Executive Budget proposals to proliferate charter schools in New York City, by eliminating the regional cap on charter schools. There simply is no reasonable basis to approve this change. New York City might see as many as 100 new charter schools if this proposal is approved, even as our enrollment has declined in recent years. More than anything, we oppose the massive corporatization of public education that this proposal advocates.

**School Leader Professional Development** - CSA’s members are critical to students’ educational progress and emotional well-being, especially so throughout the pandemic. School Principals and Assistant Principals were singularly responsible for leading students and teachers through COVID-19, addressing learning loss, and implementing in-person education and virtual learning.

The pandemic deeply exacerbated the pronounced need to support the retention and advancement of school leaders.

The research-based literature relating to effective schools and student achievement has long acknowledged the critical role of Principals in providing school leadership that will shape a highly complex human organization into a cohesive and collaborative community of learners.

A 2022 survey by the National Association of Secondary School Principals found that 1 out of 2 school leaders say their stress level is so high they are considering a career change or retirement. 3 out of 4 of school leaders (73%) and students (74%) report they needed help with their mental or emotional health last year.

We respectfully request your consideration of two investments to retain, support and attract school leaders:

1. ***Executive Leadership Institute*** - CSA established the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)<sup>1</sup> a number of years ago, as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the provision of practical, relevant and essential professional development for today's school leaders. ELI provides standards-based, results-driven leadership training to help school leaders successfully fulfill their responsibilities as instructional leaders. New York needs to invest more in this kind of high-level training and support. ELI's programs give school leaders the tools they need to create true learning communities.

We are grateful for the Legislature's support of ELI again in last year's state budget. This \$475,000 appropriation helps sustain our work to provide much-needed professional development services to school leaders working in New York City public schools. ELI mentors more than 200 school leaders on a one-to-one basis each year=year and offers hundreds of workshops throughout the year, all free of charge to public school leaders. During the COVID-19 emergency, ELI has shifted its programming online, and this important work has continued throughout the last three years.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://elipd.org/>

CSA respectfully requests a **\$1,000,000** appropriation to broaden ELI's professional development services. With the Legislature's support, ELI has expanded training required under the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), creating LGBTQ-friendly school environments, and on the impact of social emotional intelligence in our schools. With your help, ELI can take important next steps to extend its reach and offerings.

2. ***Advanced Leadership Program for Assistant Principals (ALPAP)*** - Through ELI, CSA can also expand our Advanced Leadership Program for Assistant Principals (ALPAP)<sup>2</sup>, to attract and support school leaders considering becoming a school principal. This is vitally important as we anticipate a high turnover in school leadership in coming months.<sup>3</sup> Another survey by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)<sup>4</sup> found that while this exodus "... will impact all students, historically marginalized communities, students of color and those who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds will be disproportionately affected by the departure of our strong and dedicated school leaders."

ALPAP can help foster a new cohort of strong, inspired and dynamic leaders to help our youth succeed. ALPAP provides a path forward for Assistant Principals and Education Administrators who have demonstrated a readiness to become Principals. CSA respectfully requests a **\$500,000** appropriation to expand ALPAP's work.

***Assistant Principal in Every School*** – We cannot overstate the need for minimal levels of administrative staffing in every school. Students, especially those in the middle and high school years and those with special needs, require personal attention to their educational progress, their social and environmental circumstances, their need for regulation and order, their disciplinary needs and other important factors that influence their physical, mental, emotional and academic development. Yet there are over 100 schools in New York City without an assistant principal.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://elipd.org/leadership-program/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/why-school-leaders-are-considering-an-early-exit-one-principals-take/2020/08>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nassp.org/news/nassp-survey-signals-a-looming-mass-exodus-of-principals-from-schools/>

More than ever, we need to attract and support school leaders who are considering becoming a school principal. Assistant principals very often aspire to become principals later in their careers.

In our last contract, the DOE and CSA agreed that having an assistant principal in every school is a best practice. In the age of coronavirus and its aftermath, we maintain that it is more than a best practice; it's absolutely essential. We are grateful to Senator Liu and Assemblymember Hyndman for their introduction of legislation to require an AP in every New York City school: S.1397/A.2605. We ask that you continue to support us in ensuring adequate school supervision.

**Conversion Charter Schools** –CSA represents three unionized, conversion charter schools. CSA recommends the creation of a new category of support: *“Conversion Charter School Supplemental Aid.”*

Our unionized conversion charter schools continue to bear “legacy” costs that date from pre-conversion. Our charter school members report that pension and health insurance costs have risen dramatically in recent years and can now comprise 12% to 22% of the entire operating budget for each school. These costs are not covered under the regular charter school funding process, and financial relief – which would cost the State approximately \$3,000,000 per year - is urgently needed to protect our members’ retirements.

**Conclusion** – As I mentioned earlier, CSA is deeply grateful to state leaders for their support and guidance throughout the COVID-19 emergency and thereafter. Similarly, CSA members have led their school communities through many days of uncertainty, fear, and trauma, and this work continues. During the upcoming budget negotiations, we urge the Legislature to continue to advocate for students, teachers, and school leaders as you always have.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry D. Rubio