

Foundation Aid
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The present Foundation Aid formula was developed in response to two court decisions. Both said that New York State must close the funding gap between districts to provide an equitable education system across the state. The New York State constitution grants every child in New York State the right to a basic education. Foundation aid is the appropriate method for assuring that right.

As an educational psychologist, I am familiar with the research on learning and instruction. It is known that schools need more resources to meet the needs of children living in poverty, children whose learning problems require individualized educational programs, and children for whom English is a new language. The most effective factors in improving learning are small classes and libraries. Both have been shown to improve learning, but both cost money.

This year's scores on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) show that the last decade's education reforms have not helped children learn. Neither the common core state standards, the No Child Left Behind testing regime, nor transferring resources to charter schools has improved student achievement. Years of research show that small class size has a bigger impact on student learning than any other factor. School libraries with trained librarians are the second most effective factor. New York State should provide the funding set in the Foundation Aid formula so that all schools can provide these two basic needs.

As an educational psychologist I know that children must be taught to think for themselves, to read between the lines, to ask questions and explore the complex issues that face humanity in the present. They must be taught self regulation, taught to set goals and determine the best strategies for reaching them. Teachers must have the opportunity to individualize instruction to reach every student.

Schools need the resources to provide social workers, nurses, and psychologists to support teachers and children.

Providing funding for better schools for all children is the right thing to do. It will also help all residents of New York State. If children graduate from school with the ability to think for themselves, with problem solving ability, with self regulation, we will have a higher level work force. People prepared to fill higher level jobs will pay more taxes, so the state will benefit from providing Foundation Aid.

It is essential that the state fully fund Foundation Aid to public schools in New York City and the four other cities mandated by the courts in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

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