



Yonkers Children: A Proven Return on Investment



**THE NUMBERS MUST INFORM DECISIONS:
EQUITABLE FUNDING FOR
YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MUST BE ACHIEVABLE IN FY2022**

**Budget Testimony before the New York State
Joint Legislative Fiscal and Education Committees**

PRESENTED VIRTUALLY JANUARY 28, 2021 BY:
DR. EDWIN M. QUEZADA
Superintendent of Schools

Yonkers Students Today

31,118 Urban Students

26,149

Prekindergarten-Three to Grade Twelve Students

1,318 Prekindergarten 3 & 4

23,960 Kindergarten to 12

871 Students with Disabilities in Out-of-District Schools

18,503	73% Economically Disadvantaged
4,727	19% Students with Disabilities
2,786	11% English Language Learners
15,228	60% Hispanic
4,227	17% African American/Black
5,836	23% White, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, Multi-Racial

4,969 Yonkers Students attend:

804 Charter School Students

4,165 City of Yonkers Parochial/Private students

These students receive transportation, textbooks, library resources, nurse, pupil support services, Title I, II and III funds and special education services.

Yonkers students reside in Westchester County and deserve to have the same educational experiences and opportunities as their peers throughout the county.

Recognize the difference in Yonkers population and poverty levels compared to other Westchester County school districts.

**Yonkers Children: A Proven Return on Investment
Equitable Funding for Yonkers Public Schools
Must be Achievable in FY2022**

Distinguished members of the Joint Legislative Fiscal and Education Committees, I appreciate the opportunity to address you on behalf of the Yonkers City School District; I am Dr. Edwin M. Quezada, Superintendent of Schools. **Once again, it is an honor to report that the state of the Yonkers Public Schools remains strong and magnificently evident in the continuous academic progress of our students.**

Often I state with pride that Yonkers Public Schools is the best urban district in America. The data is clear. **In 2020, Yonkers was the first and only Big 5 City District in New York State to achieve a 90% graduation rate**, surpassing the graduation rate of many districts in Westchester County as well as the State’s overall average. We are most proud of the graduation rate advances of our sub-groups:

	Graduate Rate	Percentage Point increase for 2018 to 2020
Black students	90%	10 points
Latino students	90%	4 points
Multi-Lingual Learners	85%	29 points
Students with Disabilities	68%	10 points

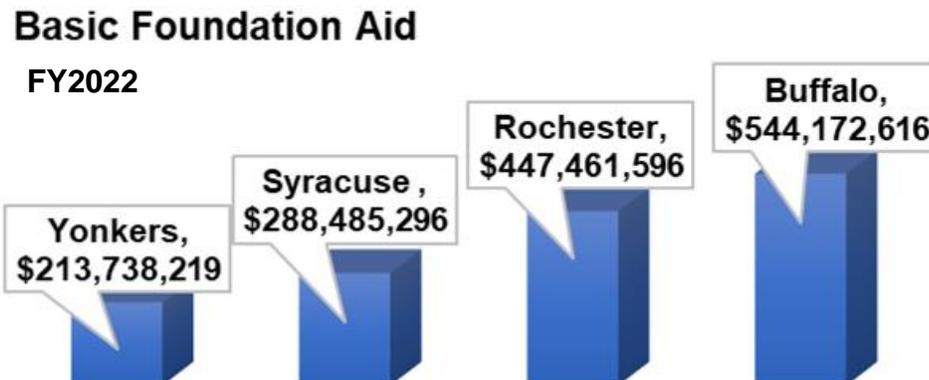
Yonkers Public Schools children, educators and staff deliver yearly improvements in instruction and educational outcomes. Five consecutive years with a graduation rate above 85%. Former President Barack Obama recently lauded our Yonkers My Brother’s Keeper movement for effective implementation and perseverance. In October 2020, Yonkers was the only large city school district in the State to robustly initiate Hybrid Instruction in all 39 schools.

Please share in our pride because the investment you chose to make in Yonkers in the recent past, clearly demonstrates that we are a cost-effective entity. This requires years of building an academic and social-emotional foundation for our students beginning in prekindergarten. Yonkers Public Schools is a model urban school district; the numbers confirm our results.

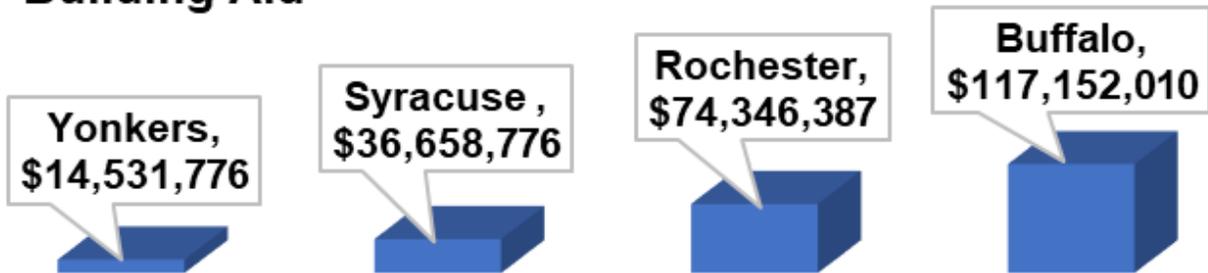
Maintaining this momentum requires dependable and recurring revenue. This continues to be the greatest challenge for the Yonkers Board of Education and the reason for our annual plea for sustainable equitable funding, rather than one-time appropriations.

I have chosen an info graphic format to illuminate Yonkers’ request because *a picture is worth a thousand words*. This visual format illustrates the FY 2022 estimated funding appropriation of four similar cities in New York State as indicated in the Governor’s Executive Budget on January 19, 2022. Let me be clear, our sister cities deserve all the appropriations they receive and more.

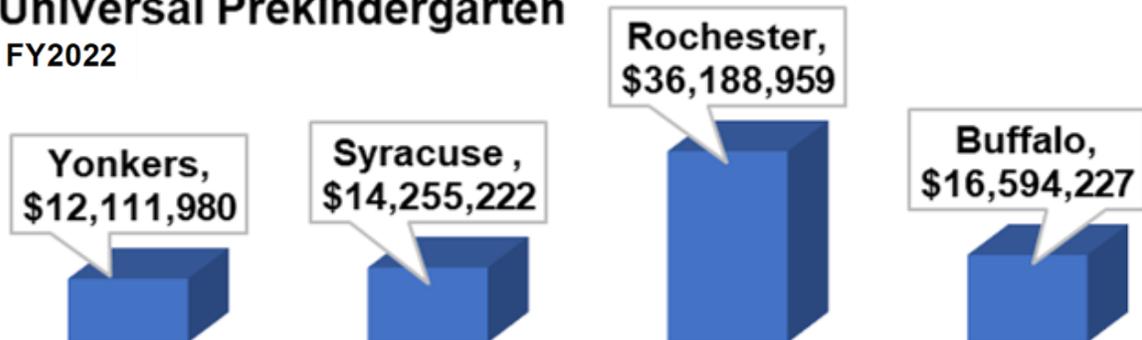
Yonkers deserves the same consideration for dependable and recurring revenue.



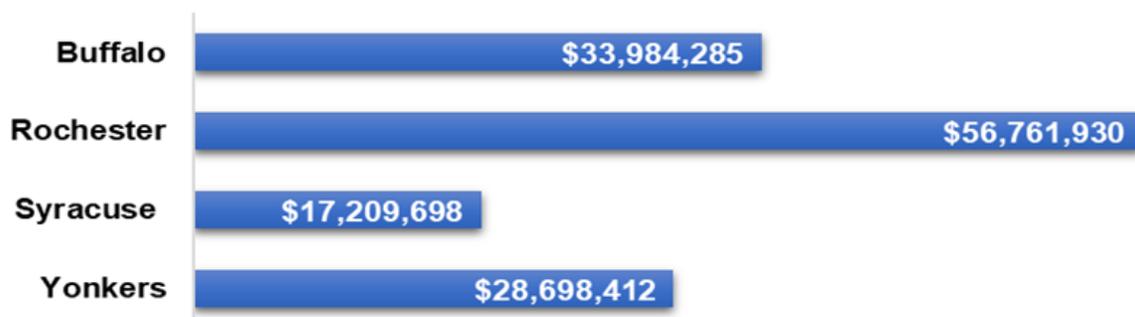
Building Aid FY2022



Universal Prekindergarten FY2022



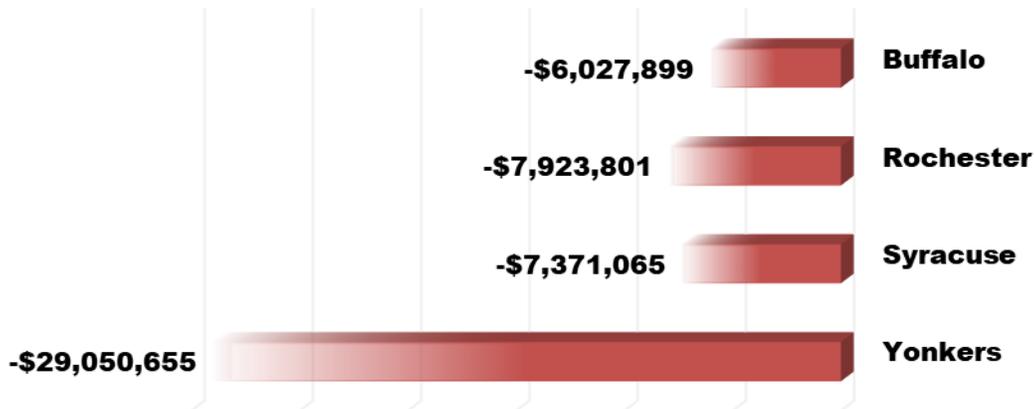
Transportation Aid FY2022



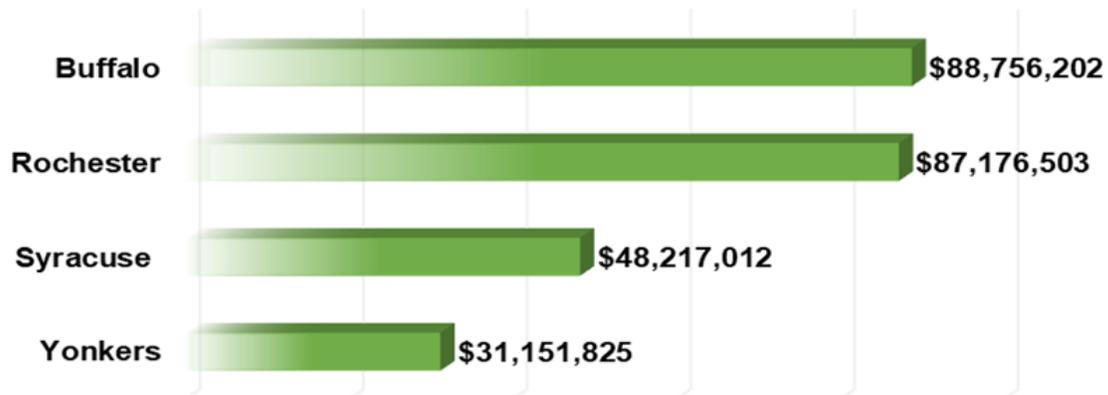
Yonkers Unfairly Impacted

By the Local District Funding Adjustment Reduction and COVID-19 Stimulus
The Result will be Reduction in Staff and Services for Students

Local District Funding Adjustment Reduction



COVID -19 Stimulus FY2022



For years, Yonkers has raised the inequity for our city because of the antiquated Foundation Aid formula. The formula uses a combined wealth ratio that is not reflective of the children we educate in our schools – over 73% are economically disadvantaged, 19% are Students with Disabilities who require related services, 11% are English Language Learners, 77% African American/Black and Hispanic.

A majority of our learning community and their families continue to be significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yonkers Public Schools level of success cannot be sustained unless the inequitable funding formula is corrected for the City of Yonkers.

While this esteemed body works on amending the funding formulas, Yonkers offers for your consideration ten solutions for FY 2022 that will prevent financial catastrophe for our schools and community next year and in the future.

Please consider the following for the Yonkers Public Schools:

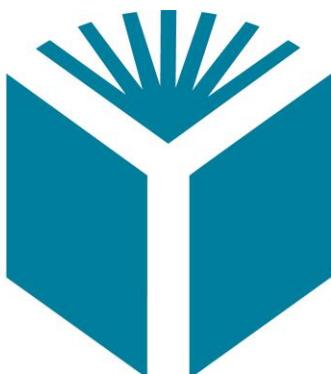
- Solution 1:** Appropriate an equitable amount of the federal stimulus funding.
- Solution 2:** Fully fund the total cost of Universal Pre-K from \$12 million to \$20 million.
- Solution 3:** Reject the Expense Based Consolidation proposed in the Executive Budget.
- Solution 4:** Permanently allocate the \$12.6 million Bullet Aid.
- Solution 5:** Fully fund Health Services for Yonkers public and non-public schools from \$1.2 million to \$6.9 million.
- Solution 6:** Identify additional funding to address the significant infrastructure concerns in schools, many of which are over eighty years old.
- Solution 7:** Identify funding to address the significant social-emotional concerns that our students are facing due to being out of school for more than a year.
- Solution 8:** Fully fund a robust K – 12 Summer School Program to address the instructional time lost during the pandemic at an estimated cost of \$1.8 million.
- Solution 9:** Increase funding for Multilingual Learners (MLL) to support students and families academic and acclimation needs.
- Solution 10:** Increase funding for Career and Technical Education (CTE) to include ninth grade students in the funding calculation.

Academic year 2021-2022 must be hallmarked as a Restorative Year with a dynamic educational corrective plan to robustly revitalize our public schools and thereby our communities. Our students, families, and staff will require additional intense supports to mitigate the pain and suffering caused by this pandemic. Our children have lost significant academic and social-emotional growth without the in-person support of their teachers, administrators and support staff as well as their interactions with their peers. It is our joint responsibility to restore what our children lost. **Our actions must be intentional additional supports that will elevate our children’s educational experience in 2021-2022 to counter what they have lost since March 2020.**

Yonkers is up to the challenge. Is the State ready to support us?

Please join Yonkers Public Schools’ fight for the survival of our public education system. Year after year, Yonkers teachers, administrators and staff rise to the challenge and realize remarkable academic success for *all* of our students to achieve their potential. We take pride in the community that we proudly serve.

Respectfully submitted.



YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools

2020-2021