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For Immediate Release

Alliance for Quality Education & Campaign for Fiscal Equity Response to Executive Budget Proposal

Statement of Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education

“New York State made a commitment in 2007 to finally meet its obligations to our school children and raise the bar on educational quality for every child. All branches of government committed to add \$1.24 billion in additional foundation aid this year and to firmly protect our school children against year-to-year economic fluctuations. The budget proposed today, is the first step, in a multi-step process, towards getting a final budget by April 1st. The focus now shifts to the legislature to add the funds needed to fulfill the commitment to increase foundation aid by \$1.24 billion this year. Today’s budget proposal provides \$350 million less in foundation aid than committed. It does propose some grant funds that could serve as stop gap measures to help close the gap so long as those funds are covered by the accountability of the Contract for Excellence. Between now and April 1st all branches of government have the ability to come together and guarantee that nothing is allowed to stand in the way of fulfilling our long-delayed commitments to our school children.”

Statement of Geri Palast, Executive Director, Campaign for Fiscal Equity

“In 2007, after 13 years of Campaign for Fiscal Equity litigation, the state made a long overdue commitment to fully fund the constitutional promise of a quality education for every public school child with strong accountability measures to achieve excellence. This landmark legislation specifically provided for \$1.24 billion in foundation aid in 2008, \$5.5 billion new investment over four years, to ensure that funding for our children’s education is immunized against shifts in the economy. CFE will work with all branches of government to ensure that this commitment is met in the final budget on April 1. The budget proposal released today would reduce the foundation aid increase statewide from \$1.24 billion to \$890 million statewide, with some grants to make-up for the shortfall. In New York City, foundation aid would be reduced from \$528 million to \$335 million. Today’s budget includes targeted grant funds that may close the gap in operating aid covered by the Contract for Excellence by as much as \$90 million. This

translates into fewer teachers, larger classrooms, less investment in strategies from middle school reform to after school programs that make the difference in academic achievement for our kids, particularly those with the highest needs. More than a generation of public school students of New York have already suffered delays that have and continue to affect their ability to compete in the global economy and actively participate as citizens. Our kids can't wait!"

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