

Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Chair  
Assembly Ways & Means Committee  
LOB 923  
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Catharine Young, Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
428 Capitol  
Albany, NY 12247

Hon. Catherine Nolan, Chair  
Assembly Education Committee  
LOB 836  
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Carl Marcellino, Chair  
Senate Education Committee  
LOB 811  
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Chairpersons:

We are writing to you regarding an item of the utmost concern regarding clear and urgent threats to funding for our public schools in New York State. At the federal level there is much that is unknown, however, the Trump Administration and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos have threatened to cut federal funding for public schools and reprogram this money into private school vouchers. New York State's schools currently receive \$2.5 billion in federal funding. The vast majority of this is funding for economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.


The policies of Donald Trump and Betsy DeVos pose a clear and urgent threat to our public schools in New York State. However, when we look at Governor Cuomo's proposed budget the threat is even greater. He is proposing to repeal the Foundation Aid formula and with it the \$4.3 billion that is owed to our public schools as a result of the statewide settlement to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. The vast majority of this funding is owed to schools with high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. In fact these categories of students are major factors in the Foundation Aid formula. In addition, 58 percent of this funding is specifically owed to Black and Brown students. Governor Cuomo's proposal to repeal the \$4.3 billion in Foundation Aid commitments exceeds the total of all federal funding for New York schools by \$1.8 billion.

We are calling upon you to make clear through tomorrow's budget hearing that the threatened repeal of \$4.3 billion in Foundation Aid is entirely unacceptable and would do irreparable damage to the education of New York's 3 million students. Rather than protecting New Yorkers

from the policies of Trump and DeVos, Governor Cuomo's budget proposal actually doubles down on the damage. This damage would be greatest to economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities and Black and Brown students—the very students threatened by any proposals being considered by Trump and DeVos.

This is not an upstate vs. downstate, large city vs. small city or rural vs. suburban issue. For instance, Jamestown schools are owed \$10.3 million. Rochester is owed \$93 million. Utica is owed \$47 million, Brentwood is owed \$138 million, Ossining is owed \$16 million, New York City is owed \$1.9 billion. High need rural schools are owed \$191 million. This is a representative sampling and students in schools throughout the state would be deprived of the educational opportunities they deserve if the Foundation Aid formula is repealed as proposed by Governor Cuomo.

Sincerely yours,



Billy Easton  
Executive Director



Jasmine Gripper  
Legislative Director