

Foundation Aid Roundtable Talking Points:

The real question is how has your school been impacted by the failure to use the Foundation Aid formula

- Every year, instead of funding the Foundation Aid formula, New York State substitutes a temporary formula that leaves our schools underfunded and makes our students feel the impact. They call this temporary funding formula Foundation Aid, **but it is Foundation Aid in name only**. If it were really Foundation Aid our schools would already be receiving \$4 billion more than they are.
- Describe programs and resources your district is unable to provide due to the lack of adequate funding.
- Describe effective programs your school district offers, but needs to expand but cannot do so without more funding.
- Describe opportunities students miss out on due to failure to use the Foundation Aid formula.

[Art, Music, Sports, After-school programs, Class Size, Science labs, Libraries/ Librarians, Counselors, ESL Programs, Supports for Struggling Students, Supports for Students with Disabilities, Etc]

Addressing Systemic Racism in Education Through the Foundation Aid Formula

- 71% of Foundation Aid money is owed to school districts with 40% or more Black and Latinx students
- Failing to fund the formula is primarily denying the full worth of Black and Brown students. Perpetuating educational racism.
- Schools that educate Black and Latinx students, often have to make choices such as offering music, art, and physical education on rotation because they cannot afford to offer them every week, whereas schools with majority White students, do not have to make such choices.
- English Language and Multilingual Learners are often underserved, as schools cannot fully provide the programs they need to thrive.

The biggest problem with the formula is that it has been underfunded

- According to the State Education Department (SED), New York State owes public schools \$4 billion in Foundation Aid. Every year the state comes up with excuses for not funding it.
- The state committed to phase in \$5.5 billion in new Foundation Aid from 2007-2011, yet a decade later and the state has yet to fulfill its promise.

- Without adequate resources, schools cannot educate students. Research consistently shows that 10% increases of funding each year closely correlates with opportunities and outcomes.¹
- Foundation Aid for school districts is based on factors including the prevalence of student poverty, disability and English language learners, regional costs and other economic conditions in a given community. If it is fully funded, it will provide high-need school districts with the resources needed to meet their students' needs.
- Due to the State's failure to fully fund the Foundation Aid formula since 2008-09, schools in poor districts have seen class sizes spike, services for English language learners reduced, curriculum offerings curtailed, teachers positions eliminated, cutbacks in guidance counsellors, social workers and librarians, and reductions in tutoring for students who are not meeting state standards. These cuts in the quality of education have hit students in the poorest districts the hardest.

New York State is Violating Students' Constitutional Right to a Sound Basic Education by Underfunding the Foundation Aid Formula.

- Foundation Aid was enacted after 14 years of high profile lawsuits, *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. The State of New York*, extensive public debate and considerable engagement from the widest possible range of stakeholders.
- Foundation Aid was created to provide an infusion of school aid dollars to both meet the mandate of the Court of Appeals decision in *CFE v The State of New York*, and to provide school districts with a fair, transparent and predictable aid program that properly reflects the needs of students and taxpayers across the entire state.
- In 2007 Governor Spitzer and the Legislature enacted the Foundation Aid formula as the "statewide solution to the school funding needs highlighted by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit."

The singular most important improvement the state can make in the 2020 legislative session on Foundation Aid is to actually use the Foundation Aid Formula instead of doing so in name only. And, fully fund it.

¹ Jackson, C. K., R. Johnson, and C. Persico. (2015). The effects of school spending on educational and economic outcomes: Evidence from school finance reforms. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131(1): 157–218.

Fully fund the Foundation Aid formula in the 2021 state budget. Once the formula is fully funded, then the Legislature should consider ways to strengthen the formula.