



Education priorities 2022

Despite the landmark 2021 budget victory finally meeting the requirements of the education funding formula that arose from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity case. We will continue to fight for a fully funded and equitable system of education, where every school's mission is to provide an excellent education in an environment conducive to teaching and learning, for expanded family and community engagement, and to ensure that entire school communities respect cultural differences and are reflective of the communities they serve.

Foundation Aid \$1.5 billion: In 2022 ensure that the second year of the promised increase in Foundation Aid contained in the 2021 budget agreement is provided in full. There is still \$3 billion to be delivered to our students. Also, we will need to start thinking about how to improve the foundation aid formula and the way we finance our school system.

Importantly, how the federal and state funding is spent is crucial for our students. We need to use the existing tools of accountability, such as the Contract for Excellence, strengthening them, in order to ensure that funding is spent appropriately and effectively, as well as, ensuring meaningful public process for parents, families, and community members.

Early Care and Learning: In 2022, we need to ensure affordable, accessible early learning opportunities with the goal of creating statewide universal access to child care and Pre-K. To do so we need \$4.7- \$5 billion for universal child care, including passing **S7595/A8623 (Brisport/Hevesi)**. In addition, New York State must fulfill its promise to provide fully funded, full day quality pre-K for all students including investing \$500 million and making policy changes to ensure that pre-K and child care programs are not competing for resources, including those who need preschool special education and early intervention. The executive and final budget must include Governor Hochul's commitment to invest \$240 million in preschool special education to ensure that all children have access to the services they need.

Solutions Not Suspensions: All children deserve safe schools with supportive and respectful relationships with teachers and staff. We will advance the Solutions not Suspensions Act, which will, among other things, help encourage the use of positive and age-appropriate disciplinary strategies, eliminate the use of out-of-school suspensions for minor infractions, ensure that students receive instruction when they are removed from school, and limit unnecessary contacts between law enforcement and students (**A5197/S7198**).

Critical Race Theory: The national right-wing hysteria over Critical Race Theory (CRT) is already impacting New York State. School board candidates are running on anti-CRT platforms. Rhetoric from the right is already inducing some New York State parents to oppose culturally responsive education (CRE), grounded in the idea that public schools should offer a variety of classes, curricula, projects, books and resources that are based on the rich diversity of the student population. NYS needs to commit to teach truth and combat anti-CRT advocacy efforts in our schools and ensure that all students have access to a culturally responsive and sustaining education and all educators have access to anti-racism and anti-bias trainings.