

TALKING POINTS: These talking points are meant to serve as a guide for your conversations with legislators and their staff. Use them as a tool, but do not read word for word from this document. Emphasize the sections you most relate to and it's ok to skip the sections you are least familiar with.

School funding

New York's school districts are still grappling with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with one-time federal aid running out, the essential programs that have been funded with those dollars will need to be picked up by the state. The state's infusion of resources, equitably distributed through the Foundation Aid formula, will help enable New York's students to thrive.

The Governor announced that 2023 must be the year to complete the phase in for Foundation Aid. Parents have been coming to Albany for years fighting for the state to keep its promise and fully fund Foundation Aid. This is the year to fulfill the promise and fund 100% of the Foundation Aid formula.

- The state will need to deliver the projected \$2.7 billion increase to fully fund Foundation Aid. (Share how these resources could help your school. Share why you've been fighting for Foundation Aid Funding with AQE for years? Share highlights of new programs that have been added to your schools since 2021 when the state finally started to fund Foundation Aid).

Will you commit to publicly supporting 100% funding for Foundation Aid and the \$2.7billion increase in 2023?

New York City has fewer children due to numerous social and economic reasons. It's clear the city currently has enough schools to serve the current population of students. NYC doesn't need to add any new charter schools, especially since they siphon resources away from the Department of Education which serves more than 80% of the students. The State must maintain the existing cap on charters in New York City. (Share your story on how Charters have taken space or resources from traditional public schools)

Can we count on you to publicly commit to maintaining the NYC cap?

Child care

Child care providers and educators are vital to our communities. They care for infants, toddlers and young children all day with warmth, compassion and love. They deserve quality wages and benefits for their time and service.

The Governor has pledged to continue to expand child care, which we are grateful for and gives us hope. That said, we need more than incremental change to address the scale of the need - we need to get to universal care so that every child is taken care of, every provider earns a good wage, and every parent

who chooses to can go back to work. Yes it will cost the state money, but that is money that we will get back many times over. For every dollar spent on child care, you get back anywhere from \$7-\$15.

The amazing childcare providers and their staff are not being paid a living wage. Many talented and caring workers have been forced to leave the industry to work at places like McDonald's or Wendy's, because they make more money in the fast food industry than by educating children. (ADD story if you have on about your experience with amazing care)

Right now child care is too expensive for many families (like mine). On top of that, it is too difficult to access child care assistance. I have to _____ (describe the process of obtaining a childcare subsidy. Or share how much your family is forced to spend to cover the cost of childcare).

Immigrant families outside of NYC don't even have access to child care assistance, even though NY's economy depends on their labor. That's not fair or right. We urge you to include ALL families in the expansion of access to childcare.

Every year, we lose billions of dollars in productivity and tax revenue because of a lack of affordable child care. Women are often forced to leave the workforce or drop out of school due to the lack of access to affordable childcare options. By implementing Universal (meaning for all, not just a few) Child Care we can transform our economy by getting people back to work, strengthening an entire (vital) industry, and helping small business owners to get back on their feet. We don't need Amazon, we need child care! (Share how the lack of childcare has impacted your career or education)

Childcare is an economic justice issue. Childcare is the largest monthly expense for families with children. Most families do not access assistance because it's too hard or not publicized.

Childcare is a gender justice issue. Women's employment rates are at the lowest since 1998, exacerbated by the pandemic. This not only limits women's opportunities, it also weakens our economy as women are forced to choose between paid work and caring for their children.

Childcare is a worker justice issue. Childcare workers are in the bottom 2% of salaries, and do not earn a living wage.

Childcare is a racial justice issue. A large portion of the childcare workforce are women of color. We must pay these essential workers a living wage.

Childcare is an education justice issue. Education inequality doesn't begin in the K-12 system, it begins in early childhood. When children have access to high quality, culturally responsive childcare, this sets the learning conditions for successful academic achievement.

Childcare is a housing justice issue. For families experiencing homelessness, access to childcare offers some kind of stability (access to food/services/etc).

Support strategic investments in childcare to help cover costs for families and increase wages for providers. This includes a \$3 billion increase in the state budget.

Will you support the \$3 billion investment in Child Care in the state budget and write an op-ed about the importance of Childcare?

Pre-Kindergarten

Child Care and Pre-K make up what is known as Early Childhood Education (ECE). ECE is the corner stone of a successful public school system. But still some children do not have access to full day pre-K. Outside of NYC, only 58% of school districts have full day pre-K. Some only have half day, which is only two and a half hours. This does not work for parents.

(TELL YOUR STORY)

Continuing to expand pre-K is great. We must also make sure that some of the districts that implemented pre-K early on, have enough funding to support it. Some still get per child rates from thirty years ago. These rates need to be increased.

Can we count on you to support increasing the per child rate for UPK for early adopters of the program?

Can we count on you to support adding at the least \$125 million that the governor is proposing to full day pre-K?

Solutions Not Suspensions

Suspensions are not a victimless crime. Here are some of the consequences of suspensions.

Discrimination: Our system of school discipline is discriminatory. Even the New York State Education Department has recognized this in the work that the SED ‘Safe and Supportive Schools Task Force’ has done. New York is supposed to be a liberal state that welcomes immigrants and supports marginalized communities, yet every year most of the students who get suspended are Black, Brown, differently abled, or come from low income households. Are we punishing behavior or are we punishing communities?

Black and brown students are more likely to receive suspensions, even when they commit the same infractions as their white peers all through New York State. Just 1 suspension increases the likelihood

that a student will drop out of school. The overuse of suspensions fuels the school to prison and deportation pipeline. (IF you have a story, share it)

Statewide, students with disabilities were 78% more likely to be suspended than students in the general education population. For children who are already struggling with learning differences to be removed from the classroom only multiplies the harm.

Learning Loss: In the most recent school data available, we found that 913,211 days of instruction were lost in New York State because of suspensions. That's almost 1 million days in just a single school year. The Solutions not Suspensions Act would limit the number of days any child can be suspended to a maximum of 20 days, and would mandate schools to create a plan for students to keep up with their work and instruction, so they can easily reenter the classroom. Learning loss has lifetime consequences for young people and their future.

Question: how does it serve any of us to have generations of young people with an incomplete education?

Depression and Suicide: The youth mental health and suicide crisis is real and profound. Suspending children keeps them away from the services and support they deserve. Suspending students furthers their isolation and sense of hopelessness and despair. The NYS legislature must pass the Solutions Not Suspensions Act in 2023, and Governor Hochul must sign it into law.

Too often we punish children and young people for the behavior or perception of adults, too frequently in the name of safety. Managing conflict is a two way street, and no one can claim that all adults have learned to manage their emotions or situations perfectly (if we had, there would be no war). By training educators and students in restorative practices, we improve the health of the whole classroom and teach our kids how to work through the tough stuff and trust adults.

New York State courts have said it is unlawful to suspend a child because of minor infractions such as dress code violations, yet it happens every day in our schools. Shouldn't we have education laws that follow the courts?

The Solutions, Not Suspensions bill limits the number of days students can be suspended. It also encourages districts to adopt restorative practices and suspensions can only be used as a last resort.

Please sign on to support the Solutions, Not Suspensions bill. (If already signed on, can you pen an op-ed on the need to get it passed this year?)