

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.

The expiration of federal COVID relief funding

- The pandemic and its impacts are not over. As of May 2023, New York State lost over 82,000 lives to COVID-19, and inevitably those losses, as well as all the ways in which life has had to change, has been really hard for students and school communities.
- The federal government did the right thing in funding emergency relief for school districts, but the impact of the pandemic (like trauma, learning loss, and more) is not over. The State needs to step in and take care of public schools.
- **In my child's school, without help from the State, we will lose [Fill in examples here from your child's school or the larger district, and explain how that will impact your child.]**

Foundation Aid Formula

- Many districts used COVID-relief dollars for urgent, long standing needs that had not been funded by the state.
- Foundation Aid was only fully funded three years ago, and while that has been a huge win for the public schools, the formula that is used to calculate money for districts is out of date, so it is not meeting the needs of public school students in 2023;
- **In my school/my child's school/community, here are some of the ways that students' needs have grown beyond what the current formula can account for: (give examples)**
- We need to fund school finance experts, and other critical stakeholders, to study the formula and adjust it to the present day. An investment of \$1 million now, which is minor for NYS budget, will help bring school funding up to date so the state knows exactly how much to distribute;

Ask for their commitment:

Will you commit to publicly supporting \$2 billion for public schools to save critical programs and services, and \$1 million for a study to update the Foundation Aid formula?

Record their response here:

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 have a right to quality wages and benefits for their time and service.
- Child care educators also make sure that parents can go back to work and know their kids are safe and learning;
- **[for parents] One of the ways my child's child care providers have made a difference in my/my child's life is...**
- 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. Childcare workers are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as the general population.
- Most child care educators do not have access to health benefits or retirement
- **[for child care workers] One way this has negatively impacted my life/the lives of my coworkers/employees is....**
- 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.

Ask for their commitment:

Will you support the \$1.5 billion investment in Child Care in the state budget to pay educators what they deserve, and expand access for all families?

Record their response here:

Pre-Kindergarten

Child Care and Pre-K make up what is known as Early Childhood Education (ECE). ECE is the corner store of a successful public school system.

- However, many children still do not have access to full day pre-K.
- Outside of NYC, only 2/3 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, and can make it logistically harder for them to figure out how to shuttle their child from one place to another
- Many school districts do not implement pre-K programs because the amount the state provides is insufficient.
- 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.
- **In my child's district, our pre-K program could better serve my community if... (TELL YOUR STORY)**

Ask for their commitment:

Will you support a \$100 million investment for pre-K in the 2024-25 state budget, so that New York can continue its momentum in expanding pre-K?

Record their response: