



NYS Education Funding Lesson Plan

**Objective/Desired Outcome:**

Students will be able to develop an advocacy plan to increase state aid to their local school district.
Students will be able to organize their peers and school community to build public demand for more state funding for schools

Project Options:

Organize advocacy events within the school community to demand elected officials fully fund schools.
Create a research paper on education funding and it's affect on the students in your school
Create an informative news article detailing current state of education in NY
Create a documentary video showing how insufficient budgets from the state are hurting student opportunities
A Tale of Two Schools: Compare your school district with another school district in NY that receives more or less funding. How are students' opportunities and outcomes different?

Focus Questions:

Does money matter in Education? Are schools in NYS funded equitably? How does funding impact student outcomes and opportunities?

Materials/Resources:

AQE Tool Kit: <https://www.toolkit.aqeny.org/>
Foundation Aid One Pager: http://www.aqeny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CFE_one-pager.pdf
How Much Foundation Aid is Owed to Your District: <https://www.aqeny.org/school-district-owed/>

Vocabulary: *equitable, unequal, insufficient, funding, pupil, resources, Foundation Aid, Campaign for Fiscal Equity*

Plan of Instruction

- Activator:** *(Students may express their opinions via a whole class discussion, small group discussions or in writing, journal response)* Do you think all schools currently receive the same resources? What are some of the things that other schools may have, but are missing from your school? *(books, computers, ipads, musical instruments, art supplies, sports teams, etc.)* Is this fair? Should all students have access to the same resources?
- Mini-Lesson:** *How much funding is my school district owed? Search for your school district <https://www.aqeny.org/school-district-owed/> to see how much money New York State owes to the schools in your district. Also search neighboring districts to see how much they are owed. Compare two districts, one wealthy and low-need to a high poverty and high need district. Compare outcomes and opportunities.*
- Practice:** Develop a plan on how to advocate to state leaders to get your district the money that is owed. Think of ways everyone in the district can participate to maximize impact. (Organize a letter writing campaign to your elected official, Organize a call-in day or days to elected officials (Prepare a call script), Start a petition and deliver the petition once you have collected a significant number of signatures, Organize a local rally, town hall or press conference, Organize a visit to you



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elected official's office to demand they fully fund your district in the NYS budget, Organize a social media campaign, etc.)

- Work Time:** Execute your advocacy plan!
 1. Once you have developed a plan to advocate to your elected officials about the funding owed to your schools, execute your plan in a reasonable timeframe. Legislators are working on the state budget from Jan. 6- April 1st. Be sure you are able to execute your plan in time to influence the state budget process.
- Closure/Summary:** Students should evaluate if they feel the actions they took were effective. What assurance do you have that your elected official is going to fight for the funding for your district? If now, what more can or should you do to continue to build pressure and public accountability?

Lesson Reflection/Next Steps for Learning:

Students can engage in on-going education advocacy for their school district.

Write a letter to Governor Cuomo expressing your opinion on the current state of education and what he should do.

Come to Albany to participate in education rally and attend a lobby visit with local elected officials.