

Regarding New York State Aid for Schools and the Executive Budget Proposal for 2017-18

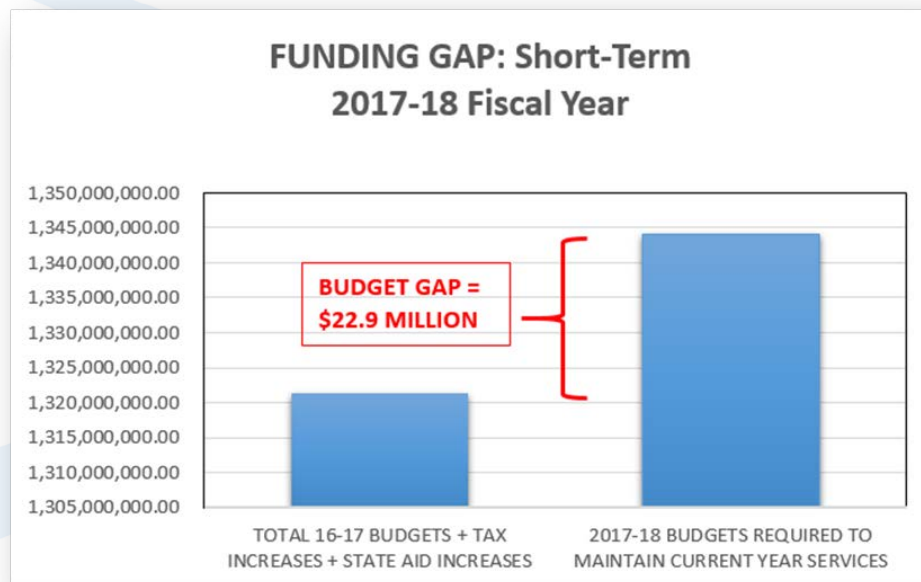
Dear Western New York Legislative Delegation member,

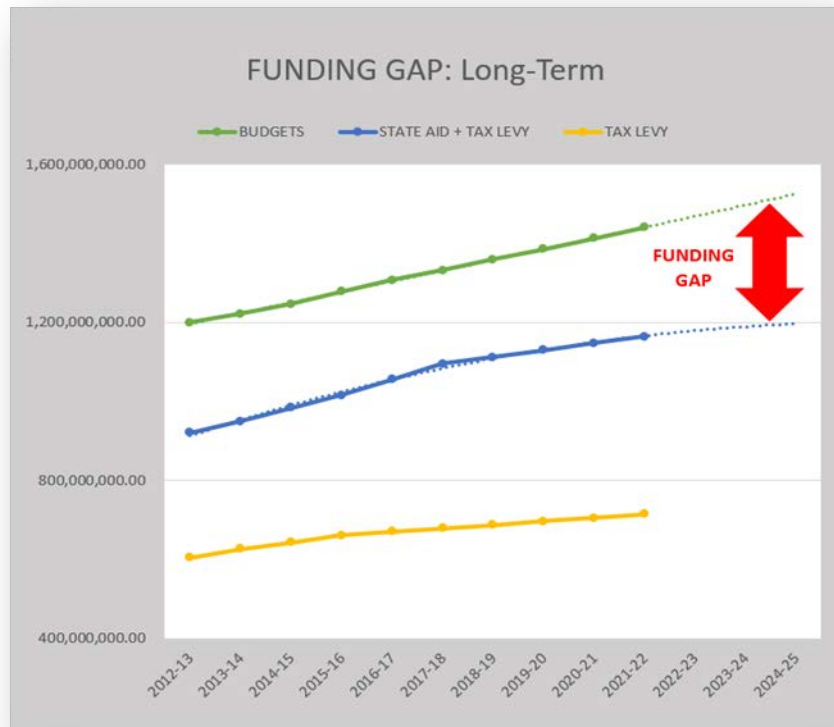
We appreciate your continued support of our public schools. You empower us to lead Erie County's public school districts and deliver the highest quality educational services to the region's children. When we fulfill our educational mission, we deliver hope and opportunity to those children, their families and the region.

According to every responsible estimate of necessary funding for public schools, Governor Cuomo's proposed 2017-18 New York State budget offers inadequate support for public schools. Specifically:

- An overall increase in funding of \$1 billion for public education, or less than half the \$2.1 billion that the Educational Conference Board (ECB) proposes for schools in 2017-18; and
- An increase in general, unrestricted or "foundation aid" of \$378 million, rather than the \$1.5 billion that the ECB stated is needed by the State's public schools to simply sustain their current operations for 2017-18.

How does Governor Cuomo's 2017-18 budget proposal affect Erie 1 BOCES component school districts? The local funding gap for Erie 1 BOCES component districts is \$22.9 million. The charts below illustrate the negative impact that the Governor's proposal will have on Western New York's public school children:





Based on currently available budget information, Erie 1 BOCES component districts will face a collective funding gap of \$22.9 million in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Simply put, the Governor’s proposal does not even provide sufficient funds for school districts to deliver the current school year’s instructional program in the next school year. Additionally, under this proposal there are no funds to promote student growth, enhance opportunity, meet new challenges or offer any innovative programs to benefit students.


As you can see, assuring that New York State provides the necessary \$1.5 in Foundation Aid to public schools is absolutely vital. However, there are a couple of long-term structural issues that must also be addressed:

- New York State’s public schools still suffer from the withholding of approximately \$4 billion in state aid since approximately 2008;
- Viable and meaningful reforms to the property tax cap are required; and
- A Foundation Aid formula that is adequately funded, predictable, transparent and that promotes equity is central to the long-term sustainability of public education.

Since 2008, New York’s public schools have reduced staffing levels by tens of thousands of teachers and other employees. Schools have also had to reshape, or eliminate, academic, athletic, or visual/performing arts programs of every kind in response to the financial crisis that gripped the state. Now that the crisis is over, it is time for New York’s public schools to be adequately funded so that every child can have the world-class education that they need to succeed in life after high school.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you to find solutions to these challenges.

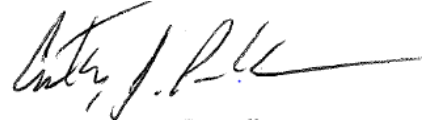
Sincerely,



Kevin L. Shanley
Superintendent,
Akron Central School District



Adam Stoltman
Superintendent,
Alden Central School District



Anthony Panella
Superintendent,
Amherst Central School District



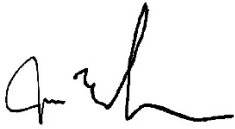
Mary A. Morris
Superintendent,
Cheektowaga Central School District



Andrea Galenski
Superintendent, Cheektowaga-
Sloan Central School District



Geoffrey M. Hicks
Superintendent,
Clarence Central School District



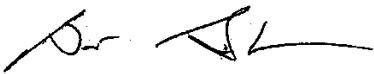
Jon MacSwan
Superintendent,
Cleveland Hill Union Free School District



Jeffrey Rabey, Ph.D.
Superintendent,
Depew Union Free School District



Bret Apthorpe, Ed.D.
Superintendent,
Frontier Central School District



Brian Graham, Ed.D.
Superintendent,
Grand Island Central School District



Michael R. Cornell
Superintendent,
Hamburg Central School District



Stephen Bovino
Interim Superintendent,
Kenmore-Tonawanda Union Free School
District



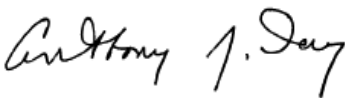
Anne G. Spadone
Superintendent,
Lackawanna City School District



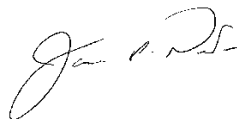
Michael Vallely, Ph.D.
Superintendent,
Lancaster Central School District



Joseph D'Angelo
Superintendent,
Maryvale Union Free School District



Anthony Day
Superintendent,
Sweet Home Central School District



James Newton, Ed.D.
Superintendent,
Tonawanda City School District



Mark Crawford, Ed.D.
Superintendent,
West Seneca Central School District



Scott G. Martzloff, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Williamsville Central
School District



Lynn Fusco, Ph.D.
District Superintendent
Erie 1 BOCES