

New York State Educational Conference Board



April 22, 2020

To the Members of the New York State Congressional Delegation:

We are writing as leaders of statewide organizations representing public school parents, classroom teachers, school-related professionals, building administrators, superintendents, and school board members asking for your help to prevent the destruction of learning opportunities and support services for schoolchildren all across our state.

We are grateful for the help you have already provided through the CARES Act. But public health measures crucial to saving lives and slowing the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus have crippled our state's economy. Now drastic cuts to state education funding cannot be averted without more assistance from the federal government.

The simple facts are grim: State revenues have fallen by perhaps as much as \$15 billion. In combatting the pandemic, the state has incurred emergency expenses totaling more than \$600 million, so far. Comprising 27% of total state spending, School Aid could not be spared from the cuts needed to match expenses to revenues.

We ask you to support bipartisan proposals to deliver \$500 billion in federal assistance to states, local governments, and school districts.

Schools will face extraordinary new costs whenever on-site instruction resumes in order to help students recover ground lost from the disruptions of the current year. We expect, also, that our ongoing ordeal will require schools to do even more to support the social and emotional needs of children returning to school. Therefore, additional federal aid cannot merely offset reductions in state support. We ask for \$200 billion in funding earmarked to schools with a strong maintenance of effort requirement for states, to assure new aid does help schools meet new costs.

Throughout this crisis, our members—families, teachers, aides, administrators, and school board members—have stepped up in extraordinary ways to enable schools to continue instruction, to deliver student meals, and to arrange emergency childcare for essential workers. The crisis now threatens to destroy the ability of our schools to meet their most basic obligations to all the children of New York. Please do not allow that devastation to occur.

Sincerely,

John Yagielski, Chair

Educational Conference Board

Jennifer Pyle, Executive Director
Conference Of Big 5 School Districts

Charles Dedrick, Executive Director
New York State Council Of School Superintendents

Lorey A. Zaman, President
New York State Congress Of Parents And Teachers

Robert Schneider, Executive Director
New York State School Boards Association

Jolene DiBrango, Executive Vice President
New York State United Teachers

Kevin Casey, Executive Director
School Administrators Association Of New York State

New York State Educational Conference Board ♦ John Yagielski, Chair
c/o NYSUT ♦ 800 Troy Schenectady Rd ♦ Latham, NY 12110