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THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



JAMES L. SEWARD  
SENATOR  
51<sup>ST</sup> DISTRICT

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May 1, 2017

Dear Ms. Ruscio:

Let me take a moment to offer an update on the final state budget and its effect on our local school districts, teachers, and students.

State aid for our local public schools generates more mail to my offices than perhaps any other issue. It's easily understandable – our schools are at the center of many communities in our upstate, rural areas.

Because of the importance of a top education for our young people, and an affordable tax bill for mom and dad, I worked to increase state aid for our schools beyond the governor's pale recommendation.

We succeeded. Working together, the legislature finalized an aid package for our schools that provides a bump in state aid of \$1.1 billion. Including reimbursement funds to districts for the lost value of the STAR exemptions, New York's total dollar commitment to our schools will be about \$29 billion this year.

The new budget hikes Foundation Aid by more than four percent, rejected the governor's plan to eliminate the phase-in of full Foundation Aid, and fully pays for districts' expense-based aids. The new dollars will help control property taxes and provide substantial aid for our upstate, rural, high-need districts.

I appreciated the letters, calls and e-mails I received throughout the budget process, and hope you will feel free to contact me on state issues.

With best wishes, I remain

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jim Seward'.

JAMES L. SEWARD  
State Senator

