

Auburn Enlarged City School District

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

Dear Board of Education President & Superintendent of Schools,

*Harriet Tubman
Administration Building*

We are writing this letter to request that your district join the Auburn Enlarged City School District in fighting for fair and equitable Foundation Aid funding from New York State.

*Jeffrey A. Pirozzolo
Superintendent of Schools*

78 Thornton Avenue
Auburn, New York 13021-4698

As you are well aware, New York State froze Foundation Aid in 2008-09, and since then, only minor increases have left many districts at roughly the same funding level as nearly a decade ago. This loss of funding has forced many districts like ours to tap into reserves, raise taxes, decrease programming offered, and increase class sizes, among other cuts. In addition to the hardships caused by the frozen Foundation Aid, the formula itself is seriously flawed. **School districts like yours and ours need the formula fixed, and fully funded, immediately so that we can provide our students with the same opportunities that students in fully-funded districts receive.**

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One of the biggest flaws within the Foundation Aid formula has to do with the Income Wealth Index (IWI), which is a component of the local contribution portion of the formula, and it is a measure of district income wealth relative to the statewide average. An IWI of 1.0 means a district is average, while an IWI of 0.5 means a district is at 50% of the average, etc. The statute currently sets a "floor" of 0.65 in the formula, which makes it so that any district with an IWI that is less than 65% of the statewide average is "capped" at that 65% level. Districts, like ours, with an IWI lower than .65 are unfairly penalized. In other words, the poorer the district, the more the IWI "floor" hurts the district, even though they have a higher need for the funding.

This major flaw with the Foundation Aid formula holds no prejudices; it affects districts across the entire state, districts large and small, and districts in urban and rural areas.

In the Capital Region, the Schenectady City School District, a large urban school district with approximately 9,300 students, has a current IWI of .364. If the "floor" were eliminated, they would receive an additional \$918,500 in Foundation Aid in 2017-18.

Here in Central New York, the Auburn Enlarged City School District, a medium-sized urban school district with approximately 4,300 students, has a current IWI of .539. Eliminating the "floor" would allow us to receive an additional \$2.24 million in 2017-18. Fully funding the original Foundation Aid formula would yield an additional \$5.3 million for the Auburn district in the 2017-18 school year.

In the North Country, the Indian River Central School District, a large rural school district with approximately 3,800 students, has a current IWI of .18. Without the "floor", they would receive an additional \$2.2 million in 2017-18.

In Western New York, the Randolph Central School District, a small rural school district with approximately 900-1,000 students, has a current IWI of .38, and if the "floor" were eliminated, they would receive an additional \$960,000 in 2017-18.

If the arbitrary "floor" were eliminated, 151 school districts across the state would see an increase in the amount of Foundation Aid they receive, and your school district is one of them.

The Auburn Enlarged City School District has been advocating to our local legislators and Governor Cuomo for the elimination of the IWI "floor" in the Foundation Aid formula and for Foundation Aid to be fully funded. We have written letters to our local legislators, sent signed petitions and post cards to Governor Cuomo, developed the hashtag #FixAndFundIt to share on social media, and now we are reaching out to districts like yours throughout the state to ask for your assistance in our advocacy campaign.

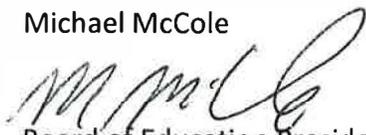
Please, reach out to your local legislators and Governor Cuomo, and ask your district residents to reach out to your local legislators and Governor Cuomo. Send them letters, post cards, and signed petitions. Request that immediate action be taken to improve and fully fund the Foundation Aid formula for public schools. Push the message to your district stakeholders on social media with the hashtag #FixAndFundIt.

New York State Foundation Aid is simply not adequate or equitable. The loss of that funding is detrimental to the education our students receive. Our students deserve fair and equitable funding. We need everyone on board to spread this message. The more the governor and other lawmakers hear the message, the more likely they are to listen and act.

We encourage you to contact us to discuss ways we can coordinate our advocacy efforts. We will be attending the NYSSBA Convention & Education Expo, October 12-14, in Lake Placid, and we welcome the opportunity to connect with you. You can reach either of us at (315) 255-8822 or Michael_McCole@auburn.cnyric.org and Jeffrey_Pirozzolo@auburn.cnyric.org. In addition, please visit the budget page of our website for more information about our advocacy campaign at district.auburn.cnyric.org/Budget.

Thank you for your commitment to all of our students.

Michael McCole



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