



The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

March 14, 2024

RE: Urging the Reinstatement of Proposed Cuts to Foundation Aid Funding

Dear Governor Hochul:

As members of the Westchester County Board of Legislators, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed cuts to Foundation Aid funding in the Executive Budget. We stand united with school district leaders, parents, students, and a bipartisan group of state legislators who share our concerns. We respectfully request that you restore Hold Harmless and the current statutory inflationary factor for Foundation Aid.

The proposed changes to the formula would result in a staggering \$20 million reduction in funding across the 40 public school districts in Westchester County that receive Foundation Aid. These changes would include a 30% cut to Foundation Aid, or \$1.5 million, for the Bedford Central School District; a 19% cut, or \$682 thousand, for the Harrison Central School District; and a 9.7% cut, or \$775 thousand, for the Mamaroneck Union Free School District. Students in our poorest cities would also experience these cuts: Yonkers would lose \$3.9 million and Mt Vernon \$2.9 million. Because of the Tax Cap, school districts across Westchester will be unable to replace this lost revenue.

The proposed budget is unacceptable, especially after the state has recently fulfilled its obligation to fully fund the Foundation Aid formula in the 2023-2024 state budget. The Foundation Aid cuts proposed in the Executive Budget would have a devastating impact on school districts, resulting in staff layoffs, loss of programming & larger class sizes, and weakening the district's ability to meet student needs around mental health and academic support, especially districts with large populations of English language learners. This will severely harm the education which our children receive and disproportionately affect the neediest of the State's districts.

Public education is a fundamental pillar of our community. Families choose to make Westchester their home because they can rely on a high-quality public education. These arbitrary and abrupt changes to state funding go against the spirit of the state as a reliable and responsible fiscal partner for our local municipalities and school districts. Working families in Westchester are already struggling—we cannot shift the burden to local property taxes to make up for the impact of the proposed state cuts.



Public schools provide a path to opportunity and self-actualization and are an investment in the future of our county and state. As stable partners for our school districts, we urge you, once again, to immediately reinstate the Foundation Aid cuts proposed in the Executive Budget.

Chairman Vedat Gashi
Westchester County Legislator, District 4

Vice Chairman José I. Alvarado
Westchester County Legislator, District 6

Majority Leader Tyrae Woodson-Samuels
Westchester County Legislator, District 13

Majority Whip Terry Clements
Westchester County Legislator, District 11

Minority Leader Margaret A. Cunzio
Westchester County Legislator, District 3

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Catherine F. Parker

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Westchester County Legislator, District 8

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Westchester County Legislator, District 10

David T. Imamura

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Westchester County Legislator, District 12

David J. Tubiolo

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Westchester County Legislator, District 14

Shanae Williams

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Westchester County Legislator, District 16