



New York State Federation
of School Administrators

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

TESTIMONY

**Joint Legislative Hearing of the
Assembly Ways and Means Committee**

&

Senate Finance Committee

On

Executive Budget Proposals for Education

SFY 2017-2018

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www.nysfsa.org

On behalf of the New York State Federation of School Administrators, I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony regarding the Executive Budget for State Fiscal Year 2017-2018. I am *Mark Cannizaro*, NYSFSA president and executive vice president of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

NYSFSA represents 14,000 active and retired Principals, Assistant Principals, Education Administrators and other school supervisors from Buffalo, Yonkers and New York City. We appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony regarding the 2017-18 Executive Budget. Please consider the following:

Foundation Aid - As many advocates will likely testify to your committees, NYSFSA believes that the \$428 million increase proposed in the Executive Budget for our State's schools just is not enough.

NYSFSA believes that the State must commit to fully funding the Foundation Aid formula within three years. In 2007, the Legislature established the Foundation Aid formula to support all school districts, after the Court of Appeals ruled that the state had failed to provide students with the classroom resources necessary to receive a "sound basic education." The time has come to fulfill the requirements of the CFE decision and Foundation Aid's promise.

The Executive Budget proposal for Foundation Aid - a proposed \$428 million increase - is not what our schools need nor what the formula would otherwise require. The Legislature's work in recent years to phase-out the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) also kept us from a fully functioning Foundation Aid formula. We are now \$4.3 billion behind the full phase-in of Foundation Aid. We ask your support to fund Foundation Aid fully in order to provide adequate and equitable funding for our schools, and to reject the Executive Budget's proposal to repeal the Foundation Aid formula schedule as well.

Community Schools - The Executive Budget directs school districts to set aside a designated amount of Foundation Aid to support the transformation of school buildings into community hubs to deliver academic, health, mental health, nutrition and counseling services to students and their families. These are smart investments proven to improve student success and achievement. NYSFSA supports the

Executive Budget proposal to increase the current set-aside to a new total of \$150 million for 2017-2018.

In order for children to learn, schools must do more to be safe places that are conducive to learning. What that means today is different than it was in the past – as many children need help with the challenges of poverty, health, nutrition, homelessness – as these all affect their ability to learn.

Community schools provide an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement to improve student learning, build stronger families and healthier communities. Community schools offer a range of supports so that children come ready to enter school, are actively involved in learning and their communities, and families become more involved with their children's education. Community schools help students succeed academically. Community school students are more healthy - physically, socially, and emotionally, and learn in safe, supportive, and stable environments.

Dream Act - NYSFSA strongly supports enactment of the “DREAM Act” - so important for the progress of immigrant children who attend our P-12 public schools. We support allowing immigrant students to apply for state financial aid for higher education.

School Safety Funds – NYSFSA supports the continuation of the NYSAFE Act proposed in the 2017-2018 Executive Budget, which provides enhanced aid for the purchase of stationary metal detectors, security cameras and safety devices for electrically operated partitions. However, we also stress and underscore that Principals - as the school leaders - must continue to be intimately involved in the development of school safety plans.

Supporting School Leaders – The work of school leaders – principals and assistant principals – is elementally important to the success of schools and the educational progress of children. Over the years, school leaders have encountered the incredible demands of rising education standards while simultaneously managing flat or decreasing school budgets. The role of instructional leader has become even more crucial, as policymakers across the country have become much more sensitive

to student achievement and eliminating college and career readiness gaps among our youth.

In order to ensure that school leaders successfully manage and meet these ongoing challenges as well as succeed in their role as instructional leaders, New York State must provide our school leaders, Principal and Assistant Principals, with access to ongoing professional development. The research-based literature related to effective schools and student achievement has long acknowledged the critical role of Principals in leading a highly complex human organization (a school) into a cohesive and collaborative community of learners.

In closing, I am grateful to bring the voices and concerns of New York's school leaders to your attention, and we thank you for your continued support of our work.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Cannizzaro, President