



# Advocates for Children of New York

## Protecting every child's right to learn

### Public Comment Delivered at the Rockefeller Institute Public Hearing on the New York State Foundation Aid Formula

July 16, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Randi Levine, and I am the Policy Director at Advocates for Children of New York. For more than 50 years, Advocates for Children has worked to ensure a high-quality education for New York students who face barriers to academic success, focusing on students from low-income backgrounds.

Every year, we help thousands of individual families navigate the New York City school system. And, every day, we hear from parents who are having difficulty getting the support their children need in school – including families of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), students in temporary housing, and students in foster care.

As you've heard today, New York City Public Schools' current budget is roughly 57% local funding and 37% State funding. There is a growing need for increased State support for City schools, particularly given the enrollment of 40,000 newly arrived immigrant students in temporary housing, the expiration of federal COVID-19 relief funds that were being used for important long-term education programs, and the requirements of the class size law.

As you consider changes to the Foundation Aid formula, we urge you to approach recommendations through an equity lens. The formula must include the resources needed to provide a high-quality education to *all* students, including those who need the most support.

Echoing the suggestions of others you've heard from today, our recommendations include:

- Providing funding in the formula specifically to support students in temporary housing and students in foster care;
- Increasing the weights for students with disabilities and ELLs to better reflect program costs including considering differentiation by program;

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- Updating the Regional Cost Index to better reflect the growing costs of salaries and services; and
- Ensuring the formula accounts for and funds the State's new class size requirements for New York City.

Our written comments will provide more detail. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We look forward to working with you.