



Coalition for Equitable Education Funding

News Release

For immediate release

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Advocates, Parents, Students, and Elected Leaders Call for a Final State Budget That Does Not Shortchange NYC Schools

March 26, 2025 (ALBANY, NY) — This afternoon, Senator John Liu, Chair of the New York City Education Committee; Senator Shelley Mayer, Chair of the Education Committee; students; parents; elected officials; and the Coalition for Equitable Education Funding (CEEF)—comprised of more than 120 organizations—held a press conference calling to ensure that the final New York State budget for FY 2026 does not shortchange New York City schools.

While Governor Hochul and the State Legislature took a positive step by fully funding the Foundation Aid per pupil formula for the first time in 2023, the formula itself is more than 15 years old; it includes outdated and incomplete measures of need and has not evolved to account for growing costs, particularly in large urban districts.

However, Governor Hochul's budget proposes only limited changes to the Foundation Aid formula and would result in NYC schools receiving nearly *\$350 million less* than they would without these changes. This shortfall is due to the Governor's proposed update to the poverty weight, which relies on the grossly inadequate federal poverty guidelines with no adjustments for local cost of living.

The Senate and the Assembly budgets both propose updating the formula's Regional Cost Index (RCI), which is supposed to account for variations in costs in different parts of the State, but hasn't been updated since 2006, with the Senate proposing a higher RCI for NYC. The Assembly budget also proposes an increase to the per pupil weight for English Language Learners (ELLs). These updates would help offset the negative impact of the Governor's proposed changes and better capture the needs of NYC students and schools.

The coalition is calling for the final budget to include the Senate proposal to update the Regional Cost Index to better account for higher costs in NYC and the Assembly proposal to increase funding for English Language Learners and to ensure that changes to the formula drive more resources to high-need districts and do not shortchange NYC schools.

"The Executive Budget's proposed changes to the Foundation Aid formula risks stripping crucial funding from NYC schools, funding that supports NYC's neediest children. While the formula is

long overdue for modernization, any changes must be fair and equitable, and properly capture the substantially higher costs faced by NYC public schools,” stated **State Senator John Liu, Chair of the Senate NYC Education Committee**. “The Senate and Assembly budget resolutions take important steps in the right direction by updating the outdated Regional Cost Index to account for differences in costs throughout the state, and increasing funding for English Language Learners to account for the thousands of newly arrived immigrants in our public schools. These common-sense measures will help ensure every student has the resources they need to succeed.”

“I am proud to join my colleagues, including Senator John Liu, and education advocates in fighting to ensure our New York City schools receive the funding they need and deserve in this year’s budget,” said **State Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair of the Senate Education Committee**. “New York City public schools serve almost a million students, many of whom are economically disadvantaged, learning English as a second language, students with disabilities, or living in temporary housing — it is critical that the district receive funding that reflects the needs of its students. The Senate and Assembly have put forward strong proposals to drive additional aid to New York City. I am committed to working with my colleagues to ensure New York City schools are made whole in the enacted budget.”

“It’s outrageous that NYC schools could potentially lose out on \$350 million, given the tremendous unmet need we see every day in our work with City students and their families,” said **Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York**. “As budget negotiations continue, we urge legislators to stand firm on funding for NYC schools and to ensure the final budget includes both an update to the Regional Cost Index to better account for NYC’s higher costs and an increase in funding for English Language Learners.”

“At CACF, we regularly hear from young people and parents about the unique needs of New York City’s Asian American English Language Learners (ELLs) in public schools. Whether it is advocating for better services to meet the needs of ELLs and their families, or supporting programs that work to combat the isolation many ELL students face in school each day, New York State should be increasing their investment in the programs Asian American-and all public school students rely on to thrive,” said **Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Directors of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)**. “ELLs of Asian and Middle Eastern descent make up over 20 percent of all English Language Learners in NYC public schools and their needs go far beyond translation services. We are urging the state to invest in increased resources to help schools provide a high-quality education to ALL of its students, regardless of the language they speak at home. Don’t shortchange our schools!”

“Restorative justice, high-quality mental health supports, and immigrant family engagement and communications are essential in public schools. More than ever, youth need these holistic supports and positive outlets to stay engaged in school. Yet our state and local elected leaders have made funding for these essential programs unstable, risking their fate in New York City public schools,” said **Andrea Ortiz, Membership and Campaign Director of Dignity in Schools Campaign-NY**. “Our state leaders must not shortchange immigrants, students in temporary housing, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty as they negotiate updates to the Foundation Aid formula. We need them to drive more resources to public

schools because we simply cannot do with less money to serve our most vulnerable youth. Dignity in Schools-NY youth, parents, and community leaders demand that our elected leaders protect funding for New York City's public schools so all public school youth can thrive.”

“A budget is a moral document. It reflects our priorities and values. In light of the Trump administration’s ongoing attacks on public education, now more than ever, New York State must step up to protect our students,” said **NeQuan C. McLean, President of the Education Council Consortium (ECC)**. “The New York State Constitution guarantees every child a ‘sound basic education,’ ensuring they develop fundamental literacy, math, and verbal skills necessary for higher education and competitive employment. Yet, Governor Hochul’s proposed changes to the Foundation Aid formula would strip nearly \$350 million from New York City schools, putting this constitutional promise at risk. This is especially harmful to high-need students, including those in temporary housing and foster care, who already face immense barriers to academic success. State leaders must update the Regional Cost Index, increase funding for English Language Learners, and ensure that every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the resources needed to thrive.”

“New York State must update the Foundation Aid formula to provide equitable resources for every student,” said **Arlen Benjamin-Gomez, Executive Director for EdTrust-New York**. “Governor Hochul’s proposal risks shortchanging New York City schools by underestimating the true cost of living and the unique needs of our students. State leaders must prioritize fair funding by updating the Regional Cost Index, increasing support for Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs), and addressing critical gaps in the formula. As the federal government threatens funding to students who need it the most, it’s time for New York to step up and invest in the future of all students and provide New York City schools with the resources they need to succeed.”

“I am a parent who cares deeply about the public education that my family and community needs. Now more than ever we need to update the Foundation Aid formula so that it reflects the current times and needs of the school district,” said **Norma Arevalo, member of Make the Road New York**. “I’m outraged that Governor Hochul is proposing to update the formula so that New York City receives \$350 million less. This is not right. Our children deserve better and should not be shortchanged by this proposal. The state must fund education and childcare according to the needs of the school districts in each neighborhood.”

“The YMCA of Greater New York applauds the Senate and Assembly for their commitment to strengthening education by incorporating key recommendations to support Foundation Aid in their one-house budgets,” said **Sharon Greenberger, CEO/President of the YMCA of Greater New York**. “While these are steps in the right direction, our students deserve a funding formula that truly reflects the cost of their education. We stand in solidarity with the Coalition for Equitable Education Funding and strongly urge state leaders to include their recommendations in the final budget.”

For more information about Foundation Aid, please see CEEF’s [one-pager](#) on the proposed changes. To learn more about the Coalition for Equitable Education Funding, please visit the [CEEF website](#).

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