



# Advocates for Children of New York

Protecting every child's right to learn

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News Release

**For immediate release**

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## **Response to the New York State Senate and New York State Assembly One-House Budget Proposals on Foundation Aid Funding**

**March 12, 2025 (NEW YORK CITY)** — *Kim Sweet, Executive Director of Advocates for Children of New York (AFC), issued the following statement in response to the Foundation Aid proposals included in the New York State Senate's and New York State Assembly's Fiscal Year 2026 one-house budgets:*

We are pleased that both the Senate and the Assembly are proposing significant changes to the Foundation Aid per pupil formula for distributing education funding, helping to offset the negative impact to New York City schools of the Governor's proposed changes. While we are still assessing the full financial impact of these proposals, they are a notable improvement on the Governor's Executive Budget, which would result in New York City schools receiving \$350 million *less* than they otherwise would.

We would like to see a formula that fully captures the needs of today's students. At a minimum, State leaders must ensure that changes to the Foundation Aid formula do not shortchange City schools.

We are pleased that both the Senate and Assembly included a much-needed increase to the formula's Regional Cost Index (RCI) in their one-house budgets. The current RCI dates back to 2006 and is sorely in need of an update; it is supposed to help account for differences in costs in different parts of the State, and expenses have risen significantly in New York City over the past two decades. Yet, Governor Hochul's budget proposal failed to include *any* changes to the RCI, even as it proposed updating the Foundation Aid formula's similarly outdated weight for students in poverty. It is illogical to update the poverty weight without *also* updating the RCI, particularly given that the former relies on the *federal* poverty guidelines—currently only \$32,150 for a family of four—and makes *no* adjustments for the local cost of living.

We are also encouraged that the Assembly included a higher weight for English Language Learners (ELLs). Particularly at a time when thousands of newly arrived immigrant students have enrolled in NYC schools, it is essential for districts to have increased resources to provide ELLs with the instruction and support they need.

We look forward to working with Governor Hochul and the State Legislature to ensure the final budget has the resources our schools and students need.

**About Advocates for Children of New York (AFC)**

*Since 1971, Advocates for Children of New York 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 who are at greatest risk for failure or discrimination in school because of their poverty, disability, race, ethnicity, immigrant or English Language Learner status, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems. AFC uses four integrated strategies: free advice and legal representation for families of students; free trainings and workshops for parents, communities, and educators and other professionals to equip them to advocate on behalf of students; policy advocacy to effect change in the education system and improve education outcomes; and impact litigation to protect the right to quality education and compel needed reform.*