

# Let's get state aid right in 2017

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As the 2017 Legislative Session gets underway we are hopeful that New York seizes the opportunity to get state aid right. But the governor has issued a disturbing budget proposal that ignores the intent and purpose of Foundation Aid. Foundation Aid was created in 2007 with calculations made for the cost of student success based on real data from school districts educating real students.

A phase-in of Foundation Aid was promised to an entire generation of students. Today over three-quarters of the never delivered funds are owed to high-need schools. The governor proposes to throw away the phase-in with a one-time payment that continues the culture of failing schools.

Our constitution says that "the state shall provide a system of education wherein all children shall be educated." That's precisely what the 2007 Foundation Aid promise intended to build.

Recent reports by the New York State Association of School Business Officials (NYSASBO) document the disparity between the education offered to children living in poverty and the rest of New York's kids.

The resource and achievement gap continues to grow as unmet student needs soar. High- and low-needs schools spend different amounts per child and every year the results reflect that difference.

The state share of school funding needs to increase with a concentration on adequate funding for children living in poverty. NYSASBO applauds the updated approach the governor proposes to calculate poverty. That will direct funds more accurately.

But we cannot cancel the phase-in of Foundation Aid. New York can afford to correct the inequities in the current funding stream without taking away the dollar gains all districts have welcomed in recent years.

We are at a turning point. This year it is crucial to make necessary changes in Foundation Aid to provide the educational opportunity the laws intended.

Our Foundation Aid Task Force has recommended specific changes to improve the formula's equity, adequacy and stability along with a three-year phase-in of the remaining \$4.3 billion in Foundation Aid promised to schools in 2007 by state leaders.

The NYS Board of Regents echoed this call in their State Aid Proposal. There is a broad consensus for the phase-in across the education spectrum contradicting the governor's shortsighted proposal.

One year can make an enormous difference in a student's academic success. Every year that goes by without fully funding Foundation Aid is a lost year for tens of thousands of students.

In 2017 the education budget can offer every student in the state an equal opportunity to learn and achieve success regardless of where they live.



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We must do what is right for all children now, so that the future is brighter and more prosperous for all of us.

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