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NYSASBO Releases Report on Growing Student Achievement and Resource Gap

NYSASBO has released a new report entitled *Achievement and Resource Gap Widens: More Students Left Behind*. The report examines the connections between student outcomes and school funding. The findings show that students in high-need school districts enter high school significantly less prepared and graduate at much lower rates than students in low-need school districts. The report uses graduation data released on February 10th for an up-to-date picture of the enduring achievement gaps. These findings hold true for all regions of the state and in urban, suburban, and rural school districts. The links between student outcomes and fiscal capacity are even more pronounced when school districts are ranked in ten equal groups based on property and income wealth.

“Although the results of the report are unfortunately not surprising, it does confirm that despite several years of school aid restorations that culminated in the complete phase out of the GEA last year, the disparity between high and low-need school districts continues,” stated Michael J. Borges, NYSASBO Executive Director.

Some key findings of the report are:

- There are striking disparities in graduation rates between students in high and low-need districts. Students in low-need districts were 30 percent more likely to graduate than students in high-need districts.
- High-need districts bear the burden of the state’s failure to fully implement the Foundation Aid formula. High-need urban and suburban schools are still due \$3,109 per student, while for low-need districts, the gap is \$508 per student. Approximately 80 percent of the money needed to fully fund the formula is due to high-need school districts.
- Students in low-need districts enter high school better prepared in math and language. In high-need schools, 37 percent of 8th graders were proficient in English language arts and 21 percent were proficient in math. In low-need districts, 64 percent of students were proficient in English language arts and 44 percent were proficient in math.
- Achievement gaps are even more pronounced at the ends of the wealth spectrum. When looking at combined wealth ratio deciles, in the least wealthy school districts, 7 percent of students scored proficient or better in math and 20 percent were proficient or better in English language arts. These school districts had a graduation rate of 70 percent. In the wealthiest ten percent of districts, 55 percent of students scored proficient or better in math and 67 percent were proficient or better in English language arts. These school districts had a graduation rate of 94 percent.

“Despite the clear link between resources and achievement, the Executive Budget proposes to abandon the full phase-in of the Foundation Aid formula, which will only perpetuate the disparity that exists between high and low-need school districts. NYSASBO therefore strongly urges the Legislature to reject this proposal and fulfill the state’s constitutional obligation to provide a sound basic education to all students, regardless of the wealth of their community,” said Michael J. Borges, NYSASBO Executive Director.