



Remsenburg - Speonk U.F.S.D.

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TO: Members of the Rockefeller Institute Foundation Aid Team

FROM: Denise Sullivan, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: July 25, 2024

RE: Survey for feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard regarding the potential changes with regards to Foundation Aid for New York's schools. My district is a small district on the eastend of Long Island. We serve students in grades K-6 and pay tuition to neighboring districts for grades 7-12. This structure creates unique challenges with regards to the budget process because when we receive a new student in the upper grades, there is always an expense associated with that addition. For quantitative purposes, a general education student comes at the expense of \$20,000 in tuition, whereas a student with a disability would be at a minimum \$70,000 added into the budget. This became a significant challenge during COVID as many residents in this area are from New York City and summer in Remsenburg. When the New York City schools announced that they would not be providing in-person instruction, those families chose to live in their summer homes and the district had to absorb the cost of educating these new enrollees, unexpectedly.

This year, the Executive Proposed Budget called for a reduction in foundation aid for our district of 38% for our school, which works out to just over \$132,000. I know that this does not sound like a lot to most districts but to us it is significant. Essentially, that reduction would have caused us to reduce reading services for students.

Our district demographics are dramatically shifting and continue to shift. While our enrollment has gone down over the last ten years, our student population has changed in that the students and families are requiring more and more support and services from the school district. The number of English Language Learners (ENL) has gone from 0% to 13%. The number of students who are receiving Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) and living below the poverty line has tripled. The housing market in this area is at a catastrophic level. Families are finding it harder and harder to find affordable housing let alone rental properties. Last year, we were eligible for Title I money for the first time. During COVID, we were not on that list and therefore

we received ZERO federal dollars in COVID relief, yet we were heavily impacted by COVID, like all districts.

SCHOOL YEAR	ENROLLMENT	FRL %	ENL %
2023-2024	125	33	16
2022-2023	122	37	13
2021-2022	139	29	15
2020-2021	131	22	16
2019-2020	131	23	16
2018-2019	140	18	11
2017-2018	139	12	10
2016-2017	160	14	8
2015-2016	156	13	8

My hope is that this information will help you in determining what is fair and just to all school districts. I truly appreciate the ability to provide insight into our small part of the state of New York and I wish the committee success.