

It's crucial that the fair and equitable formula addresses and reflects the actual costs of educating students today, ensuring that every public school can support all students effectively.

Any modifications to the formula must be made on the basis of how much it costs to ensure public schools are getting the resources to meet their students' needs.

Underfunding public education is not “sustainable,” and not an option. The state's fiscal circumstances should not form the basis for calculating the true cost of educating a child. We cannot afford to deprive our kids of the resources and opportunities they need to succeed, and we cannot neglect to prepare them for life. Our children's future, and the future of our state, depends on it.

Copy of Public Testimony
Cheryl Ashley-Williams

Good afternoon----- My name is Cheryl Ashley-Williams. Family Public Policy coordinator at Families Together in NYS. Families Together is a Statewide Organization located in Albany NY focuses on Mental Health,

School district Half Hollow Hills, Residence: Wheatley Heights, NY

My school district Racial/Ethnic composition:

49.7% Minority enrollment. 50.3 % White, 18.4 % Asian, 14.6% Hispanic 12.4 % Black, 4.3 % two or more races, 0.1% American Indian/Alaska Native.

As a Family Public Policy Coordinator, I hear a lot from families.

1. Families asking for funding engagement help with school refusal and school Avoidance and ensuring that all students have access to academic support.
2. **My school offers** an array of services that are rich in academics, sports, stem programs, music, and other activities, however, we need funding for free tutoring for the underserved population”.
3. Families need community-based activities that provide families with opportunities to engage and support their children’s education.
4. Funding IEP Process and Mental Health Services to support students with disabilities and mental health challenges.
5. Funding Support for Migrants: Addressing language barriers, mental health challenges, and integration into the school system.
6. Funding for solutions not suspensions by adding afterschool programs, keeping young people out of the prison system and occupied in positive activities.
7. Funding in Workforce development- retention rate for teachers, especially for the underserved populations, eliminating student overcrowded in classrooms creating a space for students to learn.
8. Funding to contract with family peers/youth peers through external entities to provide additional support.
9. Funding in specialized programs and resources in school districts in keeping families out of the child welfare systems..