



## CINCINNATUS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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August 27, 2024

I am a small school superintendent from Cincinnatus Central School District. I am also the husband of a retired special education teacher and the father of a set of 26-year-old triplets that are proud and successful graduates of a New York State public school. Two of my children were students with an IEP and both of them also hold master's degrees in addition to their four-year degrees.

In my current work as a superintendent, I believe the greatest thing that we can do for all of our children is to provide them with opportunities to be their best selves. In our situation, that means creating academic opportunities and extracurricular activities where students can feel success and support their future goals. Many of our students go to college by their choice and many others enter the workforce, but in both cases, we are looking to send them "out" after graduation with the confidence that they can achieve those goals. Currently, we have increased the rigor of our instruction from K - 12 in all content areas. We have aligned our curriculum in math so that all students take regents algebra in one year and then are able to take regents geometry. In the equity lens, these students can now attend a community college without taking remedial classes. This change was made based on feedback from the community colleges as well as some of our graduates.

Also, we have over 80% of our students in grades 5 - 12 that are involved in at least one extracurricular activity. We know these protective factors keep our kids engaged in not just their learning, but in their community as well.

We are a high needs school district with approximately 75% of our revenue coming directly from New York State. Despite the rate of poverty, we are proud of our students, especially those that have trauma, unpredictable living conditions, about 22% identified for special education services, or have food insecurity. One of the reasons we host an enrichment program in the summer is to provide breakfast and lunch to our students who choose to attend.

In addition, we are embarking on a Community Schools initiative to provide more direct counseling services and supplemental programming for students and families in need. We are just not able to provide for all students between the starting bell and the ending bell. Access to any outside agency is at least 17 miles away and access is a barrier for some of our families. The Community Schools model will also assist our District with after-school tutoring so that our students can continue to push themselves in our rigorous secondary courses.

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Our school is able to provide advanced math and science courses, both Spanish and French up to level 4, a cadre of college level high school courses, as well as high interest electives. We have most recently had two students earn their associate's degree as well as graduate from our school.

I am hopeful that the new Foundation Aid Formula will still meet our District's needs and reflect the true cost of educating students in this era. We know that underfunding schools will not be a positive long-term solution for not just maintaining our current population of students, but to attract other families from other states that want the best of a public-school education in which my own children were able to prosper.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and I have tremendous faith in the work that you are doing on behalf of New York States' children.

Todd M. Freeman

Cincinnatus Central School District