

I am a parent from NYC School District 28 in Queens. I am a graduate of the NYC public school system.. If all goes well, I anticipate my son will enter the public school system sometime in Fall 2025.

Public education is the cornerstone of our democracy, and remains our best path to advancing equal opportunity at a time of deepening inequality. Public schools serve children of all abilities and identities, and turn away no one. Adequately and equitably funding our public schools to meet the diverse needs of students is not just important; it is essential to ensuring their success and our shared prosperity. Prioritizing public education means investing in a just and prosperous future for all New Yorkers

In the school district I reside in, according to data from NYC Public Schools presented to the community via the Queens Borough President's office, District 28 (which covers Forest Hills and Jamaica), have the lowest percentage of classes at or below the class size caps relative to all other school districts in NYC. This aligns with what I constantly hear from neighbors in my community who already have their children in the district's public schools expressing constant concern about overcrowding in the schools. We need foundation aid in NYC District 28 so all of our public schools can equitably and ethically meet the required class size laws recently passed by the New York state government.

Every child in New York has a constitutional right to a sound, basic education, and it is our government's responsibility to fund it, from Buffalo to Long Island, from the North Country to Southern Tier.

The current Foundation Aid formula was created in 2007 to ensure that NYS was meeting this obligation, though it took until 2023 to bring schools to full funding levels. Over the past 17 years, the needs of students have evolved and grown tremendously, especially over the past 4 years since the pandemic began.

The Foundation formula should be updated to reflect the real cost of educating students today, so that every public school has the resources it needs to support all students. 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.

Signed,
Suzanne Elgendy
NYC School District 28 in Queens