

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO
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Sept. 4, 2024

Rockefeller Institute of Government
411 State St.
Albany, NY 12203

To whomever it may concern:

I am writing regarding the Foundation Aid Study that the Rockefeller Institute of Government was tasked with by Gov. Kathy Hochul in the 2024-25 Fiscal Year budget.

The Foundation Aid formula is critical to school districts across the state that rely on these funding mechanisms to support important student services and enhance the education that they provide to students. I have heard from – and agree with - many stakeholders in education who have indicated that the formula needs to be examined, revised and fully funded to ensure that schools are treated more fairly and equitably.

The initial Executive proposal of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget included cutting the Save Harmless provision and changing the CPI calculation used for the Foundation Aid formula. These changes would have resulted in massive losses for districts across the state. While the final budget restored the Save Harmless provision, many schools in my district still faced cuts and received less aid than expected and were forced to cut positions and programs for the upcoming school year due to the budgetary constraints.

Small schools in my district like Morrisville-Eaton faced cuts of nearly \$500,000 while Oneida faced \$1,6 million. Other school districts like Westmoreland and Oriskany received no additional Foundation Aid funding from 2023-24 at all.

It is imperative that the Foundation Aid Formula be revised to help districts like Morrisville-Eaton and others in the state, especially rural ones in Upstate New York. A more fair, equitable and fully-funded formula will help to deliver crucial support to the important programs and vital services that provide every child with new possibilities and opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Griffo".

Joseph A. Griffo
New York State Senator, 53rd Senate District

