

I am a member of the Eastport South Manor Teachers Association and I care deeply about public education and the educational opportunities and resources available to the students in our communities. I am writing to express my concern regarding the troublesome proposals in the executive budget that would change the way schools in our state are funded.

The executive budget proposes to stop using the current Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is 3.8 percent, and instead begin using a 10-year rolling average of 2.4 percent. This will underfund the Foundation Aid formula, which is the main driver of school aid in our state and the distribution of equitable state aid funding.

Coupled with the blunt cuts being proposed by changes to the Save Harmless provisions that will seriously affect my district, Eastport South Manor potentially leading to a compounding loss of programs and services such as mental health, enrichments and staff to assist students for years to come.

In addition we ask that the foundation aid formula include provisions for the mandated programs for our English Language Learners and our Students with Disabilities. The proposed cuts will result in a decrease of \$419 million in Foundation Aid. These cuts coupled with the growing mandates for our ELL students and our Students with Disabilities will strip our schools of the resources required to provide all students with the quality education they deserve. This decision not only breaks a promise made to our children and educators, it also jeopardizes the future of our communities by undermining the foundation of a strong and equitable education system.

New York's students deserve better, and I know that the Legislature wants better for the communities they serve and for the entire state.

We urge you to stand up for our students and schools by doing everything you can to properly fund our public schools. Our children deserve a future built on the promise of a high-quality education.

Sincerely,

Antonina Leonard