



# CANDOR CENTRAL SCHOOL

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BRENT SUDDABY  
Superintendent  
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August 30, 2024

Dear Rockefeller Institute:

I am writing on behalf of the Candor Central School District to provide our input on the current study of New York State's Foundation Aid formula for school districts. It is our sincere hope that your findings and recommendations will lead to a more equitable and sustainable formula for funding public education in New York State. We appreciate the opportunity to express how this funding mechanism impacts our local educational system.

The responsibility to provide for a system of free K-12 public schools wherein all children of the state may be educated is firmly established by the New York Constitution. In 1993, the state's educational financing system was further defined under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) when the Foundation Aid Formula was created to distribute aid based on student need and close the spending gap between districts. Over the last thirty years, the costs of educating children, especially children with special education needs have soared while foundation aid has lagged behind. This problem has been exacerbated by state imposed mandates that exceed the requirements of IDEA. The current foundation aid formula overlooks these mounting expenses. Based on the formula, the foundation aid for Candor Central School district only increased 2.93% from last year. This rate does not come close to matching the increased cost of operating a school and providing a free and appropriate public education to our students.

Any revisions to the formula should include greater consideration of a district's ability to generate revenue through local property taxes and weighting for the Students with Disabilities (SWD) as significant factors. Additionally, there needs to be an adjustment in the foundation aid amount (FA) to align it with the realistic costs of educating individual students, as the responsibilities of school districts have expanded well beyond basic inflationary measures. For example, the Candor Central School District now offers enhanced mental health counseling, and academic intervention services. We also equip our students with College and Career Readiness skills, meet mandated standards in Digital Literacy, Social-Emotional Learning, Next Generation Science, and prevention programs related to bullying/cyber-bullying, character education. All together, the increased costs of operation and additional responsibilities impose hundreds of thousands of dollars of new expenses on our district each year. It is impossible to offset these costs through local levies, especially given that Candor Central School District's residents are already paying one of the highest rates per thousand in the southern tier. The current formula is still relying on census data from 2000, neglecting the significant changes in the educational funding landscape that have occurred over the last three decades, including the tax cap. We advocate for a future foundation aid formula that allocates support based on student needs and local capacity, utilizing updated poverty estimates and regional cost metrics for a more accurate assessment of district needs, taking into account the wealth and demographics of students to ensure equitable access to

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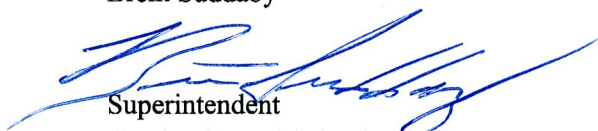
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education, irrespective of zip code. Moreover, we urge the Institute to recognize the importance of consistency for school districts when planning annual budgets; a formula that offers predictability would be immensely beneficial.

We extend our gratitude to the Rockefeller Institute for considering the concerns of the Candor Central School District as it finalizes its report on the Foundation Aid formula for the Governor. We are eager to review your findings in early December.

Sincerely,  
Brent Suddaby



Superintendent  
Candor Central School District