

MAIN DISTRICT OFFICE:
33 North Central Avenue
Valley Stream, New York 11580
516-599-2972

ALBANY OFFICE:
Room 736 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
518-455-4465

solagesm@nyassembly.gov



NEW YORK STATE
ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLY MEMBER
MICHAELLE C. SOLAGES
22nd District

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

CHAIR
Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, & Asian
Legislative Caucus
COMMITTEES
Health Libraries and Education
Technology
Racing and Wagering
Social Services

September 6, 2024

Re: Foundation Aid Study

Rockefeller Institute of Government
411 State Street
Albany, NY 11203-1004

To the Rockefeller Institute of Government:

The need to revise the Foundation Aid formula stems from its inability to adequately address the evolving challenges faced by school districts, particularly those serving vulnerable populations. Since its inception in 2007, the formula has not kept pace with the changing needs of New York's students and educators. The significant shifts brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic—including heightened mental health concerns, increased disparities in learning outcomes, and fluctuations in student demographics—underscore the inadequacy of a funding system based on data and assumptions from nearly two decades ago.

One of the core issues is that the current formula does not allocate sufficient resources to districts serving students from low-income households, students of color, and those with disabilities. These students require the most support to succeed, yet they continue to be underserved by an outdated funding mechanism. As a result, the gaps between high- and low-income districts, which the Foundation Aid formula was meant to close, remain significant, and in some cases, are widening. This growing inequity threatens the fundamental principle that every child in New York is entitled to a quality education, regardless of their background or where they live.

Moreover, the existing formula does not reflect the current reality of rising costs for schools, particularly as they try to address learning loss and increased student needs in the aftermath of the pandemic. Continuing to use this formula will only deepen the divide, leaving schools unequipped to provide the comprehensive education necessary to meet the needs of today's students.

A revised funding system is essential not only to reflect present-day economic and social realities but also to ensure that every district, particularly those in underserved areas, has the resources to deliver a high-quality education. Without an overhaul of the formula, we risk perpetuating systemic inequities that harm the most vulnerable students. We must adapt to ensure that funding is allocated in a way that truly addresses the diverse and evolving needs of all students across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michaele Solages'.

Honorable Michaele C. Solages
New York State Assemblymember
Twenty-second Assembly District