



September 6, 2024

Rockefeller Institute of Government  
411 State Street  
Albany, NY 12203

Dear Rockefeller Institute Research Team,

As members of the Village of Port Jefferson Board of Trustees, we are writing to express our concern regarding any proposed amendments to the New York State Foundation Aid formula that may lead to reductions in funding for the Port Jefferson School District. As elected representatives of a local municipality that works in close coordination with our school district, we oppose any updates that would lead to local public school cuts and believe that such cuts would have significant negative consequences not only for our schools but for our entire community.

In our village, school taxes account for approximately half of the total local tax burden – an investment well worth it. When Long Island schools, like Port Jefferson School District, do not receive adequate funding from Albany, it further agitates the preexisting pressure on municipalities like ours to hold the line on taxes as the cost of living has become unmanageable for far too many of our constituents. This dynamic unnecessarily strains the essential partnership that should exist between school districts and local governments and limits the level of investment our Village can make to address issues like flooding and local infrastructure. Adequately funded schools benefit the entire community, contributing to a strong local economy, attracting families to the area, and promising a high quality of life.

As the question of fair distribution of school aid gets underway it is critical to consider the broader funding environment that impacts our local services, especially infrastructure funding. As part of the New York City metropolitan area, Long Island is often underfunded compared to other regions. When we examine per capita spending, the disparity becomes evident. According to the Center for Cost Effective Government, under the shared umbrella of the New York City metropolitan area, Long Island's long-range plans project an investment of \$12 billion compared to Philadelphia which is half the population of Long Island yet expects an investment of \$84.5 billion in long-range projects. Long Island's bus systems receive \$260 million while New York City's receives \$4.1 billion annually. That's fifteen times more revenue for New York City but the population is only three times that of Long Island. It's worth mentioning that Long Island also doesn't have a subway system that also receives federal and state resources. When the New York State legislature examines updates to school funding it should not forget the greater context of this inequitable distribution of resources which our local municipalities and taxpayers must account for.

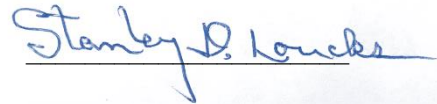
As the conversation about Foundation Aid continues, we strongly urge you to consider the broader context of how resources are allocated across New York State. Ensuring fair funding for Long Island schools like Port Jefferson is not just a matter of maintaining educational standards—it is crucial to the overall health and vitality of our local communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we hope the Rockefeller Institute will take these concerns into account as it studies the future of school funding in New York State.

Sincerely,



Kyle Hill  
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Port Jefferson Village



Stanley D. Loucks  
Trustee  
Port Jefferson Village



Robert Juliano  
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