

Subject: NYS Budget

Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 4:14:56 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Geoffrey Hicks <ghicks@clarenceschools.org>

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Senator Ranzenhofer,

Governor Cuomo is counseling the legislature to pull back additional spending for school districts, beyond the \$1 billion increase he has already proposed, saying there is too much uncertainty over federal funding. The contention that a School Aid increase needs to be minimized now because of uncertainty over possible federal actions is debatable as both political parties have expressed strong opposition to many of the Trump Administration's budget proposals.

I strongly urge you to push back at the Governor and provide an adequate increase in Foundation Aid to school districts, and preserve the Foundation Aid formula. The Governor's proposal is wholly inadequate and would leave Clarence with a \$733,000 deficit in our 2017-18 budget, which maintains programs and staff at this year's levels.

I also urge you to approve legislation to follow through on the adjustments in the property tax cap authorized in 2015 but never implemented through regulations – to exclude the local share of BOCES capital expenses from the allowable levy limit and to include tax base additions generating payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) in the tax base growth factor. Both these adjustments would create consistency in how the tax cap is applied, treating BOCES capital expenses the same as school district capital expenses and treating tax base additions the same, whether they generate property taxes or PILOTs.

In addition, please reject the proposals to expand support for charter schools by eliminating caps, unfreezing tuition, and providing building aid. The state should not take actions which would benefit charter schools at the expense of district schools which are charged with educating all children, whatever their circumstances, whenever they arrive.

Thank you for your continued support of the Clarence Central School District.

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