

CLARENCE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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March 28, 2018

The Honorable Michael Ranzenhofer
New York State Senate
8203 Main Street Suite 4
Williamsville, NY 14221

Dear Senator Ranzenhofer,

I am writing to ask that you reject the budget proposal that would require all school districts to obtain voter approval for funding allocations among school buildings. The proposal is wrongheaded and would have a serious negative impact on the school budgeting process for the reasons listed below:

Local leaders – elected school boards and their administrative teams -- are closer to the kids and the schools than state bureaucrats, their judgments should not be superseded.

School districts already have tons of reporting and disclosure requirements – more than any other institution – school report cards, property tax report cards, budget notices mailed to every resident, administrative compensation disclosure, standardized test results, and so on. And we have annual budget votes – unlike cities, towns and counties and a tougher tax cap than any of them.

Then there are all the plans and reports that districts are required to file – already too many, especially for small districts. This would be one more paperwork burden.

Requiring state approval could mess up local budget decision-making – if approval is delayed or denied it could prevent districts from having plans in place for the start of the school year when kids return to class.

If the state wants to approve our budgets, maybe it should stop having us ask our voters to approve those budgets too.

At best the proposal is premature. The new federal Every Student Succeeds Act will require every district to report actual per pupil funding allocations by school districts starting with the next school year. That reporting will illuminate what districts are doing and the complications they face in deciding how funds are allocated among school buildings. The proposal being discussed is also different than ESSA requirements for building level spending reporting, thereby creating a new report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoffrey M. Hicks".

Geoffrey M. Hicks, Ed.D.
Superintendent