

CROTON-HARMON BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION
Regarding New York State Funding of Public Education 2021-2022

WHEREAS every student in New York State should have access to a quality public education, regardless of where the student lives;

WHEREAS COVID-19 has created exceptional short-term costs for school districts, including but not limited to, expenditures related to additional personnel costs, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, contact tracing, COVID testing, remote teaching equipment, 1:1 devices and WiFi hotspots for home use;

WHEREAS the recovery from COVID-19 is creating new student needs that will require long-term funding and solutions, especially in the area of mental health, recovery from diminishment in students' retention of learning, and digital equity;

WHEREAS the State of New York used federal funds intended to aid schools in managing pandemic costs in the CARES Act to fully supplant state aid funds in the 2020-21 school year;

WHEREAS the Executive Budget proposes to use Federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act) funds intended for school pandemic expenses to replace \$1.35 billion in state aid in the 2021-22 school year;

WHEREAS the Executive Budget proposes to fully use CRRSA allocation to our district and other districts in lieu of state aid for the 2021-22 school year;

WHEREAS the School Tax Relief (STAR) program is intended to support property taxpayers and does not provide additional funding to school districts beyond ensuring the full receipt of their voter-approved tax levies;

WHEREAS the state aid runs promulgated by the Governor's office for each district include the amount of STAR relief provided to taxpayers in that district, thereby creating the false impression that STAR payments made to taxpayers is "state aid" to the district;

WHEREAS New York State insufficiently funds Foundation Aid, and proposes keeping Foundation Aid funding flat for the third consecutive year, and the shortfall is estimated to be \$4 billion;

WHEREAS the Foundation Aid formula is no longer running as designed, including the use of outdated data and inaccurate measures of student needs and regional costs;

WHEREAS the FY2021-22 Executive Budget proposes consolidating 11 expense-based aids into a Combined Services Aid, and cutting the expected and needed aid to school districts by \$693 million in the upcoming year;

WHEREAS the FY2021-22 Executive Budget proposes limiting transportation aid for spring 2020 during school closures due to COVID-19 to be used only for bus runs that delivered meals, devices or homework to students, and would deny aid for payments made to ensure buses remained on standby during school closures during that time, and proposes the same limitations for the 2020-21 school year;

WHEREAS the FY2021-22 Executive Budget proposes to permanently place the State's share of special education residential placement costs (18.42%) on local school districts;

WHEREAS the FY2021-22 Executive Budget proposes to cut the \$19 million annual payment toward the Prior Year Adjustments (PYA) aid, and to cut off all funding for the PYA queue and disallow payments for approved aid claims in the amount of over \$300 million; and

WHEREAS school districts are limited in their ability to raise funds due to a restrictive property tax levy cap that requires a CPI-based allowable growth factor in the tax levy cap calculation of only 1.23% for the 2021-22 school year, well below the increased costs on school districts due to the pandemic;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

The Croton-Harmon Union Free School District calls on the State Legislature to ensure public schools receive short- and long-term funding to deal with the extraordinary costs and student needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to reject the Executive Budget proposal to fully supplant state aid with CRRSA Act federal funds;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to ensure STAR payments to school districts are taken out of the state school aid runs, and all STAR reimbursement due to school districts is fully paid by NYS;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to work towards full funding of Foundation Aid to ensure a sound basic education for all New York State students;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to reject the Executive Budget proposal to combine and reduce 11 expense-based aids in a new Combined Services Aid;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to deliver Transportation Aid for transportation payments made during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 and the 2020-21 school year;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to reject the Executive Budget proposal to permanently require local school districts to fund the State's 18.42% share of residential placement costs for the most challenged special education students;

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to maintain and fund the Prior Year Adjustments queue of approved school aid claims; and

The Croton-Harmon School District calls on the State Legislature to set the allowable growth factor in the tax levy calculation for the coming 2021-22 school year at 2%.

THE CROTON-HARMON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Sarah Carrier, President
Brian Loges, Vice President
Iris Bugliosi
Joshua Diamond
Andrea Furey
Neal Haber

Date: March 11, 2021

The Board of Education directs the District Clerk to send a copy of this resolution to the following people:

- Sandy Galef, State Assembly Member
 - Peter Harckham, State Senator
 - Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of the State of New York
 - Carl Heastie, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly
 - Andrea Stewart-Cousins, the Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
 - Michael Benedetto, State Assemblyman, Chair, Committee on Education
 - Shelley Mayer, State Senate, Chair, Committee on Education
 - Lester Young, Chancellor, NYS Board of Regents
 - Frances Wills, Member, NYS Board of Regents, 9th Judicial District
 - Betty Rosa, NYS Commissioner of Education
 - Karen Belanger, Executive Director, Westchester Putnam School Boards Association
 - Robert Schneider, Executive Director, New York State School Boards Association
- The Croton-Harmon district community re: K-12 Advocacy Alert