

The pandemic has resulted in great uncertainty regarding state and federal funding for education throughout New York State, including here in the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District. As we continue work on our 2021-22 school year budget, we are asking for your help with two key advocacy efforts that affect our school district. We passed resolutions for each at our Board of Education meeting on November 19. The first issue relates to providing schools with COVID-19 testing resources if the district is designated a micro-cluster and, thus, required to conduct tests. The second issue is to protect funding for school districts by reimbursing transportation aid. In our district, this accounts for approximately \$280,000.

The Westchester Putnam School Board Association created advocacy e-letters relating to these issues to assist community members in sending their concerns to NYS legislators and the NYS Department of Health.

Following is additional information on these issues:

1) New York State Support for Mandated COVID-19 Surveillance Testing (Keep School Buildings Open) asks to ensure that school districts are provided with the COVID-19 testing resources needed to keep school buildings open when communities are designated as micro-clusters by New York State. Once a micro-cluster is declared in a community, any school district in that zone is required to do random COVID testing of staff and students on a weekly basis. Our district will only be able to accomplish this with the logistical and financial support of the state.

Here is a link to the BoE resolution: [New York State Support for Mandated COVID-19 Surveillance Testing](#)

2) Transportation Aid During Pandemic asks to protect public education funding for school districts by reimbursing transportation aid. In our district this accounts for approximately \$280,000.

School districts are reimbursed for transportation expenses as part of the aid given each year. Education law narrowly defines aidable costs as transportation for pupils travelling to or from school. When school buildings were closed down in March, the contractual obligations with bus drivers and contractors remained. Additionally, buses were used for delivery of meals, materials, and technical devices to students. Unfortunately, because there were no students riding the buses, the law does not allow for these particular transportation uses to be subject to NYS aid. Our district has been left with ongoing transportation costs without the aid expected and planned for in the budget. As such, we need NYS legislators to amend education law to allow for transportation aid to public schools during remote instructional periods related to the pandemic.

Here is a link to the BoE resolution: [Resolution Transportation Aid During Pandemic](#)

Please consider adding your voice to the 1,600+ letters that over 4,000 Westchester and Putnam county residents have sent to our representatives.

Thank you for your valuable support!