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## PUBLIC FUNDING FOR TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS Reject Funding Increases for Nonpublic and Charter Schools

While the New York State Legislature debates a final budget, the Senate and Assembly are striving to provide as much support as possible to our public school students. This task is particularly hard in a difficult budget year when the Governor and Comptroller declared an additional unexpected shortfall of \$2.3 billion. As the Legislature endeavors to include as much foundation aid for our schools as possible, the Educational Conference Board urges rejection of any funds to support private school STEM teacher salaries. Public dollars should be spent to support our public school students.

Over the last two budget cycles, the Executive Budget provided a total of \$20 million to fund private school STEM teacher salaries (\$5 million in 2017-2018, \$15 million in 2018-2019). The State Education Department (SED) has not disbursed any of this funding and only recently sent out applications for the first \$5 million.

This year's Executive Budget proposal included yet another \$20 million for private school STEM teacher salaries. Further, this year the Assembly would increase the funding to \$25 million and the Senate wants to provide \$30 million. Our public school students do not have the resources they need to address critical issues, including efforts to improve school safety and climate, meet the needs of our increasing population of students that are homeless, have a disability or are English language learners, and expand access to college and career pathways. If additional state resources are available this year, they should be directed to those public school needs.

At the same time private schools are demanding a larger share of public dollars, some are suing New York State to block oversight of the education they provide or accountability for whether they are in fact delivering a “sound basic education”, as required by our constitution. **Our state should not provide nonpublic schools funding to hire teachers unless the dollars are used to comply with federal and state mandates and earlier appropriated public monies have been spent as intended.**

At the same time, many in the charter school industry have consistently fought efforts for oversight as well. **While our traditional public schools proudly serve our most vulnerable students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, year after year we see too many charter schools push them away. That's why we appreciate the Assembly for refusing to siphon \$24.9 million from traditional public schools to underwrite the charter school sector.**

As New York works to close down the budget process, if additional state dollars are available, they should be directed towards meeting the state's obligation to provide foundation aid. Therefore, we strongly oppose any proposal to provide nonpublic schools with funds to hire STEM teachers.