

We, the undersigned organizations, care deeply about public education and the educational opportunities and resources available to the students in our communities. We have come together to express our concerns regarding the troublesome proposals in the executive budget that would change the way schools in our state are funded.

The executive budget proposal to stop using the current Consumer Price Index (CPI), this year it is 3.8 percent, and instead begin using a 10-year rolling average of 2.4 percent will underfund the Foundation Aid formula, which is the main driver of both school aid in our state and the distribution of equitable state aid funding.

Coupled with the blunt cuts being proposed by changes to the Save Harmless provisions that will affect 337 school districts around the state — half of which are high needs — this will lead to a compounding loss of programs and services such as mental health, enrichments and staff to assist students for years to come.

As proposed, these changes will result in a decrease of \$419 million in Foundation Aid. They will strip our schools of the resources required to provide students with the quality education they deserve. This decision not only breaks a promise made to our children and educators but also jeopardizes the future of our communities by undermining the foundation of a strong and equitable education system.

The impact of this shortfall will be felt across all districts, disproportionately affecting those already struggling. Without the promised funding, schools will be forced to make cuts that could result in larger class sizes, fewer and diminished educational programs, and a decline in the quality of education our children receive. This is not just a budgetary issue; it is a question of our priorities and values as a state.

New York's students deserve better, and we know that the Legislature wants better for the communities they serve and for the entire state.

We urge you to stand up for our students and schools by doing everything you can to properly fund our public schools. Our children deserve a future built on the promise of a high-quality education.

