

Croton-Harmon Union Free School District NYS Executive Budget Shifts Costs to Local Taxpayer

Whereas the 2018-19 Executive budget proposes a reduction in state reimbursement for mandated summer special education programs from the current 80% reimbursement to a wealth adjusted reimbursement rate; and

Whereas under this proposal two-thirds of the districts in Westchester and Putnam Counties would only be eligible to receive the minimum proposed state reimbursement of 25% for summer special education, including the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District's which currently receives 80% reimbursement; and

Whereas the Executive Budget further proposes a 2% expenditure reimbursement cap on annual increases in transportation, BOCES, and building aid effective 2019-20; and

Whereas the proposed 2% cap on transportation reimbursement aid disregards normal variability due to: school bus purchases; fuel and labor cost increases; changes in the number of students requiring NYS mandated special education transportation in a 50 mile radius; fluctuations in the number of private and parochial students transported within a 15 mile radius; changes in the number of homeless or foster children requiring transportation under federal law; successful interscholastic teams whose expanded season increases bus costs; and

Whereas the proposed 2% cap on annual increases in BOCES reimbursement aid would be a disincentive to use BOCES for shared services, professional development, and student programs such as career-technical education, special education or alternative high school, etc.;

Whereas the capping increases in BOCES reimbursement aid would have resulted in a \$154,147 reduction in state aid to the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District had it been in effect this year; and

Whereas, the proposed statewide 2% building aid cap is based on the overall state increase in building aid and not determined on an individual district basis, and any cut would proportionally affect all school districts receiving building aid, creating uncertainty regarding a district's ability to budget effectively for current and future projects, programs or staffing; and

Whereas 80% of the districts in Westchester and Putnam Counties would only receive the 2018-19 proposed 0.25% minimum increase in Foundation Aid, including the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District, irrespective of increases to NYS employer

pension costs, rising healthcare premiums in NYS, and contractual salary increases that affect every school district in the state; and

Whereas the Executive Budget proposes to maintain veto power over school district budgets for Big Five City school districts and certain other large districts based on their school-level funding plan, which disregards local control of school districts across NY State; and

Whereas, NY State property taxes, and taxes in our region in particular, are the highest nationally, and any further revenue shift from the state to the local taxpayer could result in increased property taxes; and

Whereas these reductions in state aid could lead to program or staff cuts in order to stay under the maximum allowable tax levy limit; and

Whereas the Article XI of the NY State Constitution mandates that the legislature provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all of the children of this state may be educated;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District opposes any caps on state reimbursement for expense based aids; and

RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District deems that these line item limitations compromise a local school district's decision-making and flexibility; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District calls upon the New York State Assembly and New York State Senate to reject Executive Budget proposals that shift costs to the local taxpayer; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District calls upon the Governor, NYS Assembly and NYS Senate to appropriately fund public school districts, and stop diverting much needed state funds, so that we can address the ever increasing needs of the children we serve.

Adopted: March 22, 2018

Respectfully submitted by:

The Croton Harmon Board of Education: Iris Bugliosi, President; Andrea Furey, Vice President; Sarah Carrier, Joshua Diamond, Neal Haber, Elizabeth Lynam, and Giuseppina Miller

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

- Sandra Galef, State Assemblywoman
- Terrence Murphy, State Senator
- Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of the State of New York
- Carl Heastie, the Speaker of the New York State Assembly
- John Flanagan, the Majority Leader of the New York State Senate
- Martin J. Golden, State Assemblyman, Sponsor of S4563
- David Buchwald, State Assemblyman, Sponsor of A7353B
- Catherine Nolan, State Assemblywoman, Chair, Committee on Education
- Carl L Marcellino, State Senate, Chair, Committee on Education
- Judith Johnson, NYS Board of Regents
- Betty Rosa, Chancellor, NYS Board of Regents
- MaryEllen Elia, NYS Commissioner of Education
- Lisa Davis, Executive Director, Westchester Putnam School Boards Association

