

# Miller Place Union Free School District

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## Superintendent of Schools

Seth A. Lipshie

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## Executive Director for

### Educational Services

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## School Business Official

Colleen V. Card

## Director of Human Resources

Christopher J. Herrschaft

## Board of Education

Lisa Reitan, President

Bryan Makarius, Vice President

John Galligan, Trustee

Andrea Spaniolas, Trustee

Johanna Testa, Trustee

March 12, 2024

Sent via fax (518) 474-1513 and US Postal Service (CM:RR)

The Honorable Kathy Hochul

Governor of New York State

NYS Capitol Building

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We are writing to you to advocate for the Miller Place School District on several issues which will negate the years of progress of restoring Full Foundation Aid. The Proposed lowering of the Foundation aid inflationary factor during a time of high inflation and cost of living cause us future concern for being able to project and maintain many educational programs in our district. We are asking that the State provide minimum increases to account for inflation, formally reviewing and updating the current Foundation aid formula, fully fund expense-based aids, and restore annual funding to make payments against the prior year aid claims list.

Although the Miller Place School District has had declining enrollment over the last ten years, the cost to educate our students has increased by about 33 percent during that same time. The Miller Place School District has seen a large increase in Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners populations along with increasing mental health needs. We have developed wonderful programs for all our students and have had great success, however it is getting more difficult to maintain these effective programs, putting a large strain on our budget.

We are also very concerned about the upcoming deadlines and requirements to transition to zero – emission school buses. In addition to the timeline being unrealistic for our bus company and the ability to comply and provide reliable uninterrupted transportation to our students, our future budgets would be significantly impacted due to added funding for transportation and funding taken away from academic and social programs.

In addition, we respectfully ask that you consider increasing the full day reimbursement for equitable universal pre-kindergarten programs so that every preschooler in our district will be eligible for our universal pre-kindergarten program. Also, an increase to the maximum allowable undesignated fund balance would greatly help us continue to maintain and expand our programs.

We would like to thank you for your support across the past three years of school budgets. Your commitment to fully fund the Foundation Aid Formula has been instrumental in helping us to continue to address the academic, social and emotional needs of the students and families of the Miller Place School District. We are very concerned that future progress will be thwarted and impossible to maintain with the proposed Executive Budget. Please reconsider these changes, and the current inflationary factors.

On behalf of the Miller Place School District, we extend our sincerest gratitude for your unwavering support. Your dedication and commitment to our educational endeavors have not gone unnoticed. We eagerly anticipate continued collaboration with you to ensure exceptional education for all students of the Miller Place School District.

Respectfully submitted,

*Seth A. Lipshie*  
Seth A. Lipshie  
Superintendent of Schools

*Lisa Reitan*  
Lisa Reitan  
President, Board of Education

*Bryan Makarius*  
Bryan Makarius  
Vice President, Board of Education

*Johanna Testa*  
Johanna Testa  
Trustee, Board of Education

*Andrea Spaniolas*  
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*John Galligan*  
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Trustee, Board of Education