

Sayville Public Schools



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January 24, 2024

The Honorable Kathleen Hochul
Governor of New York
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We write to you today as elected Board of Education members of the Sayville Union Free School District ("our District"). **We request that you to reinstate Save Harmless with a modest and reasonable rate of inflation increase for all New York State School Districts.** We are deeply concerned with the recently proposed New York State budget and how it impacts the Sayville School District. As you are aware, our District must comply with the restrictive requirements of the tax cap, as well as the many unfunded mandates that continue to leave us reliant on essential New York State funding.

Last year, we appreciated your decision to fully fund essential Foundation Aid. Unfortunately, this year's budget proposal will serve to dramatically harm the children of our district. **As proposed, your budget includes a devastating 3.4 million dollar cut to our districts Foundation Aid.** More alarming, this reverses the save harmless policy that has served to protect our students from extreme funding cuts over the past several decades. **Your proposed reduction in aid to our District places us at a funding level not seen since 2007.**

Our district continues to remain highly academic with a focus on developing successful college and career ready students. This includes providing essential academic programs such as college level Advanced Placement courses as well as a wide variety of electives and extra curriculars that support academics, athletics and the arts. We successfully develop programs that educate the whole child, supporting social emotional needs while also being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers. However, maintaining these essential programs requires consistency in funding levels that the Save Harmless policy ensured.

As part of your proposed budget, our District is slated to lose 16.86% of our foundation aid in one year. A cut in essential Foundation Aid of this magnitude will threaten almost every program in our District. This cut will also force a significant increase in class sizes and limit our ability to provide essential academic intervention programs and enhanced special education services at all levels. With these devastating prospects on the horizon, **we call on you to immediately revisit your proposal and ensure the continuation of the Save Harmless** funding for our District so that we continue to provide our students with the essential educational foundation and opportunities that they deserve.

Sincerely,



Thomas Cooley
BOE President



Kelly Sack
BOE Vice President



Carl Cangelosi
Trustee



James Bertsch
Trustee



Maureen Dolan
Trustee



Christine Sarni
Trustee

cc: Andrew Garbarino
cc: Alexis Weik
cc: Jarett Gandolfo
cc: Anthony Piccirillo