
Pittsford Schools

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Darrin Kenney
Assistant Superintendent for Business

Date: June 18, 2021
To: Michael Pero, Superintendent of Schools
From: Darrin T. Kenney, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Re: Foundation Aid Plan – Fiscal Year 2021-22

In late April, NYS enacted the 2021-22 budget. A focus of the NYS budget was to address the many years of Foundation Aid shortfall, where some districts like Pittsford had been significantly underfunded since 2007 and some districts in recent years are overfunded. The 2021-22 NYS budget set a goal of funding Foundation Aid at the 60% of formula level with a three-year phase-in to 100%. Pittsford was currently at approximately 54% funded. As a result, the District is scheduled to receive a 22% or \$2 million increase in Foundation Aid under this “catch-up provision.”

NYS Foundation Aid History: It is important to recognize that Foundation Aid was created in 2006-07 to replace General Operating Aid. This was done due to NYS losing the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit and the Supreme Court ruling the State’s funding formulas to schools to be unconstitutional. Foundation Aid was to provide a “sound basic education” by returning to a formula, not political process and schools were to know four years in advance their Foundation Aid for planning purposes. Due to various reasons, NYS has not paid Foundation Aid according to formula since its inception; there have been freezes and various forms of reductions. Since 2006-07, PCSD is cumulatively due more than \$90 million in arrears in Foundation Aid.

NYS Foundation Aid in today’s Post-Pandemic/Federal Stimulus World: The 2021-22 NYS Enacted Budget is utilizing some of the COVID Federal Stimulus funds to initiate corrective action to the Foundation Aid (sound basic education) funding. However, the NYS budget contains a requirement, if a school’s Foundation Aid increase is more than ten percent or \$10 million, the school must post to the District website a plan of how the funds will be used to address student performance and need, including but not limited to the following criteria:

- Increasing graduation rates and eliminating achievement gap;
- Reducing class sizes;
- Providing support for students who are not meeting, or at risk of not meeting, State learning standards in core academic subject areas;
- Addressing student social-emotional health; and

- Providing adequate resources to English Language Learners (ELL), students with disabilities (SWD), and students experiencing homelessness.

At the time of the District’s 2021-22 Budget Development and Vote, this requirement was not publicized by NYS. Therefore, the District budgeted the full Foundation Aid increase as supporting the general operations of the District (sound basic education), which includes the aforementioned criteria and more.

To comply with this new Foundation Aid requirement, please find below items originally contained within the 2021-22 voter approved budget that meet one or more of the NYS criteria.

Description	Budget
Increase in social work contractual supports to address student SEL needs	\$185,000
Behavior Specialists 6.4 FTE	\$683,227
Student & classroom technology devices and supporting network	\$325,200
Nursing & health services supports restructure	\$269,924
BOCES Virtual Academy – if county wide remote learning is necessary	\$265,000
Initiatives and supports related to Cultural Diversity & Inclusivity	\$100,000
Software and tools to assist in evidenced based identification learning gaps and assessment of improvement	\$120,000
English Language Learner faculty support	\$ 89,631
Increase in SEL supports for Special Education	\$ 67,500
Purchase of student desks, educational furniture and PPE to enhance the learning environment, social distancing, resulting in smaller class size	\$119,694
Total Identified 2021-22 Foundation Aid Increase Plan	\$2,225,176
NYS Foundation Aid Increase	\$2,038,970

NYSED will not be collecting or approving said plans. The Plan will be published on the District’s website, no later than July 1, 2021.