



Chappaqua Central School District

Christine Ackerman
Superintendent of Schools

Joshua Culwell-Block
Assistant Superintendent for Business

July 30, 2024

Dear Rockefeller Institute Foundation Aid Representatives,

We are writing to share considerations and recommendations regarding the NYS Foundation Aid formula review on behalf of the Chappaqua Central School District.

First and foremost, at a minimum, if the decision is made to reduce our Foundation Aid - we request that you allow our reduction in Foundation Aid *in the first year of the reduction*, be added to the list of excludables under the tax levy limit formula (NYS Education Law Section 3023-a).

We also ask that you also discuss the following considerations and recommendations during your deliberations:

1. **Special Education Funding:** The current formula uses a 1.41 multiplier. However, students with disabilities often require local district funding that exceeds this multiplier.
2. **Safety and Security:** Since the last revision of the Foundation Aid formula, there have been increased costs for security personnel, technology-integrated lockdown systems, camera systems, and other related security needs. And, unfortunately, our requests for NYS Legislators and the Governor to consider these expenses as exemptions under the tax levy limit formula have gone unanswered.
3. **Retiree Obligations:** Contributions to TRS and ERS have surged since 2000 and retiree health benefits payments have also increased at a rate that surpasses our Foundation Aid and tax levy limit increases.
4. **Predictability:** Please provide a predictable formula. The unpredictability of the current formula makes student program planning challenging for the next school year as we work to meet budget adoption deadlines.
5. **Regional Cost Index:** Please use granular metrics to determine a school district's cost index. Using only nine regions for a regional cost index harms districts like ours. Although we are grouped with the Hudson Valley, our costs align more closely with Long Island/NYC.
6. **Tax Cap Formula Adjustments:** Please consider coupling changes to the Foundation Aid formula with changes to the tax levy formula to allow for additional exclusions as provided above.

The Chappaqua Central School District is seeking a Foundation Aid formula that is simple, fair, sustainable, and predictable. It is important that we at least maintain our current levels of NYS Foundation Aid due to tax levy formula constraints that we face and our dependency on local property taxes (86.5%) to support our school budget.

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Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Christine Ackerman, PhD
Superintendent of Schools



Joshua Culwell-Block
Assistant Superintendent for Business

CC: NYS Senator Shelley Mayer
NYS Assemblyman Michael Benedetto
NYS Senator Peter Harckham
NYS Assemblyman Chris Burdick

