



2020 State Positions

Equity of Opportunity and Access

Prevent School District Insolvency

- ◆ Reform the Foundation Aid Formula to provide funding based on adequacy, equity, flexibility, predictability and clarity
- ◆ Retain funding for expense driven aids (BOCES, Transportation)

Funding and Use of Resources

- ◆ Provide support for efforts to enhance school safety including mental health resources
- ◆ Oppose diverting school aid to competitive grants
- ◆ Permit the creation of additional reserve funds especially for Special Education
- ◆ Oppose tuition tax credits for private and parochial schools
- ◆ Oppose passing to school districts costs born by other municipalities
- ◆ Provide a stable and reliable funding formula for Pre-K programs, that include the same formula for transportation for four-year old's as is available for K-12 students

Governance / Flexibility and Efficiency

- ◆ Provide sufficient funding and support to allow for appropriate staffing of the State Education Department so they can provide the necessary guidance
- ◆ Expand allowable areas for shared services and educational programs through BOCES and between districts
- ◆ Expand the ability for unaided participation in shared services by other levels of government

Despite having a high per pupil expenditure, New York continues to have the second worst method of distributing educational funding in the United States. As our regional student population continue to change in light of poverty, homelessness, mental health issues, English language proficiency, health, safety, food insecurities, and other socially driven issues, as well as new academic standards, the inadequacy in funding continues to put great strain on our districts.

Inequity in opportunity, access, safety, and well-being because of funding inequity leaves much for local districts to absorb, especially with regard to mandates. The state's tax cap adds additional challenges to the districts, most noticeably, in the small and rural districts which serve as the vital hub of our communities. We need your help in delivering a "sound, basic education" as guaranteed by the New York State Constitution.

The 4 County School Board Association takes our responsibility to provide a high quality and constitutionally guaranteed, equitable education to all very seriously. We need your support in eliminating inequity and preventing financial insolvency through a significant revision of the state aid formula, adequate and equitable funding, ceasing the creation of state initiated policy and placing trust in local Boards of Education to make sound decisions in the education of the children of their communities.





Foundation Aid

Four County School Boards Association calls on the state to establish and follow a plan to fully fund the Foundation Aid formula, update components of the formula and continue to work with all stakeholders to create an aid mechanism that is equitable, flexible and predictable.

Establish a plan to fully phase-in the \$4.2 billion owed in Foundation Aid.

Review and update the components of the formula that relate to poverty, disabilities, English language learners, enrollment growth, and regional costs.

Conduct a new study to determine the cost of providing each student with an education that prepares them for the future based on current costs, regulations and expectations.

Four County SBA asks the state to improve the data collection for measuring student poverty. Four County would like the state to fully replace the 2000 census poverty data with the “Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate” (SAIPE) in the formula. We would also like the state to use “direct certification” student counts as a replacement to the traditional Free and Reduce Price Lunch (FRPL) in state aid formulas. FRPL undercounts the children in our districts whether designated average need or high need.

The Income Wealth Index (IWI) is used in the formula to compare a district’s income wealth to a statewide average. But the state has set a floor of 0.65 (thirty-five percent below state average wealth), regardless of a district’s actual income wealth. This is one part of the formula that works against many Four County School Districts with less than average community wealth. Eliminating the floor would allow the formula to more accurately recognize a district’s need.

Mental Health

While meeting the educational needs of our communities remains the primary mission of our school districts, we are struggling with the growing needs of our students and communities. Our students are arriving at school with physical and mental health needs that are not being met outside the school. Our districts are well aware that a student who is hungry, scared, and dealing with physical and emotional pain and trauma is a student who will struggle to learn.

The mental health crisis is real for the Four County Region. This year our districts have faced student deaths from drug overdose, suicide and homicide. With already limited resources, we have relied upon neighboring districts for professional and personal support.

In response to this crisis, an increasing number of districts want to provide additional services, especially health and mental health services, for their students. However, not all districts have been able to find these resources locally. To ensure that our students have the services they need, several changes could be adopted. Four County SBA would like school health facility spaces to be made a building aid eligible expense. Currently, when determining what portion of a school construction project will be eligible for aid, non-instructional space is generally excluded from the aid able cost. By aiding spaces within school facilities that provide these students with health services in the same way as traditional classroom space, our school districts would be better able to meet our students’ needs.

Four County SBA asks the state to support the creation of an expense-based aid for school-based student health services. As our needs continue to grow, the Four County School Districts are developing programs specific to meet their challenges. But when we create these programs, we must do so with funds that we have to shift from instructional programming and other services. State support can help leverage our local resources and assist our districts in addressing the needs of our students while maintaining our academic offerings and extra-curricular programming. We support NYSSBA’s call for a new expense-based aid that would reimburse districts for a percentage of the dollars spent on approved services, including but not limited to primary and preventive medical care, nutrition, counseling, and other mental health services.





Four County School Boards Association

2020 Federal Positions

As advocates for the 39,000 students in the Finger Lakes region of New York State, the members of the Four County School Boards Association set forth the following recommended legislative actions:

- ◆ Denotes items with no direct Federal fiscal impact

Student Issues

Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA/ESEA)

- Advocate for implementation to follow the intent of the law
- Eliminate the 95 % test participation rate as a trigger for withholding funding

Early Childhood

- Support voluntary, locally-determined early childhood education programs with a separate, dedicated funding stream

Child Nutrition

- Provide local districts with the flexibility to operate school lunch programs in a way that meets local needs
- Involve school board members in any process to amend school lunch and breakfast program nutrition standards
- ◇ Fully fund all requirements under the Healthy, Hunger-free Kids Act (HHKA)
- Restore “offered” vs “served”

Unaccompanied Minors

- ◇ Provide on-going resources for districts experiencing influx in the enrollment of unaccompanied minors
- Ensure the performance of newly arrived unaccompanied minors on state assessments does not negatively impact overall district performance

Reaffirm the Role of Local School Boards

- Ensure the Executive branch does not exceed its authority
- Recognize the local education agency as the principal democratic governance body in determining how children are educated
- Restore maximum flexibility to local school boards, freeing them from unnecessary mandates

Funding Issue Corrections by Legislation

School Choice Vouchers and Tuition Tax Credits

- ◆ Oppose diverting public funds to non-public schools and the charter industry
- ◆ Support existing, evidence based public school choice options
- ◆ Hold all schools receiving public funds to the same financial and academic accountability standards

Fulfill the Promise with Sufficient, Sustained Funding

- ◇ Increase federal investments in Title 1, IDEA , ESSA and related education programs
- ◇ Ensure federal funding flows directly to local school districts rather than through state education departments
- ◇ Oppose funding through competitive grants
- ◇ Prevent another round of across-the-board cuts (sequestration)
- ◇ Retain current funding thru Impact Aid and hold districts harmless from revenue lost through taxes not paid by Sovereign Indian Nations

School Based Medicaid & Healthcare Reform

- ◇ Continue payment of the federal portion for medical services provided to public school students
- ◇ Reject proposals to convert Medicaid to a per-capita grant program
- ◇ Changes to healthcare should include amendments to the Cadillac Tax

Federal Income Tax Reform SALT

- ◇ Retain the state and local tax deduction option

F-1 Visas

- Allow international, tuition paying students with F-1 visas to complete four years of public high school, which is currently allowed for private schools

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LYONS MANCHESTER-SHORTSVILLE MARCUS WHITMAN MARION NEWARK
NORTH ROSE-WOLCOTT PALMYRA-MACEDON PENN YAN PHELPS-CLIFTON SPRINGS SENECA FALLS
SODUS SOUTH SENECA WAYNE WAYNE-FINGER LAKES BOCES WILLIAMSON

Our Children Are Our Future

Education is the Key



Four County School Boards Association

THE EDUCATION OF OUR CHILDREN IS THE KEY TO OUR NATION'S FUTURE



School boards in the Four County region of New York State (Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties) are committed to providing high quality education for all students. The success of this effort is dependent upon a strong, supportive partnership between local communities and the state and federal governments. Most funding for education comes, appropriately, from state and local sources. The federal government's role has historically been to supplement these resources with funding targeted toward specific needs, particularly those that provide equal opportunity and access, and are important resources in support of public education.



An educated citizenry is essential if we are to retain our position as a global leader. To prosper, we must provide the opportunity for all children to learn and be prepared to make meaningful contributions to our nation's success. Reliable and sustained financial support for our public schools, where the majority of our nation's children are educated, is critical. Our schools continue to experience dramatic increases in the cost of health insurance premiums, pension contributions, and services for children with disabilities. We must provide intervention services for "at-risk" students and expanded opportunities for higher achievers. Meeting unfunded or underfunded mandates places an additional demand on local district resources and a burden on local taxpayers. Our New York State districts have the added constraint of budgeting within the tax cap imposed by the Governor and the Legislature. All of these factors have a greater impact on the low-wealth/high-need school districts that make up the Four County area.



We must continue to invest in our future by providing quality public education. Congress must focus on a long-term solution to funding education in America and oppose any policies that would weaken our public schools. This will help insure our students' success in the global marketplace and also help strengthen America's economy. Necessary funding must accompany all federal mandates. Past promises must be kept!



Support Public Education

Support Academic Achievement

Support Our Children

The Four County School Boards Association is comprised of *mostly rural, low wealth, high need school districts which are* located within the New York State Counties of Ontario, Seneca, Wayne, and Yates. Situated in the Finger Lakes, the area educates 39,000 students (NYSED) and represents 262,302 community members (2010 U.S. Census).

The organization strives "to strengthen the leadership skills and advocacy efforts of its members by setting high standards in the areas of board development, legislative activity and opportunities to come together to share concerns and successes." The Association represents its member school boards to legislative and regulatory bodies at the local, state, and national levels.



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