



MOUNT VERNON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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The Mount Vernon City School District is strengthening its teaching staff, and implementing greater supports and interventions for students. As a result of our careful planning and delivery of services, virtually all of our 16 schools are now in a positive accountability status with The New York State Education Department.

- **The most pressing area is State Aid.** The Governor's proposal provides an increase in our aid. Most of the increase is based on spending and does not really represent an actual increase in aid.

The Covid pandemic continues to place a strain on our budget. To date, we have spent over \$1.5 Million in Covid-related matters for which there was no funding. Our health insurance costs alone will be going up almost 2% in 2022-2023. Health insurance alone exceeds 14% of our budget. We still hope for the Full Foundation Aid funding to finally be implemented and paid so that we can provide the equity for our children who have so little, while we are surrounded by such great wealth in our neighboring school districts. TRS costs are rising substantially for 2022-2023 as well. All of our contracts have expired and we cannot come to any agreements until we know how much we will get in state aid. In addition, our poor community is overtaxed and the reduced tax cap causes further problems.

- **Our transportation requirements for special needs children continue to grow.** We run some 107 buses every day to accommodate 18% of our population who are special needs. This cost exceeds \$9 Million. Mount Vernon has the highest special needs percentage in the area and perhaps the state.
- **We have a homeless population exceeding 10% of our children.** As this population grows so too does the need to funding for related support services for these students. We have to provide door to door transportation for all of these children.
- **We are also owed some \$10 Million in back Building Aid.** To date, we have been advised that the majority of this money will be included in our 2027 funding. This alone would help ease our continued financial struggle.
- **Our Charter School Expenses continue to grow with little help in state aid.** The notion

that our expenses are reduced when a child goes to a charter school is untrue and ridiculous. There is no savings at all; only a loss of revenue. Our charter school expenses are now more than \$8 Million for the coming school year. If we did not have this impediment, we would not even have any funding problems for next year.

- **Mount Vernon is attached to an up-county construction cost index.** There has been legislation vetoed by the governor to include us rightfully with NYC and Long Island in terms of the costs of construction. The effect of this problem is that our Maximum Cost Allowance (MCA) is lower than it should be and that we cannot do construction at the same lower cost as areas upstate. We urge the passage of this legislation vital to our mission to help our children.

In conclusion, Mount Vernon is a poverty stricken area with great needs to help our children to achieve the equity they deserve both on an educational level and what is right and moral. **Right now, we are some \$5 Million short of making a budget that will pass the public and meet the needs of our children.** We urge all parties to reach high to help our kids and find a funding solution which will provide our next generation of children the opportunities that our wealthy neighbors have enjoyed for decades.

Thanks you for considering the needs of the children of Mount Vernon.

Sincerely,

KRH