



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

Senator Webb, Assemblywoman Lupardo, & School Officials Urge Governor Hochul to Sign Legislation in Support of Roosevelt Elementary

LEA WEBB October 23, 2023

| ISSUE: **FUNDING FOR SMALL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS**



(BINGHAMTON, NY) Today, Senator Lea Webb and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo were joined by local school officials, parents, small business owners, and community advocates in urging Governor Kathy Hochul to sign their legislation ([S2672A/A2307A](#)) that would support the renovation and reconstruction of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary. Sponsored by Webb and Lupardo, this legislation unanimously passed through both houses of the State

Legislature earlier this year, with much support from the Greater Binghamton community, and now awaits the Governor's signature. If signed into law, this approach would enable the school district to rebuild and renovate the school in the most cost effective and least disruptive manner.

Senator Lea Webb said, "I urge the Governor to sign this legislation, which will provide Roosevelt Elementary with the much-needed resources but also to send a message that the children of Binghamton are deserving of a safe, nurturing, and inspiring educational environment. I thank my partner Assemblymember Lupardo, the Binghamton City School District, and the community for working so hard to preserve this school for the children of Binghamton and ensure that our small city school districts get the same level of support and access to resources as their peers in larger cities."

Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo said, "We are urging the Governor to look favorably on our legislation to assist with the renovations at Roosevelt Elementary. An expedited renovation process will not only limit disruptions to the learning environment, it will save the state and city taxpayers money in the long run. I'd like to thank Senator Webb for her partnership on behalf of the children who attend Roosevelt, and to the Binghamton City School District and numerous community members, for believing so strongly in this school."

Senator Webb and Assemblywoman Lupardo's dedication to this cause is reflected in the overwhelming support they have garnered. School faculty, parents and other local stakeholders have been actively engaged. Hundreds of petition signatures and over 30 letters of support from small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and other community leaders will be included with the legislation when it is delivered to Governor Hochul. The signing of this legislation represents an opportunity to not only provide Roosevelt Elementary with much-needed resources but also to send a message that the children of Binghamton are deserving of a safe, nurturing, and inspiring educational environment.

Superintendent Dr. Tonia Thompson "Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School has numerous facility issues that need to be addressed, including the abatement of asbestos used in the building's original construction. Without the passing of this bill, the district will have no other choice but to renovate using the current building aide formula and time frame. That would result in needing an additional 20 million dollars over a 25 year period of time. We need to bring Roosevelt into the 21st century, and the passage of this bill will allow the needed work to be completed for this generation of families and save tax payers money."

Michael Cooper, Parent Advocate, said "The importance and impact of Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School extends far beyond the amazing education they receive. Roosevelt serves as a community hub for Binghamton's north side and provides numerous resources for students, such as its many free meal programs and the UHS health clinic that operates at the school. The funding the district will be able to access through this bill will help not just students, but their families as well."

Under current law, New York's Big Five School Districts are permitted to access two times their multi-year cost allowance within the State's Building Aid formula for capital projects. Unfortunately, small city school districts like Binghamton are not afforded this allowance. The proposed legislation would enable a multi-year cost allowance for a five-year period to compute Building Aid for the Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School reconstruction process. This would significantly expedite the renovation process by allowing access to two times the existing Maximum Cost Allowance upfront, facilitating a three-year construction period, as opposed to a 25-year renovation process, ultimately reducing cost and minimizing disruption to students.

Roosevelt Elementary School services students on the north side of Binghamton, the most economically distressed part of the city. This community has been designated both a child care and food desert and has limited access to public transportation and services. The

school's facilities have been in dire need of an upgrade for years, with outdated infrastructure and safety concerns posing serious challenges. During the Binghamton City School District's five-year Facilities Review, Theodore Roosevelt Elementary was designated as a high needs school, primarily due to the extensive use of asbestos for fireproofing and insulation, affecting 85% of the building. Additionally, the current classroom sizes fall below minimum square footage standards, making it difficult to provide adequate instructional support services and essential community health services through the School-based Health Clinic.

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