



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Steven D. Rhoads

## Nassau County State Senators, Assemblymembers, And Superintendents Rally to Oppose Cuts to Foundation Aid

STEVEN D. RHOADS February 6, 2024

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Nassau County School Districts faced with over \$23 Million in proposed cuts.

On February 1, New York State Senator Steve Rhoads along with colleagues Senator Patricia Canzoneri- Fitzpatrick, Senator Jack Martins, Senator Alexis Weik and Assembly Members Ari Brown and Brian Curran, called on Governor Hochul to reverse the devastating cuts to schools that were included in her budget proposal.

The elimination of the “hold harmless” provision that provides critical stability to local school districts and the change in the foundation aid formula are glaring examples of the Governors’ misplaced priorities. The bloated \$233 billion budget siphons state aid away from local schools while dedicating \$2.4 billion in taxpayer dollars to address the self-inflicted migrant crisis, bringing the total to \$4.3 billion over two years.

Education should always be among the top priorities for state government, and the Republican Senators and Assemblymen are committed to ensuring that New Yorkers' hard earned tax dollars help schools obtain the resources they need.

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*“The safety, success, and well-being of our students should always be a top priority. The Governor’s proposal to change the school aid formula and hastily eliminate the hold harmless provision while simultaneously increasing the state budget to give billions to address the self-inflicted migrant crisis, millions in theft prevention due to lack of action on bail reform, and millions for swimming pools shows her priorities are truly misguided. The Governor’s proposed changes in education funding would cut over \$4 million in school aid - in just my Senate District alone. We must empower our teachers and students to be their best and chart our students on a course for a lifetime of success. As the budget process continues, I remain undeterred and ready to fight for our teachers, schools, and families to ensure our children get the quality education they deserve,” said Senator Steve Rhoads, SD 5.*

“The Governor’s budget is yet another example of the complete disregard for our Nassau families and taxpayers. \$4.3 billion over two years will be used to address the migrant crisis that was caused by open borders and sanctuary city policies supported by the supermajorities in Albany. At the same time, they are stripping millions of dollars from our Nassau school districts. My district alone is getting hit with more than **\$11 million in school aid cuts (see attached)**. Nassau taxpayers are tired of misplaced priorities from Albany’s One-Party Rule, and I will continue to fight to get Nassau school districts the funding they

deserve,” **said Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitpatrick, SD 9.**

“Governor Hochul’s proposed education budget cuts are nothing less than an attack on New York’s suburban school districts, and she will deprive our schoolchildren of the resources they deserve. This means that millions of more dollars will be thrown onto the backs of our taxpayers. Enough is enough! The State has an absolute obligation to fund our schools and the governor’s insistence on funding \$2.4 billion for her self-created migrant crisis at the expense of our kids should be a shock to every hardworking family on Long Island. Today, we stand in solidarity with our schools, teachers, and especially parents and children in saying “No!”. Our first priority has always been and will remain our children and we are completely committed to fighting for them,” **said Senator Jack Martins, SD 7.**

“The Governor's budget proposal gives illegal migrants \$2.4 billion of our hard-earned tax dollars, while she shorts our education foundation aid by \$420 million. Fifty-six schools on Long Island are being shorted by staggering amounts, leaving them with the uncertainty of how to maintain teachers and programs. The Governor and the democrat majority need to make our schools, our students, teachers and programs a priority by reallocating our \$2.4 billion tax dollars where it belongs,” **said Senator Alexis Weik, SD 8th.**

There is a strong correlation between adequate funding and student achievement. Decreased funding could lead to lower academic performance and graduation rates, and will widen achievement gaps among student populations. Students from low-income backgrounds will certainly be disproportionately affected as they rely more heavily on school resources for academic support and enrichment opportunities. Additionally, these significant cuts will almost certainly lead to salary freezes, reduced benefits, and increased workloads for educators, which will affect morale and may also hinder teacher retention and recruitment efforts, exacerbating staffing shortages and further compromising the quality of education.

“The loss of 4.3 million dollars in foundation aid in a single year is devastating for our district, particularly since the cut comes without warning or preparation. No district can absorb that level of loss without cuts to programs, which ultimately affect our students, 30% of whom live below State poverty thresholds. We urge our State legislators to seek a reprieve so that we can maintain our student programs, particularly as we continue to recover from the pandemic,” **said Dr. Jennifer Gallagher, Superintendent of the Long Beach City School District.**

“Once again, Governor Hochul and her radical allies are putting the needs of illegal immigrants over our own citizens. It's an outrage that she would cut Foundation Aid to our schools at the same time that she's handing out billions of taxpayer dollars in assistance to those who have entered our country illegally. Our schools are struggling, teachers are underpaid, and class sizes are too big, but Governor Hochul seems more concerned with rolling out the welcome mat for migrants. The Governor should be putting our children and all New Yorkers first instead of catering to those who have no right to be here in the first place,” **said Assemblyman Ari Brown, AD 20.**

“It is clear the governor does not have our children’s best interests at heart if she is planning to give migrants in New York City \$2.4 billion in handouts, while having previously given tax breaks to Hollywood Elites and forced the purchasing of electric school buses, while also proposing to end the hold harmless provision that cuts education funding to our school districts. In fact, under the governor’s plan, over half the school districts in New York will see a loss in Foundation Aid. On Long Island, 56 school districts, including those in Oceanside, Rockville Centre and East Rockaway in the 21st Assembly District, are set to lose out on \$43.8 million in state foundation aid, the largest concentration of cuts in the state. The districts losing Foundation Aid in the 21st Assembly District are set to lose out on a combined \$735,000 in Gov. Hochul’s plan, this is unacceptable,” **said Assemblyman Brian Curran, AD 21.**

“As state leaders, it’s our responsibility to ensure we’re providing students with every resource they need to succeed. Unfortunately, Gov. Hochul’s budget proposal reduces the level of foundation aid to 56 Long Island school districts, representing more than a quarter of the total cut statewide. At the same time, she’s prepared to spend \$2.4 billion to manage the migrant crisis. This is an irresponsible way to distribute public money. If the governor is looking for ways to save dollars it can’t come at the expense of education,” **said Assemblyman Edward Ra, AD 19.**

**Senator Rhoads added,** “As your state Senator, I understand how important public education is to the life of a community. I strongly OPPOSE these cuts and will fight to ensure all schools get their fair share of education funding in this year’s state budget. To voice your opinion, please sign my petition (below) and tell the Governor to get her priorities straight and to leave our schools alone!”

<https://www.nysenate.gov/petitions/steven-d-rhoads/hey-governor-leave-our-kids-school-funding-alone>