



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo calls for additional public hearings on Foundation Aid formula revisions

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO August 7, 2024

| ISSUE: **FOUNDATION AID FORMULA**

To ensure that all stakeholders are heard, New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, is urging the Rockefeller Institute of Government to hold additional public hearings on updating the state's Foundation Aid formula. The formula is the primary way New York determines state aid for school districts.

As part of the 2024-25 State Budget, the Rockefeller Institute has been tasked with assessing the formula and recommending changes that can be made to better meet the needs of New York's schools.

The Rockefeller Institute scheduled five public hearings in various locations around the state to collect feedback from the public, school families, teachers, staff, administrators, school boards, appointed and elected officials, education researchers and experts and education-focused support and advocacy organizations.

However, the closest hearing to communities in Central New York, the North Country and the Valley is in Laurens, which is near Oneonta in Otsego County. The next closest is in Guilderland in the Capital Region.

In a letter to Robert Megna, president of the Rockefeller Institute, Sen. Griffo suggested that hearings also take place in additional communities in Central New York, the North Country and the Valley.

“There is no question that the Foundation Aid formula is critical to school districts and needs to be examined and revised. It also is essential that all stakeholders in education are able to participate and be involved in the process” **Sen. Griffo said.** “However, I am disappointed by the lack of public hearings in Central New York and the North Country. We must ensure that all stakeholders throughout the state can provide input. While I recognize that written feedback will be accepted, it is my belief that additional public hearings will allow for more people to express their opinion on this important issue.”

Written feedback regarding potential changes to the Foundation Aid formula will be accepted throughout Friday, Sept. 6. Those interested members of the public can submit written feedback on the Foundation Aid formula online [here](#).

The full text of Sen. Griffo’s letter to Rockefeller Institute President Menga is below:

Aug. 6, 2024

Robert Menga
President
Rockefeller Institute of Government
411 State St.
Albany, NY 12203

Dear President Menga:

I am writing to you regarding the public hearing schedule for the Foundation Aid Study that the Rockefeller Institute of Government was tasked with by Gov. Kathy Hochul in the 2024-25 Fiscal Year budget.

The initial Executive proposal of the Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget included cutting the Save Harmless provision and changing the CPI calculation used for the Foundation Aid formula. These changes would have resulted in massive losses for districts across the state. While the final budget restored the Save Harmless provision, many schools in my district still faced cuts and

received less aid than expected and were forced to cut positions and programs for the upcoming school year due to the budgetary constraints.

Small schools in my district like Morrisville-Eaton faced cuts of nearly \$500,000 while Oneida faced \$1,6 million. Other school districts like Westmoreland and Oriskany received no additional Foundation Aid funding from 2023-24 at all. These districts deserve a chance to have their voices heard.

When the Rockefeller Institute took on the role of conducting the Foundation Aid Study, you announced that public hearings would be held across the state to hear directly from school districts that would be impacted by these potential changes. However, with only five hearings scheduled in Manhattan, Buffalo, Farmingdale, Laurens and Guilderland, schools in Central New York and the North Country that were some of the districts hardest hit by aid reductions in the budget are once again left out.

Due to this, I am requesting that you add additional public hearings before the Sept. 6 deadline and am suggesting the City of Rome as a site due to it being centrally located to Central New York and the North Country. This would allow some of the state's most impacted districts to share their concerns and ideas with you. Rome is 190 miles from Buffalo, 62 miles from Laurens, and 101 miles from Guilderland, providing the perfect location for Utica, Syracuse and Watertown districts to make their voices heard.

Thank you for your consideration. If you wish to discuss this further, I can be reached at my district office in Utica by calling 315-793-9072.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Griffo". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Joseph A. Griffo

New York State Senator, 53rd Senate District