



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

LETTER: Senator Fred Akshar: Governor Must Take Aggressive Action to Prioritize Education

FRED AKSHAR September 4, 2020

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Statement from Senator Fred Akshar:

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Regardless of whether you think Governor Cuomo's sweeping 20% cut to education funding is irresponsible and obtuse governing or callous and conniving political theater, the

consequences are the same for our families, our teachers and our students: Massive layoffs, program & special education cuts and the possible elimination of in-person learning altogether.

Local boards of education, superintendents, teachers, parents, and taxpayers across our state's 62 counties are all scrambling to adapt to these across-the-board cuts while still providing the educational opportunities that every New York student deserves. The Governor's last-minute cut has made that impossible.

One of the school districts I represent may be forced to lay off 150 teachers and staff amounting to 35% of their employees. I know this because I've been on the ground speaking with these stakeholders every day. I'd urge the Governor to do the same.

If the Governor believes teachers are essential and students are essential, then we can't wait on the federal government to save the day. We need action now. That's why we need to look within to find creative savings and fully fund our schools.

I would argue that there is no shortage of state spending items in the NYS Budget over which our children's education takes precedence.

For starters, as New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's recent report outlined, New York's economic development efforts over the past several years have been either questionable, ill-advised or poorly managed at best.

I propose that New York temporarily suspends bonding for economic development projects and instead establishes a bond that would make our schools whole and fully functional. I believe that our children's education is a far better investment in our state's economic future than any number of Empire State Development's speculative projects.

Government often picks the winners and losers, and sadly, our children are coming out the losers because of a budget that failed to prioritize "needs" before "wants". Now is the time to create this program and get schools the funding they need to operate successfully.

Our state must make every effort to sustain and support the best tool we have to create prosperity for individual New Yorkers, their families and our communities — a quality education.

To read Senator Akshar's full letter to the Governor, please [click here](#).