

COMSEWOGUE SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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March 20, 2024

Hon. Kathy Hochul
New York State Governor
NYS State Capital Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

Three years ago, you made a promise to school districts, students and taxpayers of New York State to fulfill the 2007 court mandate to fully fund foundation aid. You said on the steps of the capital building it was about time the state ensured that public school districts received the funding necessary to ensure all students received a quality education. You committed to us that 100 percent foundation aid funding would be achieved in three years. This year, we finally reached that milestone. Now, with your proposed budget, you are pulling back and reneging on that commitment.

This is a grave injustice to our taxpayers and students. If your unilateral decision to change the foundation formula goes forward, our district will receive approximately \$500,000 less in state aid than anticipated. This loss in state revenue will have a dramatic impact on our budgeting process and ability to maintain the level of programming and services we offer students here in the Comsewogue School District.

What your proposed budget, and the structure of your formula reveals is that you do not grasp that the financial requirements of delivering a high quality, comprehensive education that meets the needs of all students is far greater today than they were just a few years ago. We have, out of necessity, had to significantly increase our mental health staffing and services. Technology continues to advance at an increasingly rapid pace, requiring upgrades to our district's technology capabilities. Operational costs, such as transportation and health insurance, also present financial challenges to a greater extent than before. This is a time when the state should be keeping its promise to provide the foundation aid funding needed to meet today's educational challenges, not breaking that promise and putting at risk the very programs and services we have spent years putting in place for our students.

The extraordinary talents of our teachers and administrators, together with the astute management of our district's budgeting, has allowed our district to continually deliver a high-

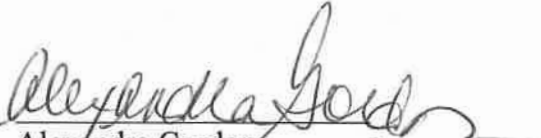


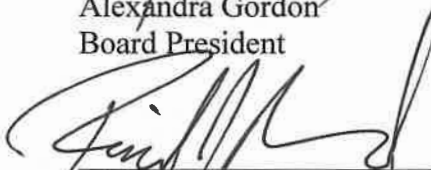
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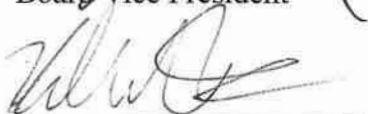
quality education to our students. Your proposed change in how foundation aid is calculated puts this in jeopardy. If there is to be a change in the formula, that should be by consensus, with school district representation, New York State Department of Education representation, and legislative representation at the table. It should not be by your fiat.

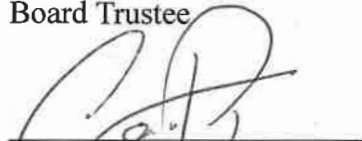
We are calling on you to rethink your educational aid package and restore the 100 percent foundation aid funding based on the current formula. Anything less is unacceptable.


Sincerely,

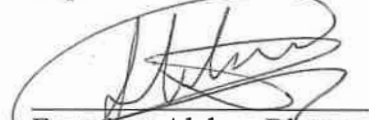

Alexandra Gordon
Board President



Richard Rennard
Board Vice President

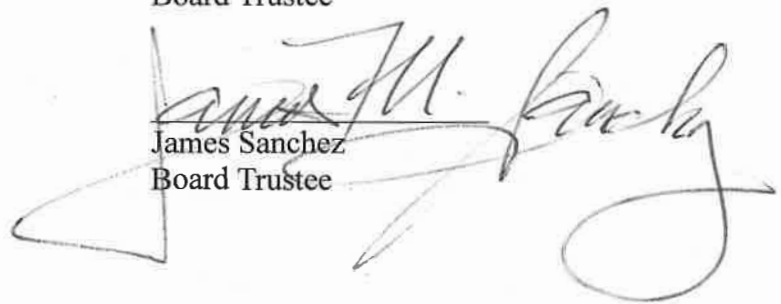

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