



**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **PARENTS, EDUCATORS AND ADVOCATES REJECT GOVERNOR'S EDUCATION CUTS AT EVENTS STATEWIDE GROUPS WARN OF DEVASTATING IMPACT OF CUTS**

A coalition of education groups has called on the state legislature to reject proposed cuts to school aid, saying the reduced funding will lead to a reduction in educational quality and massive layoffs. In 18 press conferences, town hall meetings and protests across New York State, parents, students, teachers, school board members, superintendents and other officials outlined the devastating effects of Gov. David Paterson's \$1.4 billion cut to education spending.

If the governor's cuts are allowed to stand, New York, in essence, would be nearly \$5 billion short of what the CFE decision called for only four years ago. Governor Paterson's budget proposes to cut between \$500 million and \$600 million in education aid from New York City schools. He is also threatening to stretch out CFE from seven to ten years.

"The proposed budget would cut \$11,677 from classrooms across this state," Said Zakiyah Ansari, of the Alliance for Quality Education. "Many of our children are already in schools with overcrowded classrooms, without textbooks, art programs or tutoring programs. We as parents will not sit back quietly and allow these cuts on top of the broken promise. We must provide the funding necessary for real and urgent school reform. Our children deserve the best education possible and the first step is funding our schools not cutting them."

Across the state, local school communities listed the programs they would have to cut, the schools they would have to close and personnel they would have to lay off. These will be the consequences, they said, of the state's continued failure to fund state foundation aid as prescribed in the Campaign for Fiscal Equity settlement. At nine events across New York City, parents, teachers, school officials and community members spoke out against the proposed cuts.

"We understand the tough economic realities we face but the state cannot balance its budget on the backs of public school children," said Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers. "Education must remain a top priority even during tough economic times and we need to protect our children's future and preserve the quality education every child deserves. There are a lot of great schools in New York doing a lot of great work that we can't let slip backwards now."

The court decision in the CFE case found New York State had chronically under funded schools. The state promised in 2007 to address the financial discrepancy and made good on that promise for two years. Since then, the state has fallen behind on its commitment to adequately fund schools, thereby threatening to stall progress made in classrooms around the state. The proposed cuts in 2010 school funding would be made on top of a broken promise to phase in the statewide settlement of CFE over a four-year period.

"The Campaign for Fiscal Equity urges the Governor, Senate and Assembly to renew their commitment to achieving the constitutional promise of a sound basic education and make progress toward achieving full and equitable funding of our schools. Cutting below funding levels from two years ago is a return to the bad old days before CFE. We cannot afford to go back in time. With mounting pressure to increase standards and effectiveness of both students and teachers so that our people, state and nation can compete in the global economy, New York state legislators must boldly reject this proposal and look to alternative measures to raise revenues." said Geri Palast, Executive Director of Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Last year, the governor and the legislature froze CFE funding and failed to provide the necessary resources for continued school improvement. They also stretched out CFE funding from four to seven years. This year, it is even worse. The governor is proposing to cut below the freeze.

"The governor's proposed budget cuts, if enacted, will have a tragic impact on the next generation on whom we're depending," Council of School Supervisors and Administrators President Ernest Logan said. "School districts have already seen slash-and-burn cuts to after-school programs, art and music curricula, and teaching and support staff; class size has increased. School leaders cannot help prepare our children for the future without the community's commitment to schools right now. I urge the governor and legislature to preserve school aid as it stands for the health of the state as we go forward in the 21st century. It must become our national slogan: Invest in our children today so we may all have hope in tomorrow."

"Governor Paterson's proposal would roll back the clock on educational equity and result in the loss of essential educational resources, including teachers, staff, and programs. New York children should not have to choose between an art teacher and an English teacher, or between a guidance counselor to help guide them along the path to college or a supportive and enriching after-school program that keeps them on the path to academic and life success. And yet, these are precisely the choices the governor is asking our

children to make. Education Voters urges the Senate and Assembly to protect the state's investment in public schools and look to enact cost-saving measures and progressive revenue enhancers," said Glynda C. Carr, Executive Director of Education Voters of New York.

"New York State and New York City cannot afford Governor Paterson's cuts to education. They will further and disproportionately disadvantage our most vulnerable children in our poorest neighborhoods, increase the already growing racial divide in the quality of education for all our children, and tear at the moral fabric of our society. What kind of society forces children to bear the negative consequence of adult actions? What kind of people break promises made to children? The proposed cuts not only hurt our children, they diminish our future as the just society we are called to be. These cuts are just too expensive. Let there be no cuts for our children," said Bishop Catherine S. Roskam.

"Overcrowding and school closings have a domino effect," said Tom Dromgoole, district representative for the United Federation of Teachers. "Each year schools are closed and programs are cut due to funding cuts and students are dispersed to other schools creating new overcrowded schools. It's a chess game and our students are the losers."

Throughout the day protests were held Murry Bergtraum High School and MS 54 Booker T. Washington School in Manhattan, PS 11 in the Bronx, IS 318 Eugenio Maria De Hostos, PS 13 Roberto Clemente and IS 171 Abraham Lincoln in Brooklyn, IS 125 Thomas J McCann and the offices of Make the Road NY in Queens and at PS 45 on Staten Island.

"At PS 13 we already have an overburdened school that takes many of the kids in East NY," said Domitila Garcia, a PS 13 parent and member of NY Communities for Change. "We have very high concentrations of English Language Learners. If the proposed budget cuts continue, I worry that many of the important services in our school will be lost. I don't know if we will have the capacity to serve all of the ELL students in our school if these cuts happen. We need to stop these budget cuts and protect our children from losing any of the services that our school offers."

Speaking at a press conference in the Bronx, Lunorkys Veras, Parent Association President at PS 11 said, "I stand here on behalf of our Highbridge Parent Association Presidents to say: Stop cutting our children's future," "In communities like Highbridge, located in one of the poorest districts in the country, a public education is the only path to success. Cutting funding will remove support for English Language Learners, make for larger classes, and cut after school support." "Give our children the chance they need to succeed with a quality education."

Maritza Perez, a Queens resident and member of Make the Road NY spoke at a press conference in Queens. "My family moved to NYC a few months ago and my two sons began studying at Newcomers High School this past September. This is a good school and they get counseling, tutoring and extra support classes in English and Math twice a

week and Saturday. This is exactly the kind of help that they need and exactly the kind of services that will be sacrificed if the Governor's proposed budget cut goes through."

"Churches United to Save and Heal (CUSH) is committed to join AQE and others to demand that the Governor and State legislature reject all proposed cuts to education. Our schools in NYC have been arbitrarily closed and parents have been left out of the decision making process. As a member of the faith community, we are extremely concerned about the education of our children and encourage the Governor, Assembly and Senate to "Keep the Promise", said Bishop Orlando Findlayter, Chairman, Churches United to Save and Heal a multi-denominational coalition of 140 congregations from Brooklyn.

"If the governor's proposed cuts are not reversed important educational programs our children depend on to meet the challenges of the 21st Century will be under funded and/or eliminated. Our children depend on this funding for smaller classrooms, middle grade improvement, after school programs, and English Language Learner programs. There are over one million students in New York City who attend public schools. Every cut affects every child. All students deserve the kind of quality education to prepare them to graduate high school and go to college or careers. Let's not cut our students short. Our legislators must raise revenue to ensure that the \$1.4 billion education funding cut to NYC children can be stopped!" Ronnette Summers, Coalition for Educational Justice

At each event, hundreds of pencils were broken to symbolize the state's breaking of the CFE promise and the promise to deliver a quality education to every child.