

Edmeston, like all rural districts in central New York, is very dependent on state aid. 76% of our school's revenue comes from state aid. With the recent cuts in state aid over the past 3 years, we will struggle to maintain a good educational program for our students unless the state aid formula is changed. We are a high needs rural district, and we need aid to have good programs for our students. You as parents and community members can help. Click on the link below to find contact information and a sample letter to send to our NYS legislators. Our legislators can fix this problem. We can encourage them to do so:

Contact information for our NYS Legislators

Senator Jim Seward
Albany Office
172 State Street Room 430, Capital
Albany, NY 12247
United States
Phone: (518) 455-3131

District Office
41 So. Main Street
Oneonta, NY 13820
United States
Phone: (607) 432-5524

Assemblyman Bill Magee
District Office
214 Farrier Avenue
Oneida NY 13421
315-361-4125

Oneonta Phone
607-432-1484

Albany Office
LOB 828
Albany NY 12248
518-455-4807

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Dear "Legislator":

Over the past three years New York's schools have experienced unprecedented cuts in state aid coupled with an ever-expanding list of unfunded policy mandates. In response to the fiscal crisis, schools have reduced their workforce by eliminating administrators, teachers, and staff, depleted their reserve funds, and cut student programs to balance their budgets. As educators, we believe everyone must do their part to help in times of need, but sadly the brunt of state aid cuts has been disproportionately felt by New York State's poor and rural school districts.

The inequitable state aid formula unfairly targets those schools that are the least able to weather the storm. Low-wealth schools continue to endure catastrophic staff and program reductions while still trying to provide a basic education to every single student that walks through our doors. As wealthier school districts worry about which enrichment or Advance Placement programs they may have to reduce, low-wealth schools worry about providing students with remediation to close achievement gaps. As evidenced by data from the Statewide School Finance Consortium, low-wealth schools have a significantly higher percentage of students at risk. Shouldn't students with the greatest needs, have the same opportunities as other more fortunate students? If your answer is yes, changes to the fifty page state aid formula must be made to help provide a sound education to all students no matter where they may reside.

The inequities within the state aid formula are magnified by the "shares agreement" of 1988. The "shares agreement" causes poor schools to be treated the same as wealthy schools even though poor schools have greater needs and less local wealth. The wealth of each school is measured through the Combined Wealth Ratio (CWR) which takes into account the property and income wealth of the communities and residents that make up the school district. Schools below the average CWR of 1.0 are considered less wealthy while those above 1.0 are considered wealthier. State aid cuts have had a greater impact on low-wealth districts because cuts are a significantly larger percentage of their budget. The problem is magnified when state aid cuts are compared as a percentage of tax levy. Low-wealth schools cannot recover reductions in state aid through tax increases because by definition, they do not have the property and/or income wealth to do so.

Other areas within the state aid formula also create inequities in school funding. The floor of the Income Wealth Index is set at .65 CWR even though close to 345 school districts were below this level last year. The Free and Reduced Lunch Program, which is also an indicator of students at risk, is muted in the formula. The most current poverty and wealth distribution indices are also negated from the state aid formula. These deficiencies shortchange the poorest of our schools. For the 2011-12 school year, state aid has been sent to the wealthiest school districts through High Tax Aid and Gap Elimination

Adjustment Aid Restoration totaling more than \$49,000,000. These provide further evidence that our poor and rural school districts continue to be harmed by an unjust funding formula.

Our Governor and other politicians continue to frame the issue of school funding by stating schools can continue to use reserves and cut programs without impacting the education of our children. For New York State's wealthy districts, they may be right. Dr. Rick Timbs from the Statewide School Finance Consortium warns us that at least 100 school districts will enter structural debt within the next 12 to 18 months if nothing changes. Our poor and rural schools will be the first affected unless our representatives take action to end the injustice of our current funding formula. Please stand united with your constituents by crossing party lines to insist on an equitable and predictable state aid formula.

All children deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of where they live in our amazing state. Can we count on you to help make equitable school funding a reality for our students? Vote no on any legislation or budget proposal that fails to address inequitable school funding.

Sincerely,