

ADVOCACY ALERT



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URGENT

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Proposed Mid-Year Aid Cuts

The mission of the New York State PTA, with a membership of nearly 356,000 volunteers, is to advocate for the education and well being of every child. Legislative Directives, adopted by the NYS PTA Board of Managers on November 12, 2008, target advocacy efforts that support this mission and build on past actions as educational and social conditions change and new issues emerge.

Only into the second year of its phase-in, the foundation aid formula that promised to bridge the achievement gap between low and high wealth school districts, is now at risk. As New York State legislators prepare to respond to the Governor's call to reduce public school funding for the 2008-09 school year by \$836 million, New York State PTA urges legislators to consider the following principles as they approach the daunting task of responding to immediate and longer term fiscal challenges.

- Support education finance reform initiatives of the past two years to provide equitable funding for all children in New York State
- Oppose imposition of artificial tax caps on public school districts that disregard uncontrollable school cost drivers, create greater educational inequities, and undermine the long held principle of local control
- Identify the major uncontrollable school cost drivers and provide public schools with relief from these costs or the tools to bring such cost drivers under better control
- Oppose the diversion of increasingly scarce public funds from public schools for vouchers and tuition tax credits
- Urge that the federal government honor its commitments to public education through full funding for IDEA and NCLB and all other federal laws affecting the education of children and youth in New York State
- Support parent and family involvement partnerships in consideration of state education decisions

Our children pass through our public schools only once. While we believe that no one action created the economic challenges we now face, we are certain that only a collaborative effort which involves policymakers, professionals and parents can successfully respond to these challenges. It is imperative that we protect our children's future by preserving our investment in their present.