



# COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

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Nilsa Orama  
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February 18, 2020

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

## **Re: Request for the full funding of \$3.8 billion in Foundation Aid statewide**

Dear Governor Cuomo:

In March 2019, Manhattan Community Board 11 wrote a letter urging that you release the full funding in Foundation Aid to schools throughout New York State. The funding has not since been released; thus, our request remains unchanged. Community Board 11 strongly supports the full funding of \$3.8 billion in Foundation Aid statewide—including the \$1.1 billion owed to New York City -- and calls on your office to use the Foundation Aid formula for school financing moving forward.<sup>1</sup>

The landmark Campaign for Fiscal Equity case exposed inequities in New York State's school funding system when, in 2006, New York's highest court ruled that NYS was violating students' constitutional right to a "sound, basic education" by underfunding public schools. The Foundation Aid formula, subsequently implemented in 2007, would achieve greater equity in school financing by accounting for the cost of education in successful schools, the level of student needs in a district, the school district's ability to raise local revenue and contribute toward the cost, and regional cost differences around the state. Moreover, the formula was designed to increase transparency and predictability, as well as reduce educational inequality and political manipulation.

Since 2011, the Foundation Aid formula has not been used by the state to fund schools. As a result, more than a decade after the Campaign for Fiscal Equity ruling, inequity in school financing persists and our children continue to be denied the resources that would equalize public schools across New York City and New York State. According to the Alliance for Quality Education, schools are owed nearly \$4 billion in Foundation Aid -- 67% of which is owed to school districts where more than half the students are Black and Brown.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These figures were obtained from AQE, citing numbers from the electronic backup files of the November, 2019 release of the School aid runs, published by the NY State Education Department; see also <https://www.ageny.org/foundation-aid-owed-by-district/>.

<sup>2</sup> Foundation Aid in Name Only: New York State Denying the Full Worth of Black and Brown Students, published by AQE on October 2019, [http://www.ageny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FoundationAidNameOnly\\_final.pdf](http://www.ageny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FoundationAidNameOnly_final.pdf)

Approximately a third of NYC Department of Education's budget is funded through New York State.<sup>3</sup> New York City uses its own formula, known as Fair Student Funding, to serve as the main source of funding for city schools.<sup>4</sup> Without adequate funding from the state, NYC is unable to fund schools fully through the formula. If NYS released the \$1.1 billion in Foundation Aid owed to New York City, DOE would be able to ensure that all public schools receive 100% Fair Student Funding.

Our children deserve a true commitment to fully fund Foundation Aid so that their schools can provide them the quality education and resources they not only deserve, but also require in order to truly learn and flourish.

We look forward to seeing this come to fruition in the near future.

Sincerely,



Nilsa Orama  
Chair  
Community Board 11

cc: Hon. Jose M. Serrano, New York State Senate (via email)  
Hon. Brian Benjamin, New York State Senate (via email)  
Hon. Robert Rodriguez, New York State Assembly (via email)  
Hon. Inez Dickens, New York State Assembly (via email)  
Hon. Bill Perkins, New York City Council (via email)  
Hon. Diana Ayala, New York City Council (via email)  
Hon. Keith Powers, New York City Council (via email)  
Hon. Ben Kallos, New York City Council (via email)  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President (via email)  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, U.S House of Representatives (via email)  
Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney US House of Representatives (via email)  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, New York City Public Advocate (via email)  
Hon. Corey Johnson, Speaker, New York City Council (via email)  
Hon. Scott Stringer, New York City Comptroller (via email)  
Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul (via email)  
Hon. Michael Benedetto, Chair, Committee on Education, New York State Assembly (via email)  
Hon. Shelley B. Mayer, Chair, Committee on Education, New York State Senate (via email)  
David Giordano, Community Board 11  
Denilyn Arciaga, Community Board 11

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<sup>3</sup> Foundation Aid in Name Only, page 7

<sup>4</sup> Department of Education <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/funding/funding-our-schools>