

Sachem Central School District

Board of Education



Board of Education

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#WeAreSachem

Dear Governor Hochul,

The Board of Education of the Sachem Central School District, located at Lake Ronkonkoma, joins countless other Suffolk County districts to ask that the Executive Budget be reconsidered and revised to fully fund our educational programs. In essence, restore the "Hold Harmless" methodology so that a proper level of funding is allocated to the districts that received this aid formulation last year. Restoring this funding is crucial to ensure the proper functioning and quality of education for the children. These proposed cuts will significantly impact the resources available to schools thereby hindering their ability to provide a well-rounded and effective learning experience for students. The decision to cut school aid must inevitably lead to a reduction of resources for essential educational programs, mental health supports and extracurricular activities. The proposed reductions will have a very direct negative impact on the educational experience for the children. Without this necessary aid, schools will be forced to excess teachers and staff, thus further exacerbating the challenges faced by the education system. Moreover, reduced aid limits the district's ability to update and maintain educational facilities, ensure the safest surroundings and provide an environment conducive to learning for all students. Adequate school aid is also essential for investing in modern educational technologies and resources, preparing students for the demands of the 21st century. Lastly, if these proposed cuts are not restored schools, across Long Island, will be forced to raise class sizes. It is self-evident that this inevitable change will be a direct result of reduced funding and have the most significant negative impact on the quality of education the students receive.

The proposed cuts to school aid will have a disproportionate affect on low-income families on exasperating educational inequalities. By restoring the funding as requested, you can contribute to narrowing this inequitable gap and promote equal opportunities for all students.

It is also noteworthy to address another but contributing factor to the devastating affect the proposed reductions will have on the educational system. As we worked through the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, school districts received federal and state dollars in the form of Grants. There is no question that the funds were certainly needed to address items like learning loss, remote learning, mental and physical illness, absenteeism, etc. However, despite there still being a need to address the mental health and learning loss, these Grant funds have been exhausted. Therefore, to continue providing the needed remedial services to help our kids "catch-up" we will need to fund the services directly. Accordingly, these proposed cuts would represent another blow to an already struggling educational system. The mental health and learning loss issues these grants helped us navigate have not left us. Students are without a doubt, still struggling due to the recent pandemic. To cut programs that are helping them through these difficult times would be devastating in both the long and immediate term.

We close this letter as we began it, by asking that you restore "Hold Harmless" and fully fund all of our schools at the levels necessary to maintain the programs we currently have in place and to support our nation's most precious commodity, our children.

Sincerely,

Rob Scavo
President

On behalf of the entire Sachem Board of Education

www.sachem.edu

Cc: Senator Alexis Weik
Assemblyman Doug Smith