



A Call to Action from the Board of Education President and the Superintendent of Schools

April 22, 2020

Dear Irvington School Community:

For the past month, the Irvington Union Free School District and school districts across New York have worked 24/7 to provide educational opportunities, food services, and day care services to children of essential workers, during an unprecedented public health crisis. New York is the epicenter of this pandemic, and our state costs of response are significantly above those of any other state. We are faced with ongoing challenges for school funding now and for several years into the future as well. School leaders are extremely concerned about the future impact on public education in New York resulting from the fiscal catastrophe this crisis is creating for the overall state budget.

Federal legislation enacting the CARES Act has, thus far, enabled New York to pass a budget which essentially freezes its support for public schools for 2020-21. But costs to school districts have not been frozen, and our schools will incur extraordinary costs as we help students recover from the disruptions in learning they are now experiencing. Strains that families are enduring now will also increase the need for student mental health services, once regular classes resume. A freeze in state funding will fall hardest upon New York's poorest districts and their students – districts with the least capacity to raise local funding. In Irvington, we risk negative impact from significant mid-year school aid cuts that have already been forecast by Governor Cuomo. Such funding reductions will substantially restrict IUFSD's ability to support our students.

New York State urgently needs a minimum federal infusion of aid of \$10-15 billion dollars of support to deal with the pandemic. Without this, the State Budget Director will likely have to make cuts to school aid as early as May 1st. Further cuts to school aid, once school budgets are finalized, will be educationally devastating for students.

Currently negotiations are underway in Congress on a 4th COVID-19 relief package. We applaud these efforts and urge a significant influx of federal aid to the New York State government and school districts. At a minimum, Congress should appropriate \$1 billion directly to New York State public schools to compensate for lost aid from the state.

We greatly appreciate your support and ask that you sign this letter to our congressional representatives:

<https://www.votervoice.net/mobile/WPSBA/Campaigns/73177/Respond>

Thank you,

Mr. Brian Friedman
Board of Education President

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