



TESTIMONY OF JAKE ADLER, DIRECTOR OF TEACH NYS, TO JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Good evening Chair Young, Chair Weinstein, Chair Nolan, Chair Marcelino, and members of the Finance, Ways and Means, and Education Committees. Thank you for holding this important hearing, and for spending today listening to the many diverse vantage points of educators, advocates, administrators and parents from across the state. Thank you for hearing us all - public and nonpublic.

Let me say something that may come as a surprise to you:

I am a nonpublic school parent and advocate. I represent nonpublic school parents, educators and administrators - taxpayers all. We know the importance of *public schools* for the welfare of our state. I know how hard it is for public school teachers and faculty. I know how hard parents in all schools work to make sure their kids get the best shot possible in life. It is a supreme duty and New York's teachers carry out that duty sublimely.

The time for us versus them is over. We are all New Yorkers and we all want the same thing. It is because we all want the same thing for our kids that I am here today.

Our nonpublic schools educate over 400,000 students in this state, and 15% of the students in New York are educated in nonpublic schools.

We have heard important testimony for the entire day, most of which centers around the budgetary crisis that we now face. It is unconscionable to imagine cuts to our education system, it would reflect shortsighted economic vision.

In an economic study conducted by John Dunham and Associates in 2015 and again at the end of 2017, it was revealed that nonpublic schools save New York State **\$11 billion** dollars annually.

Nonpublic schools account for more than **70,000** direct jobs, including teachers, administrators and other staff. Additionally, over **15,000** people in New York have jobs that depend on providing private schools or their employees with suppliers or services. Our schools generate **\$537 million** in state and local revenues through such sources as employment taxes, social security taxes, excise taxes, and sales taxes.

Nonpublic schools are a vital part of the educational infrastructure in New York an infrastructure that we must continue to invest in.



I know what some will ask how can we afford it this budget year, or why should we give to nonpublic schools when our own public schools are lacking. I am here to implore you - do not advance an us versus them agenda with education funding. We should not engage in withholding legitimate and needed aid for 15% of the population because 85% does not have enough. We should not penalize a population that bears \$11 billion dollars on its shoulders because doing so will weaken that system and a weakened nonpublic school system will eventually cost all children. A strong nonpublic system strengthens the public school system.

We are encouraged by the Governor's inclusion of the STEM reimbursement program that was passed in last year's budget. I believe this program holds the single greatest potential for both helping sustain the nonpublic sector as well as ensuring that students continue to receive the best possible education. There is a clear link between a solid foundation in science and math instruction, which this program will help provide, and better paying jobs. We urge the legislature to look into the nonpublic spending and to increase the positive trajectory that we have seen in the last few years.

I believe that we can find a balance both politically and fiscally - which allows for a robust public-school system and allows for relief to nonpublic school parents. I believe we can find a solution that acknowledges the 11 billion dollar benefit that New York receives because of the nonpublic school parents of this state.