



THE 4201 SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Testimony Presented to
Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature
Hearing on FY 2019-2020 Executive Budget

February 6, 2019

Albany, New York

Cleary School for the Deaf (Nesconset)
Henry Viscardi School (Albertson)
Lavelle School for the Blind (Bronx)
Lexington School for the Deaf (Queens)
New York Institute for Special
Education (Bronx)

New York School for the Deaf (White Plains)
Rochester School for the Deaf (Rochester)
St. Francis de Sales School for the Deaf (Brooklyn)
St. Joseph's School for the Deaf (Bronx)
St. Mary's School for the Deaf (Buffalo)

The 4201 Schools Association represents ten (10) not-for-profit state-supported schools serving students who are deaf, blind and severely physically disabled throughout New York State. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the 2019-20 Executive Budget as it relates to issues impacting our students.

The 4201 Schools Association would like to thank the Legislature for your longstanding support of our students. We appreciate the \$2.3 million increase in support of our students provided last year. This represents the 4th year of increases the past eight (8) years. In addition, we are pleased that the 2019-20 Executive Budget continues each of the previous investments. The continuation of the increases by the Executive enables our schools to invest in our teachers and professional staff with confidence. Combined, these investments have increased our base funding of \$9.2 million. The state’s investment in our schools reflects 2008-09 levels, when our funding was cut in deficit reduction measures. However, the percentage growth for 4201 schools has not kept up with the other special education sector (853s/Special Acts), nor growth to foundation aid annually.

GROWTH ON 10 MONTH PROGRAMS					
YEARS	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
4201 Schools	\$0/0%	\$2.3M or 2.4%	\$2.3M or 2.34%	\$2.3M or \$2.29%	\$2.3M or 2.24%
Tuition Rate Methodology Growth	3.8%	4%	4%	4%	3.4%

We recognize that our funding method is different than those subject to the tuition rate methodology and do not expect exact parity. We hope, however, that at minimum we can keep the annual growth to 2.4%, which this year would be a total dollar investment of \$2,524,800 for the 2019-20 school year.

Short-Term & Long-Term Capital Needs

While we are extremely grateful for the state’s investments in our schools, the accumulated effect of level finding has hampered our ability to maintain our facilities and grounds

appropriately. Our schools were established decades ago in communities around the State by philanthropic organizations, and most of our school buildings are now older (For example, the New York School for the Deaf was founded in 1817, the New York Institute for Special Education in 1831, and the Lexington School for the Deaf in 1864). Our facilities are aging and the needs of our students are changing.

We are grateful that the Executive Budget recognizes this challenge and has appropriated \$30 million in support of our health and safety capital needs. The health and safety of our students and staff is critical and this investment will assist us in making sure we provide a healthy learning environment.

We remain grateful to the Legislature for including our schools in the Smart Schools Bond Act of 2014 (Total of \$5 million to support 853s, Special Acts and 4201 schools). Each of our schools has worked to apply for and receive support under this important program. However, we continue to request the opportunity to engage existing *Dormitory Authority* authorization for another series of long-term capital projects. We request that the bonding cap be raised to \$100 million to allow for another round of DASNY projects. If authorized this year, our schools could begin the laborious process of developing construction plans and seek approval by NYS Education Department and the Division of the Budget for projects.

The 4201 schools are proud to be a partner with New York State in ensuring high quality educational opportunity to students with low incidence disabilities. We take very seriously our responsibility to provide each of our students with a safe and healthy environment by which to grow and succeed. We appreciate the support provided that makes our schools a reality to the students we serve across the state. Thank you.

Submitted by,

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