



## THE 4201 SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Testimony Presented to  
Fiscal Committees of the New York State Legislature  
Hearing on the FY 2022-2023 Executive Budget

January 26, 2022

Albany, New York

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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 2022-2023 Executive Budget as it relates to our students and schools.

The 4201 Schools Association would first like to thank the Legislature and the Executive for your longstanding support of our students and schools. This has been vital during the COVID-19 emergency, as our schools work to maintain our students' access to education and related services. This work continues every day, even as the measures our schools have taken to ensure the safety of students and staff differ a bit from other schools.

For the FY 2022-2023 State Budget, we ask your support for the following priorities:

**State Support** - The Executive Budget proposes level funding in FY2022-2023, which we support and appreciate.

*However, state support for the 4201 Schools has only recently been restored to the pre-deficit reduction levels of 2008-2009. **The 4201 Schools Association requests funding growth commensurate with the increases in Foundation Aid and for other special education sector schools (853s/Special Acts). Specifically, we seek a \$5.8 million increase (4%).***

- The Executive Budget proposal appropriates \$93.7 million, of which up to \$84.7 million is available to school districts for the tuition costs of students attending a 4201 school, and \$9 million for allowable purposes, such as the education of deaf children under the age of 3 years and residential facilities. An additional \$12.2 million is available for general support of the schools for the 2022-2023 school year.
- The Executive Budget also re-appropriates the \$30 million capital grant program appropriated for a second round of health and safety projects.

**Fiscal Reserve Fund** - The 4201 Schools Association requests that the Legislature afford our schools authority to establish fiscal reserve funds, similar to that approved in 2021 for 853 schools and Special Act school districts. Use of these funds would not affect the reconciliation process, which could be applied to expenses above the COA.

**Workforce Investment** – The Association and its 10 member schools appreciate the Legislature’s support of our students, programs and families we serve.

Salaries for our specially qualified staff consistently lag behind those in public schools. Despite the recommendations contained in the proposed Executive Budget – a number of our schools have unmet needs that are not addressed under the current proposal. The 4201 Schools Association requests a new initiative to increase salaries for our teachers and professional staff. ***We request a \$30 million program over three years to incrementally increase salaries to better align with public school districts.***

**Transportation** – We also take this opportunity to point out the persistent problems our New York City schools have experienced at the start of each of the last two school years, when they were informed that the City Department of Education (DOE) would not provide bus transportation until the start of the DOE school year (September 13). Several of our schools had earlier school year start dates, of which DOE officials were informed many weeks before.

We thank those lawmakers who contacted DOE directly and sought media coverage of the issue, and ask your help again to ensure that there is not a third year of these problems.

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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 are truly grateful for the support provided that makes our schools a reality for the students we serve across New York.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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