



Huntington Union Free School District

"A Tradition of Excellence Since 1657"

James W. Polansky

Superintendent of Schools

January 29, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Re: Release School Aid Runs

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The release of the 2015-16 Executive Budget proposal on January 21 contained an array of initiatives and reforms. Unfortunately what it did not contain was a spending plan for school districts. Within the proposed legislation, the release of additional monies for school districts was tied to the passage of education policy reforms.

The proposed state budget would technically appropriate an increase of \$1.1 billion for School Aid. The budget does not include formulas to allocate that increase. Furthermore, no estimates of aid for individual districts have been provided.

Withholding proposed School Aid distribution from the executive budget makes it virtually impossible for our district to proceed with budget development and to comply with state laws. *I ask that projected School Aid distribution and corresponding distribution runs for individual school districts be released promptly.*

Districts rely on the initial School Aid runs to develop a budget for the coming year. In Huntington we have scheduled meetings in the next few weeks to continue the budget development process. We cannot proceed with any degree of accuracy, however, without an expected state aid distribution baseline, as we are left with little information to forecast revenues for the 2015-2016 year.

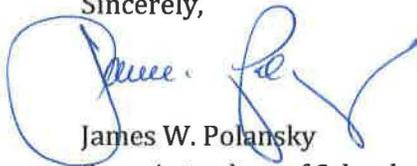
Media reports have indicated that runs may not be expected until April 1. This is not acceptable, as it would greatly hinder the timeline for budget construction. By compressing our timeline, it would all but exclude the public from critical school budgeting decisions.

Further, under the state's tax cap levy law, our school district must submit projected levy increases for 2015-16 to the State Comptroller, Department of Taxation & Finance, and the State Education Department by March 1. Without projected state aid, this is operationally unworkable. We must know our projected School Aid distribution in order to comply with the tax cap mandate.

As drafted in the executive budget proposal, if the reforms are not enacted, no district would be allowed *any* increase in aid over current year levels. With that figure as our only state aid assurance, our options are 1) steep cuts within a projected budget to ensure expenditures will meet our only known level of revenue, or 2) increasing the local tax levy to compensate for possible lost state aid. Neither of these options is acceptable or fair to our community.

I therefore implore you to submit a proposal to allocate the planned \$1.1 billion increase in School Aid and release the corresponding projected 2015-16 state aid distribution for our school district immediately. A failure to do so threatens to disrupt government function in our state and our school district, as well as cause unnecessary distress in our community.

Sincerely,



James W. Polansky
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Senator Carl Marcellino
Assemblyman Chad Lupinacci
Assemblyman Andrew Raia