

March X, 2024

Name

Title

Address

Dear _____,

We write to you on behalf of the Beacon City School District (BCSD), which faces some of the most drastic cuts in proposed Foundation Aid. As you negotiate the State budget with Governor Hochul, we want to make sure you know what's at stake.

The Governor's budget reverses all recent progress to fully funding Foundation Aid. Under the existing Foundation Aid formula, we would receive an increase of about \$639,000 (+3%). **But Gov. Hochul's proposal leaves us with a decrease of \$1,268,492 (-6%) in Foundation Aid.**

This unexpected change in Foundation Aid — made possible by the Governor's proposal to end the "hold harmless" provision that ensures each district receives at least the same amount as it did in the previous year — is the symptom of a broken system.

Such a significant loss of funding would require deep cuts to our budget. **In our district, we may need to make cuts to our PreK program, extracurriculars and clubs, and mental health supports.** Each of these cuts represents a lost opportunity for students. In the same year that we're losing Federal Covid funding and dealing with a record-high increase in education costs, these Foundation Aid cuts turn a budgetary hardship into a crisis.

As Board Members, we're the fiduciary stewards of our school district. We review the budget and the plan for each department, well in advance of presenting it to voters for approval in May. That same timely, consistent stewardship should apply at the State level. The proposed Foundation Aid cuts, followed by weeks of political negotiation, leave districts like ours scrambling to plan around worst cases, with many assurances — but no guarantees — that funding will be restored.

We ask that you restore Foundation Aid to expected levels based on the existing formula and keep the "hold harmless" provision to ensure school districts don't have to reduce programs year-to-year. In the longer term, the State should update the aid formula to make it more equitable and predictable.

Thank you for your continued support of our community and for considering our concerns. If you require additional information, please call BCSD Superintendent Matthew Landahl at 845-838-6900.

Sincerely,

Beacon Board of Education