



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 many new initiatives and reforms. The one thing 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. But the budget does not include formulas to allocate that increase and no estimates of aid for individual districts have been provided.

Without offering commentary on any of the proposed policy reforms or the contingency of funding, I offer this simple observation as a school superintendent: withholding proposed School Aid distribution from the executive budget makes it virtually impossible for our district to proceed with our own budget development and to comply with state laws. **A projected School Aid distribution and corresponding distribution runs for individual school districts must be released immediately.**

The Putnam Valley Central School District schools rely on the initial School Aid distribution – called “runs” – to execute district budget development for the coming year. We have scheduled meetings in the next few weeks to continue this process. This process cannot proceed, however, without an expected state aid distribution baseline, as we are left without enough information to predict revenue for the upcoming year. Media reports have indicated that there may not be expected runs until April 1. This is not acceptable. This would greatly hinder the timeline for school budget development. 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. I therefore must 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. This is an imperative that threatens to disrupt government function in our state and our school district as well as cause unnecessary distress in our community, and it cannot be continued.

Sincerely:

Dr. Frances Wills
Superintendent of Schools

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