



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Hon. Stephanie A. Miner, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: February 16, 2016

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**MINER, AQE REVEAL: SYRACUSE CITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT FACES \$11,249 FUNDING
GAP PER STUDENT COMPARED WITH 100
WEALTHIEST SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN NYS**

*SCSD Is Owed \$63 Million in Unpaid Funds Resulting from Campaign
for Fiscal Equity Lawsuit*

*Leaders Call For New Revenues, Including a Millionaire's Tax, to
Support Increased Funding for Education*

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Mayor Stephanie A. Miner and Billy Easton, Executive Director of the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE) announced findings from a report detailing the funding gap faced by the Syracuse City School District (SCSD) and other high needs districts compared to the 100 wealthiest school districts in the state. The report, written by AQE, shows SCSD students receive \$11,249 less funding per pupil than their counterparts in the wealthiest 100 districts in New York State.

“The children of the Syracuse City School District are some of the most disadvantaged students in the nation: one out of every two children in the City of Syracuse will be born into poverty. We have made strides to address this, including the implementation of a universal free lunch program, but it is time the State of New York did its part and funded our schools at the levels they require,” said **Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner**. “The children of the Syracuse City School District are New Yorkers and we all have a responsibility to support their education. I urge the State to take meaningful action and fully fund our schools.”

"The school funding gap between Syracuse and New York State's wealthy schools is a mind boggling \$11,249 per student. That buys a lot of smaller classes, arts and music, school technology and extracurricular activities. The need in Syracuse is truly heart wrenching and

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shows why New Yorkers have an appetite to raise taxes on millionaires and billionaires as the State Assembly has proposed. The state budget must increase school funding by at least \$2.4 billion and must prioritize funding for our neediest students like the children of Syracuse," said **Billy Easton**, Executive Director of the Alliance for Quality Education.

AQE will release its full report entitled "No Appetite to Educate: Stacking the Deck Against Children In Poverty" on Wednesday, February 17. The report will outline the growth of the funding gap since the elimination of the state's commitment to the Foundation Aid formula.

Superintendent Sharon L. Contreras, Ph.D. said: "The Syracuse Board of Education and I remain deeply committed to providing all children with equal access and opportunity to a well-rounded education, which is at the core of our mission in the Syracuse City School District. This is only possible when we have equitable funding and a fair funding formula. Our local elected officials have been hugely supportive of the district year after year, but we need Albany as a whole to come together and make the necessary changes to level the playing field for all children. We stand prepared to do everything that we can to make this happen."

Kevin Ahern, President of the Syracuse Teachers Association said: "New York State has been shortchanging Syracuse's students for decades. Rather than focusing on ill-conceived receivership schemes, the state must address the gross inequity of a funding formula that continues to provide the fewest resources to our most vulnerable students. Fully funding our schools would provide our students with smaller class sizes, more individualized support, and increased enrichment opportunities. The state must provide our kids with the same learning opportunities their peers in wealthier communities receive every day."

"We need smaller class sizes. My granddaughter has 28 children in her first grade class," said **Sonia Montanez** whose granddaughter attends Roberts Elementary School. "The teacher is a good teacher, but there are too many children. Our children need smaller class sizes so they can get the personal attention they deserve and need."

Currently, the New York State Assembly has introduced a proposal for a tax on the highest earners in New York State. Funding from that tax could be used to invest in schools and close the funding gap.

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“Giving our kids a quality education isn’t just a good idea, it’s the law,” said Assembly member **Pamela Hunter**. “Every year we fail to fully fund our schools, we rob the next generation of the tools they will need to build tomorrow’s economy and we prevent many from escaping a life of poverty. I’m calling on the Governor and state Senate to finally stand up for our schools.”

Assembly member **William B. Magnarelli** "I have consistently fought for more funding for our Syracuse schools which is why I have joined dozens of Assembly members in calling for a \$2.4 billion school aid increase which prioritizes foundation aid for high need schools like Syracuse.”

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