

For Immediate Release:
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EDUCATORS STOOD UP FOR STUDENTS AT EDUCATION HEARING

Cleary School
for the Deaf

Henry Viscardi
School

Lavelle School
for the Blind

Lexington School
for the Deaf

Mill Neck Manor School
for the Deaf

The New York Institute
for Special Education

New York School
for the Deaf

Rochester School
for the Deaf

St. Francis de Sales
School for the Deaf

St. Joseph's School
for the Deaf

St. Mary's School
for the Deaf

*Meeting the
educational needs
of New York's
blind, deaf and
physically disabled
children.*

Albany – Educators representing 11 state-supported schools serving deaf, blind and severely physically disabled students testified before a joint legislative committee charged with reviewing Gov. Cuomo’s proposed funding and recommending state school aid for elementary and secondary education.

Bernadette Kappen, Ph.D., superintendent of the New York Institute for Special Education in the Bronx and chairwoman of the 4201 Schools Association, and Tim Kelly, superintendent of St. Mary’s School for the Deaf in Buffalo and association vice-chair, urged committee members to consider special-needs students as they move toward passage of the 2014-15 budget.

View the full testimony [here](#).

Gov. Cuomo’s proposed school aid budget is \$21.9 billion, an increase of 3.8 percent – or \$807 million – over this year’s enacted budget. It includes The Smart Schools Bond Act, which would allocate \$2 billion for enhanced education technology in public school districts across the state. Dr. Kappen will remind lawmakers of technology’s important role in education children with special needs.

“Smart boards, tablets and laptops make a difference for children attending 4201 schools, too,” she said. “However, at this time our 11 publicly supported schools are not eligible for the Smart Schools investment. Technology helps remove barriers while supporting children and young adults with low-incidence disabilities to achieve their full potential.”

Budget allocations to 4201 schools have been flat for the past four years, although operational expenses continue to rise. Since 2008, 4201 schools have maintained programs while reducing payroll nearly nine percent – or roughly \$7.3 million. Total enrollment has remained stable, but state funding has declined by \$5.4 million – or four percent – since the 2008-09 budget year.

Further, payments from the member-schools into the New York State Employees Retirement System have nearly doubled since 2007-2008, increasing from \$7 million to \$13.3 million in 2012-2013.

“It is our goal to provide every student that needs our services with the opportunity to succeed,” Dr. Kappen said. “However, we are not being provided with the same resources or support as the districts whose students we serve.”