

For Immediate Release:
March 3, 2014

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SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS, ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS
WILL ASK FOR EQUAL FUNDING IN 2015 STATE BUDGET

Advocates Seeking 4.8 Percent for 4201 Schools

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 will visit Albany today to ask lawmakers to treat the students equally and increase state funding by 4.8 percent – the same percentage increase Gov. Cuomo has recommended for public school districts in his proposed 2015-16 executive budget.

The 4201 schools serve students with “low-incidence” disabilities, including students who are blind, deaf and have serious physical challenges and complex health issues.

“Many of our students need specialized care and local public schools districts are unable to meet the needs of our children,” said Bernadette Kappen, Ph.D., association chairwoman and executive director of The New York Institute for Special Education. “Our schools have records of success educating our students and preparing them for life after their schooling is over.”

Member schools have not had a funding increase in six years. In the 2009-10 and 2010-11 fiscal years, the schools saw a 4-percent (\$5.4 million) decrease in state aid. Funding has not increased since.

In recent years member schools reduced costs and found efficiencies. Since 2008, for example, schools have maintained programs while reducing payroll nearly 11 percent (or approximately \$9 million). Last year, the schools produced 108 high school graduates.

A 4.8-percent increase – roughly \$6.35 million out of \$1.1 billion in proposed education aid – would allow member schools to maintain and enhance year-round programs, such as deaf infant, regional residential, 10-month education and summer sessions.

“The time is now for the state to restore funding to our schools so that we can continue to provide the level of education that best prepares our students to maximize independence and be productive members of their communities,” Kappen said