

**For Immediate Release:**

February 14, 2017

**ADVOCATES FOR BLIND, DEAF AND SEVERELY DISABLED STUDENTS  
SEEK FUNDING PARITY**

**4201  
Schools  
Association**

Cleary School  
for the Deaf

Henry Viscardi  
School

Lexington 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

Advocates for schools representing blind, deaf and severely physically disabled students will be in Albany today to testify before the Joint Legislative Committee focused on Elementary & Special Education.

Dr. Bernadette Kappen, chair of the [4201 Schools Association](#) and executive director of [The New York Institute for Special Education](#), will ask committee members to keep the current level of funding to schools, but also support increases for infrastructure needs.

“I would like to thank the Legislature for its longstanding support of our students,” Dr. Kappen said, adding that the schools have received funding on par with public schools for the past two fiscal years. “The state’s investment in our schools is now almost back to the 2008-09 levels, when our funding was cut as part as part of the state’s deficit reduction measures.”

The association is also asking for \$5 million to be dedicated to support critical capital needs that address health and safety issues for the schools. It’s also seeking to expand additional infrastructure improvements through State Dormitory Authority financing.

“Our schools were established decades ago in communities around the state as a result of the generosity of philanthropic citizens. However, today many of our school buildings are dated,” Dr. Kappen said. “For example, the [New York School for the Deaf](#) in White Plains is celebrating its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. And, it along with others are in need of short- and long-term capital support.”

Tim Kelly, association vice-chair and superintendent of [St. Mary’s School for the Deaf](#) in Buffalo, produced [this video](#) highlighting the school’s capital needs. Other association members are producing similar videos.



The association’s advocacy day is scheduled for March 1. Advocates come in all sizes and shapes, including this first grade student from the [St. Francis de Sales School for the Deaf](#) in Brooklyn who is featured in a [15 second video clip](#).

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*The 4201 Schools Association represents 9 private, state-supported schools that serve blind, deaf or severely physically disabled students. The “4201 schools” are so known because of the section of New York State Education Law (§4201) that grants their funding. Students in 4201 schools receive a quality education in a supportive and challenging setting from teachers and staff with specialized training and experience.*