



February 17, 2023

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor, New York State
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

The 4201 Schools Association represents all eleven (11) state-supported schools authorized by statute to provide education to deaf, blind, or severely physically disabled students. We partner with public school districts around the state to ensure that these children with “low-incidence disabilities” are afforded access to education in a specialized environment that addresses their academic and related service needs.

In 2015, the enacted budget provided the 4201 schools with the first increase after six (6) years of zero percent growth. This increase was distributed to the eleven schools based on an enrollment formula recommended by the New York State Education Department and approved by the Division of the Budget. The appropriation was included in our Certificate of Approvals for the 2015-16 school year. In the following year, this appropriation was included in the Executive Budget and growth was applied above in the enacted budget.

This practice continued until the recently issued 2024 Executive Budget. For the first time, the Executive Budget omits the investment made in the previously enacted budget, resulting in a \$2 million reduction in funding to the 4201 schools. This departure from precedence is concerning as these funds are now the only source of annual funding growth for our schools.

Our schools and students face the same challenges as others – mental health, pandemic learning loss, inflation, the Great Resignation, etc. – and we need the State’s ongoing support for children with low-incidence disabilities. We ask that while you are considering changes to your Executive Budget during the 30-day amendment process, you will restore the \$2 million appropriation for the 4201 schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Bernadette Kappen
Executive Director
New York Institute for Special Education
Co-Chair 4201 Schools Association

Timothy Kelly
Superintendent, St. Mary’s School for the Deaf
Co-Chair, 4201 Schools Association

Dr. Jacqueline Simms, Executive Director
Cleary School for the Deaf

Angelo Zegarelli, Head of School
Henry Viscardi School

Dr. Rebecca Renshaw, Executive Director
Lavelle School for the Blind

Russell West, Superintendent
Lexington School for the Deaf

Dr. Bradley Porche, Executive Director
Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf

Dr. Joseph Santini, Superintendent
New York School for the Deaf

Antony McLetchie, Superintendent
Rochester School for the Deaf

Dr. Jodi Falk, Executive Director
St. Francis de Sales School for the Deaf

Debra Arles, Executive Director
St. Joseph's School for the Deaf

c.c.: Sandra L. Beattie, Acting Budget Director

Kimberly Hill, Chief Disability Officer