



Building Futures ...since 1876

February 13, 2023

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

Dear Governor Hochul:

As Board President of Rochester School for the Deaf, a member of the 4201 Schools Association, we respectfully request your support for the eleven (11) schools authorized by statute to provide education to deaf, blind, and severely physically disabled children.

Rochester School for the Deaf serves over 120 students from 35 school districts spread out over a 22-countywide catchment area. Rochester School for the Deaf offers programming that serves a unique population from newborns through age 21 and their families. With the Deaf Infant Program, our staff helps families acclimate to what having a deaf child in their family means and how to best support them in the educational future. Through the K-12 program, we can offer a great education that is aligned with the NYS standards through direct communication between our staff, students, and their peers. Rochester School for the Deaf is also fortunate to be able to offer a residential program for students who either live quite a distance away or lack access to language in their homes.

As Board President, I and the other board members each have a fiduciary responsibility to our school. The practice of continuing the state's investment in growth allows us to make the necessary investments in our teachers and clinicians, knowing that these expenses will be supported year after year. We cannot appropriately budget and plan if our funding is at risk annually. We are concerned that the Executive Budget decision to discontinue the additional support provided in the 2022-23 enacted budget, will result in a \$2 million cut to our schools.

We hope that you will reconsider the reduction in funding and restore the \$2 million appropriation for the 4201 schools in the 30-day amendment process. Thank you for your consideration and we would welcome you or your team on our campus to meet our dedicated staff and talented students.

Sincerely,

Gerard G. Walter
RSD Board President