

Special ed students deserve less funding than public school students.

...said no one ever

Members of a coalition of 853 special education schools throughout the Capital Region reacted with frustration as an eleventh-hour NYS budget decision means they once again will receive proportionally less funding than public school districts.

 The CHARLTON School



The 518 853 Schools Coalition, representing more than 500 special education students in grades K-12 from throughout the region, learned on May 28 that while this year's state budget contains a 7% increase in Foundation Aid for public schools, methodology developed and approved by the NYS Department of Education and Division of Budget will provide these pandemic-hobbled critical schools with only a 4% increase for this fiscal year.

853 special education schools provide year-round services for youth unable to find success in their home districts. Students with serious emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges benefit from smaller class sizes, integrated educational, therapeutic, vocational, and supportive services, and a learning environment structured to give each student a greater chance at success.



"It's great to see public schools receive this funding increase. But our schools are left to wonder once again why the powers that be think our students should be satisfied with less support. Our schools served children and families every day throughout the pandemic, including delivering food to doorsteps of families missing the security of daily school lunches. We're used to doing more with less, but it's disappointing to see these students pushed aside again," said William T. Gettman, Jr., CEO of coalition member Northern Rivers Family of Services.



St. Colman's School

"Releasing news of our reimbursement rate increase after 99% of school district budgets have already passed, with only days left in the legislative session, just isn't fair. Why don't our leaders think special education students deserve the same things public school students do?" said Karen Carpenter-Palumbo, President and CEO of Vanderheyden.

VANDERHEYDEN

"Our children have experienced an intense period of COVID trauma coupled with a disrupted educational approach. We need equity in the funding for their services," said Frank Pindiak, Executive Director of St. Catherine's Center for Children.



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“Investments for our youth similar to public education creates a pathway to success as an adult,” said Richard Hucke, CEO of St. Anne Institute.

“Equity, fairness and free and appropriate educations are not negotiable for our students,” said David Wallace, Executive Director of the LaSalle School.

“Our schools and faculty have an incredible impact on student success and we require fair levels of funding,” said Heather Worthington, Principal at St. Coleman’s.

“Every student at every school deserves the same support. Excluding special education students is not right and not fair,” said Alex Capo, Executive Director of the Charlton School.

The coalition urges their supporters to contact their NYS Senators and Assembly members in the waning days of the session and advocate for parity for special education schools.

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