



December 8, 2017

Senator Michael Ranzenhofer
8203 Main Street, Suite 4
Williamsville, NY 14221

Senator Ranzenhofer:

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and John McNulty Thursday afternoon. I appreciate that the meeting gave me time to fully address my one issue. On the heels of the Gap Elimination Adjustment years, and with the Local Tax Cap imposing constraints on our school districts' ability to raise revenue, the member districts of the Erie County Association of School Boards must turn to New York State and push for higher levels of budgetary support. We are specifically asking that NY State make significant commitments of new funding annually until it becomes a **"Full Partner"** funding fifty percent of PK-12 Education costs statewide.

As noted in the materials I left with you, the highest share of total state funding that NY State historically provided was 48.2% in 2001-02. We have since drifted lower (44.2% of statewide PK-12 expenditures from state sources in 2015-16) shifting the burden for supporting PK-12 Education back onto local property tax payers. As noted in our conversation, over recent years it has been tough to serve as a local school board member—simultaneously facing criticism for the programs and staff that you cut under the GEA—while also being unable to satisfactorily explain to homeowners why their property tax continued to increase. Our member school districts need state aid to support at least half of the educational services for which New York State has constitutional responsibility. We are asking you, and your WNY Senate colleagues, to become vocal champions pushing New York State to become a "Full Partner" supporting half of the PK-12 costs statewide. As I noted in our meeting this will not be a one-year message for the **Erie County Association of School Boards**. We will be "banging this drum" until this goal is achieved. We believe this message is simple, concise, and will build momentum locally, and statewide. We intend to promote this message across the Western New York region and the balance of the state. We feel confident it will be picked up by educational advocates statewide. We encourage you and your local Senate colleagues to become "early adopters" and vocal champions on this issue within your conference.

I look forward to addressing any questions, or concerns you may have in relation to our Thursday conversation. We strongly believe our **"Full Partnership"** request is logical, essential and has the clarity that will make it politically popular in the near future. We remain optimistic you will champion NY State becoming a **"Full Partner"** funding PK-12 Education. We are convinced that a **"Full Partnership"** for funding NY State schools is in the interest of the constituents of Erie County that both you, and the **Erie County Association of School Boards** serve!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Bruce Fraser'.

Bruce Fraser, Ed. D.
Executive Director
Erie County Association of School Boards