

Date:

The Honorable _____

Address _____

Dear

On behalf of more than 340,000 New York State PTA members, I am writing to express concern about the potential impact of the 2010-11 Executive Budget on our education system. The proposed budget reflects a 2% reduction of all school spending statewide. Individual school districts would see a reduction of state aid averaging 5%. Universal Prekindergarten aids would be frozen for two years and full phase-in of the foundation formula would be extended to 2016-17. Under this plan, our schools will fall further and further behind.

Although the proposal would impose a greater percentage cut in state aid to high wealth/low need districts, the loss of actual dollars would still likely be greatest in low wealth/high need districts that are more dependent on state aid and serve our most vulnerable populations. Moreover, proposed reductions are too great to be absorbed in a single year without causing long term damage to educational program and staffing.

The Executive Budget saves an estimated \$13 million by modifying Early Intervention programs by requiring evidence based criteria to determine service eligibility, permitting paraprofessionals to provide certain services and increasing reimbursement from commercial insurers. More importantly, it introduces a sliding scale based on income that would, for the first time, charge parents between \$42 and \$540 for each child enrolled in the program

We acknowledge that you are approaching the 2010-11 budget year faced with unprecedented and continuing economic challenges. Recognizing this dire situation, school districts have demonstrated remarkable ingenuity and efforts to reduce spending, and are willing to continue to work with the state on this path.

But deep reductions to our education system cannot be sustained. New York State's economic future depends on protecting the investment the state has made in providing the learning opportunities that today's youth will need to succeed in tomorrow's world. Each child passes through the education process once. Where academic opportunity is diminished or denied, the impact will be felt forever.

Sincerely,

Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Address _____
