

February 11, 2009
Honorable Charles Schumer
U.S. Senate
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3201

Dear Senator Schumer:

School administrators and local education leaders across New York State appreciate the support that both the House and Senate would provide in the economic stimulus plans that have passed both houses of Congress.

As the Congressional Conference Committee works to create the final version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in the coming days, I urge you support the needs of schools and the students they serve.

-Maintain the funding for the State Stabilization Fund as proposed in the House bill but include the Senate language to ensure that this aid can be used by states both to avert cuts and to fund previously enacted increases in state aid. This funding is essential to enabling New York schools to minimize both layoffs and property tax increases.

- Maintain the Secretary of Education's ability to grant waivers to states and local school districts in the area of supplement/supplant and maintenance of effort contained in the Senate version of the bill. Without flexibility in how they spend the federal stimulus funds, districts will be prevented from using the dollars to avert layoffs.

- Maintain the flexibility in the funding for Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and oppose the set-aside for funding for early childhood called for in the Senate version of the bill.

- Maintain the remaining House funding levels and provisions related to school-based Medicaid claiming. The House bill contains an important provision that would extend the moratoria preventing the elimination of school-based Medicaid claiming until June 30, 2009.

- Maintain the \$14 billion for school modernization funding included in the House version of the bill. This federal investment would help create jobs in local communities across the country and ensure that students are being educated in appropriate learning environments.

I urge you, again, to support a conference bill that supports our schools and the students and taxpayers they serve. What better way to move this recovery forward than by helping us renew the learning centers our children, our community and our nation urgently need.

Sincerely,

Anthony R. Albanese
Superintendent