



THE NEW YORK ADEQUACY STUDY: DETERMINING WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO GIVE EVERY STUDENT IN NEW YORK STATE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A SOUND BASIC EDUCATION

New York State currently distributes aid for education through over 50 unnecessarily complex formulas and grants that are manipulated each year by political deal-making. Repeatedly decried for its deficiencies, the education finance system was declared unconstitutional by the state's highest court in 2003 for failing to provide sufficient funding to school districts based on actual student need. The initial task for correcting the problem, as ordered by the court, was to determine the actual costs of providing a sound basic education.

After more than a year of research, an independent panel of the nation's leading educational economists and school finance experts determined the level of resources needed to provide *all* students in the state the opportunity to meet the Regents' learning standards. Their analysis, the *New York Adequacy Study*, was funded by three major foundations and initiated by 30 organizations around the state including CFE, the New York State School Boards Association, and the Business Council of New York. The key methods and findings of the study are as follows:

1. CONSENSUS OF OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

- ✓ Highly qualified superintendents, principals, teachers, school business officials, and special education directors from suburban, rural and urban areas around the state developed an educational model that specified what is required in schools to provide all students with the opportunity to meet the Regents learning standards.
- ✓ With virtual consensus, these educators called for greatly expanded early childhood programs, full-day kindergarten for all schools, very small classes of 14 to 16 at the K-5 level, expanded support services and extensive after school / summer school programming in middle and high schools, and serving over 90% of special education students in their neighborhood school.
- ✓ The educators also called for additional school support staff to provide the necessary individual attention students need to succeed, especially in high poverty areas, where additional specialists in reading, language arts, and math are required, along with more social workers, school psychologists, guidance counselors, nurses and librarians.

2. INPUT FROM EDUCATION EXPERTS AND A BROAD ARRAY OF STAKEHOLDERS

- ✓ Once an educational model was formulated, it was reviewed and critiqued by a number of leading national experts in special education, educators of English language learners, and those working with students from poverty backgrounds. It was also critiqued by a panel of New York State "stakeholders," including representatives of the business community, parents, school board members, legislative leaders, and representatives from the governor's staff and the governor's Commission for Education Reform.

3. ADJUSTING FOR STUDENT NEED AND LOCAL COSTS

- ✓ The research panel "costed out" the dollars required to provide the proposed type of education in each school district in the state, based on the number of children from poverty backgrounds, children with disabilities, and English language learners in each school, as well as the size of each school. The total amount of funding assigned to each school district was then adjusted based on the costs of hiring comparable teachers and other personnel in different parts of the state.

4. PINPOINTING SOUND BASIC EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Providing the opportunity for every student in the state to meet the Regents' learning standards will require an additional \$7.7 billion (in 2004-05 dollars) for 517 districts around the state including New York City.
- ✓ Due to the state's failure to include sufficient appropriations since 2001, CFE believes an additional \$800 million, for a total increase of \$8.5 billion, is needed to achieve adequacy. Of this, \$5.3 billion is needed for New York City, the state's largest school district, and an additional \$3.2 billion for 516 other districts in rural, suburban, and urban areas around the state.
- ✓ This includes funds for pre-kindergarten, small class sizes, and additional resources for English language learners, special education students, and children growing up in poverty.