

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Inequity in education is probably the civil rights issue of our time. There are two education systems in this state. Not public private. One for the rich and one for the poor and they are both public systems.

These words are as true today as when you spoke them while running for Governor in 2010. In fact inequity has actually grown since then. According to The Education Trust, one of the nation's leading authorities on educational inequity, New York State ranks number two nationally in educational inequality due to inequality of funding. This is a sad statistic, but it is a sadder reality for poor children and far too often for black and Latino students like the ones who attend the schools where we have the privilege to serve as school leaders.

There is a solution. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit has never been fully funded. According to the State Education Department the state owes schools \$4.4 billion in Foundation Aid as a result of CFE. New York City schools are owed \$1.9 billion. When you were running for Governor you acknowledged this funding was owed to our schools saying, *"The state is supposed to equalize or come close to equalizing with its funding. That's the CFE lawsuit that the state is yet to fully fund."*

Yet you have yet to address these inequalities. Your first five budget proposals included no foundation aid and your proposal this year includes only \$266 million statewide with no plan to ever fully fund CFE. Meanwhile the State Assembly has proposed \$1.1 billion in Foundation Aid this year and a four-year phase in of the full \$4.4 billion that is owed statewide. If the Assembly plan is enacted, finally the CFE money will be fully delivered. With your support and leadership this can happen and your vision of equitable opportunity for all of our students can become reality.

For the students whose education we hold the stewardship over, this funding would be the difference maker. It would mean smaller class sizes, more art and music, more diverse and challenging curriculum, extended learning time and much more. We know you share our belief that these educational resources are vital to our children's future. In wealthy suburban communities these are standard fare. There is no reason our children should be denied these opportunities due to the racial and economic inequalities that indeed make education a critical civil rights issue of our time.

While we are asking for your leadership to ensure a four-year phase-in of CFE funding, we also wish to thank you for making community schools a priority. Community schools offer a hopeful and truly innovative solution to support the social, emotional, health and academic needs of our students and their families. We would ask that you ensure that there is at least \$200 million for community schools in the final budget this year.

We appreciate your leadership for our state and our children, please ensure that this year's budget includes a plan to end the two systems of education you so boldly identified by fulfilling New York State's constitutional obligation to fully fund CFE. Strong words are important to gaining justice, but actions speak louder than words.

1. Jamaal Bowman, Principal
CASA Middle School

2. Carol Ann Gilligan, Principal
Van Nest Academy for Environmental Health Sciences and Technology
3. Lisa DeBonis, Principal
Linden Tree Elementary School

4. Erika Tobia, Principal
P.S. 41 Gun Hill Road
5. Ralph Martinez, Principal
Williamsbridge School

6. Shawn Manger, Principal
Baychester Middle School

7. Timothy Sullivan, Principal
The Judith K. Weiss-Woodlawn School

8. Lisa Bignall-Brice, Principal
Christopher Avenue Community School

9. Christopher Eustace, Principal
The Senator Abraham Berstein School

10. Dillon Prime, Principal
Bronx Park Middle School

11. Jean Gallarello, Principal
Bronx Alliance Middle School

12. Katheleen Bornkamp, Principal
PS 97

13. Louise Sedotto, Principal
The Bennington School

14. Farid Reyes, Principal
Hector Fontanez School

15. Amy Ellis Lipson, Principal
P.S. 175 City Island

16. James Bellon, Principal
CASA Elementary School

17. Sean Licata, Principal

School of Diplomacy

18. Denise Williams, Principal
Pelham Gardens Middle School

19. Anthony Rivera, Principal
Pelham Academy of Academics and Community Engagement

20. Eugenia Montalvo, Principal
P.S. 106 Parkchester

21. Brian De Vale, Principal
John F. Hylan Elementary School

22. Ben Honoroff, Principal IA
Middle School 50 John D. Wells

23. Sereida Rodriguez-Guerra, Principal
PS 84 Jose de Diego Magnet School for the Visual Arts & Sciences

24. Cynthia Rosario, Principal
Heketi Elementary school

25. Rosie Sifuentes-Rosado
PS/MS 194

26. John O'Reilly, Principal
Arts & Letters

27. Susan A. Barnes, Principal
112X

28. Nadia Cruz-Perez, Principal,
PS 357, Young Voices Academy of the Bronx

29. Wanda Vazquez
El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice

30. Dawn Best, Principal
PS 59, William Floyd School of Professional Studies

31. Brandon Cardet-Hernandez, Principal
Urban Assembly Bronx Academy of Letters

32. Eva Irizarry, Principal
Brooklyn Arbor Elementary School, District 14

33. Maria Masullo, Principal
M.S 577

34. Celina F. Napolitano, Principal
The Carter G. Woodson Elementary School

35. Ms. Sandra Noyola, Principal
PS147 The Isaac Remsen School for Environmental Engineering

36. Mary Renny, Principal
Leonard Dunkly Elementary School