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Greetings,

As we approach the end of the school year, a reminder for all parents getting involved and look ahead to the 2022-2023 school year.

As the majority of school budgets here on Long Island passed, it's time to ensure the allocated money is utilized effectively. The NYS budget allocated \$31.5bn allocated to education, it is of the utmost importance for us all to pay attention to our school budgets and allocation of resources. A few key things to remind everyone regarding the NYS budget.

#### Universal Pre-Kindergarten

The Enacted Budget increases the State's annual investment in high-quality prekindergarten to \$1.1 billion, an increase of \$125 million, or 13 percent. With this funding, school districts will be able to provide access to high-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten across the State for approximately 17,500 additional four-year-old children.

#### Academic and Mental Health Support

The State Budget includes a total of \$100 million of matching funds over two years to be provided to school districts and BOCES with the highest needs to address student wellbeing and learning loss in response to the trauma brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes support for extended school day or school year programs, afterschool programs, mental health professionals and other locally determined initiatives.

#### Recruiting and Retaining Teachers

The Budget includes funding for new initiatives centered around expanding the workforce for teachers, as well as expanding the means by which professionals from other careers may become teachers.

The Budget creates a state teacher residency program to bring more teachers into schools sooner while providing greater opportunity for support and training as they embark on their careers.

The Budget includes initiatives to upskill current paraprofessionals and teaching assistants. There are more than 100,000 paraprofessionals and teaching assistants in New York State schools—a number that is rapidly rising. The Budget will provide grants for paraprofessionals who remain employed in a school district to pursue a teaching degree. School districts would be required to pair candidates with professional mentors.

## Green Education

In order to improve air quality for school-age New Yorkers, the State Budget requires that all new school bus purchases be zero-emissions by 2027 and all school buses on the road be zero-emissions by 2035. The State Budget will provide \$500 million through the Environmental Bond Act to support school districts in purchases of zero-emission buses and related charging infrastructure including charging stations. Additionally, the State Budget authorizes school districts to lease or finance zero-emission buses for 12 years, more than double the current five-year limitation for diesel buses, in order to help districts meet this goal, and ensures Transportation Aid is provided on zero-emission buses and related charging infrastructure.

Secondly, school board elections are in the beginning phases as candidates were invited to contact the district clerk for a petition to run for office on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Let's encourage our parents to take an active approach in the campaign of the candidates for each district. In light of the political climate we are in surrounding the pandemic, DEI and curriculum decisions, some of more of the school board elections will be more detailed and accessible to all parents moreso than the campaigns may have been in the past. It is imperative we all have a seat at the table to hear from all candidates and educate our families on the stance and value any candidate will bring to the table for the benefit and future of our schools for our children. To that end, we encourage local PTA units and Councils to send reminders for the Meet the Candidates Night taking place at your district and familiarize yourself with the issues and candidates that will be on the slate. If possible, a suggestion to local units and Councils to invite all candidates to speak at a meeting ahead of the District-wide Meet the Candidates Night to introduce themselves, their reason for running for office and what each candidate hopes to achieve if elected.

Last but certainly not least, lets encourage our parents to turn their attention to secondary school children's schedule selections for the '22-'23 school year and encouraging parents to attend. As noted in the NYS PTA position paper regarding family engagement, we support meaningful, culturally competent family engagement preparation programs to include instruction in meaningful, culturally competent family engagement in the process of improving student achievement and success and particularly the concept of ongoing, two-way school/family communication

For more information about the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships and National and NYS PTA programs that promote family-school partnerships, visit [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) or [www.nyspta.org](http://www.nyspta.org). For more information regarding APPR, visit [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov) or [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org).

Respectfully Submitted,

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