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Helpful Talking Points for Use in Expressing Support of Your Children, Schools & Communities

Quality & Fairness of Public Education in NYS

- It's been a much-used Albany sound bite to criticize NYS per-pupil spending and results, but what you don't hear is that several respected sources tell a different story. For instance:
 - In its "Quality Counts 2013" assessment, *Education Week* ranked NYS third in the nation in the six key areas of educational policy and performance.
 - A 2012 CNBC study ranked NYS schools first in the nation for providing "What Businesses Need."
- You also don't hear that while our spending is indeed number one, NYS ranks in the mid-forties among all states when it comes to fairness in distributing those dollars to the children, schools and communities that need it the most.
- FACT - Some of the best schools in NYS are also ranked as the best schools in the world...better than the best schools in the current "poster-child" nation of Finland.
- Unfortunately, these schools are also among the most wealthy districts in NYS, which only emphasizes the need to make education aid distribution more fair and equitable.

What We Must Have from Albany in this Year's State Budget

- The immediate and FULL repeal of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA).
 - Since it was established in 2010, the GEA has deducted well over \$8 billion from state aid disbursements school districts were legally entitled to receive.
 - Over \$460 MILLION was deducted from aid checks sent to the 49 schools districts in the CNYSBA region...almost ONE-HALF BILLION dollars during this same four-year span.
 - What could our schools, communities and region have been able to do with these funds? Lay off fewer people? Kept vital educational programs? Kept property taxes lower?
 - If, as the Governor has asserted, that NYS now has a budget surplus, why is there a need for a Gap Elimination Adjustment?
- The extraordinarily unfair formula used by NYS to distribute Foundation Aid - the backbone of financial support for our public schools - MUST be dumped and replaced by a new formula that is not only fair, but also sufficient to carry out the educational mission the state mandates.
- This new formula MUST be developed in time for implementation in the 2015-16 state budget by a non-political panel of public education fiscal experts.