



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Standing tall for our children and schools: Community advocacy forum on public school funding issues coming to Auburn

Stakeholders from area school districts will converge on Auburn West Middle School on Tuesday, February 2, to draw attention to the ongoing fiscal crisis facing public schools and learn more about the issues and the need for grassroots advocacy.

The event “Standing tall for our children and schools” has been organized to bring community members together for a lively, informative and motivating forum that will let them know what is at stake if state leaders do not fully eradicate the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and develop a funding formula that provides adequate, equitable and sustainable funding for our public schools.

“Governor Cuomo’s proposals for both GEA elimination and sufficient new Foundation Aid funding have come up well short of what our districts will need in the next fiscal year,” said Charles Borgognoni, Executive Director of the Central New York School Boards Association. “The situation is further complicated by the news that the property tax levy cap will be 0.12%. The goal is to inform public school stakeholders about the impacts of insufficient state education funding on their own districts. Attendees at the forum will get the actual, non-politicized facts about what is really at stake as the 2016-17 state budget is hammered out in Albany so that they will be able to more effectively bring their messages to their state legislators.”

The February 2 program will begin at 6:30 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. The venue is the West Middle School auditorium, which is located at 217 Genesee Street in Auburn. The forum is open to everyone who cares about public education: booster clubs, PTAs and PTOs, teachers, students, administrators, staff, parents, school board members, local residents, business people and other members of the community.

The featured presenter for the forum is Dr. Rick Timbs, Executive Director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium. Dr. Timbs will cut through the layers and complexities of state aid to make it easy to understand and provide examples of how local school districts continue to suffer as a result of the Gap Elimination Adjustment – a “temporary” state policy that for the past six years has withheld billions of dollars in legally authorized state aid from every public school district in the state – an inequitably distributed Foundation Aid.

The February 2 forum is coordinated by the Central New York School Boards Association and Cayuga-Onondaga and Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES on behalf of the students, families and community members in the districts that make up the two BOCES regions.

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Charles Borgognoni and Dr. Rick Timbs will be available to speak with the media before the event between 5:30 and 6:15 pm.

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CNYSBA’s mission is to inform public school board members about critical issues affecting public education and the operation of public schools and to mobilize board members to effectively influence stakeholders outside the schools who also share the constitutionally guaranteed responsibility for the education of our children.

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