

# Miller Place Union Free School District

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## Board of Education

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April 28, 2020

Congressman Lee Zeldin (via fax)  
Senator Charles Schumer (via fax)  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (via fax)

Re: Federal Aid to New York State

Dear Elected Official:

We hope this communication finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe. As Board of Education Trustees for the Miller Place Union Free School District, we are writing to you regarding our concern that our district, as well as, all New York State public schools, will be facing severe economic shortfalls as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While we are grateful the state did not reduce school aid next year, holding our aid flat would essentially amount to a budget cut as districts face increasing inflationary costs such as health insurance. The Governor has forecasted further funding cuts to districts throughout the next year. The devastation that further revenue reductions would have on our schools is unfathomable.

As the New York State School Boards Association ("NYSSBA") has stated, school districts will be faced with shortfalls that will negatively impact our students with steep cuts in the programs that can be offered, reductions in staff and the level and quality of instruction that can be provided. In addition, the shortfalls could have long-term detrimental effects on our students if they are unable to acclimate back to being normal kids in the educational setting that is a major source of support for their social and emotional well-being. As school districts ensure they meet not only the academic needs of their students; they address students' social, emotional, health and nutritional needs as well. Every day school districts continue to serve their communities.

Further, noted by the NYSSBA is that it has been clear since the very beginning of this pandemic crisis, schools have been at the forefront in keeping a shred of normalcy for our communities. All across New York State, our school districts are helping families by delivering meals, providing care for children of essential workers, providing technology -- often times to students with little to no access, continuing education remotely, and so much more. Many of these services are above and beyond the usual scope of a school district; however, we have been called upon to meet the extraordinary needs of our students. None of this was

budgeted for; none of this was ever designed as a need to be reimbursed. We are calling on you to support an additional Federal stimulus with funding for Education.

For this reason we write to implore you to continue, as you have in the past, to be a strong proponent and partner with us in education with federal support for our schools so that students can move past this pandemic in as healthy a way as humanly possible and get back to what will be the new normal with the least amount of hurdles.

This can hopefully be achieved with your continued leadership and partnership with public education and through your support of immediate and specific federal funding assistance and flexibility for IDEA relief for education in the upcoming supplemental relief package. We are pleading that you include more funding for Education in the next stimulus packages so we can continue to serve our communities today, without fear of financial ruin tomorrow.

We thank you for your efforts to date but want to reinforce that the financial needs of the school districts to provide the best and healthiest educational environment to its students will only continue to grow. As educational leaders in our community, we are writing to encourage you to aggressively support additional funding to states for K-12 Public Education. Schools have always been the anchor of their communities and examples of this are being seen day in and day out.

Thank you for your considering our request and for all you are doing as we navigate through this unprecedented time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Miller Place Board of Education

*Johanna Testa*  
Johanna Testa  
President

*Richard Panico*  
Richard Panico  
Vice President

*Noelle Dunlop*  
Noelle Dunlop  
Trustee

*Keith Frank*  
Keith Frank  
Trustee

*Lisa Reitan*  
Lisa Reitan  
Trustee

Copy: Governor Andrew Cuomo (via e-mail)  
Senator Kenneth P. LaValle (via e-mail)  
Assemblyman Anthony Palumbo (via e-mail)