

Buffalo City School District Budget Testimony Before The New York State Legislative Fiscal and Education Committees



Presented January 26, 2022

Dr. Kriner Cash, Superintendent of Schools
Buffalo City School District



The Education Bargain with Students and Parents

An equal and high-quality education is every child's civil right; and, as educators, we must deliver on this essential democratic principle. The Education Bargain is simple: The District will guarantee pathways to opportunity that will lead to achievement and success in exchange for hard work, commitment, and collaboration of our students and parents.



IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- Place a high premium on education
- Make sure your child goes to school and to all classes every day
- Make sure your child does his in-school work to the best of his ability and puts in additional study time (up to two hours each day) outside of school hours
- Make sure you and your child show respect for teachers and for staff

Rigorous
Early Elementary
Education

Strong
Community
Schools

Innovative
High Schools

Extended
Learning Excellence
for All Our
Students

Services for
Our Neediest
Children and
Families

New
Relationship
with Our
Teachers



The Buffalo City School District extends our deepest appreciation to the Honorable Governor Kathy Hochul, our esteemed Western New York delegation, Commissioner Betty Rosa and the Board of Regents. Together, we formed a team throughout this past year that has kept our schools open, strengthened our relentless focus on high quality, rigorous instruction, and prepared a foundation for continuing our safe and successful re-opening. We would not be in this favorable position without the leadership and partnership from our dedicated leaders in state government and at the State Education Department.

Our strategic transformation plan, ***The Education Bargain with Students and Parents***, exemplifies for the nation the fundamental and required benchmarks for providing the equal and high quality education every child deserves and every parent expects.

As a result of our strategic transformation plan, ***The Education Bargain with Students and Parents***, 45 of 60 schools—and rising—are now in good standing in Buffalo. Leading indicators of our success also include:

- 1) On-time graduation rates up from 48% to over 78% since 2015;
- 2) 48 of 60 schools are meeting annual academic performance targets—up from 4 of 60 in 2015;
- 3) All levels of Buffalo’s civic leadership are collaborating effectively with the District to support our students (parents, elected officials, higher education, business, faith-based & advocacy groups, philanthropy, and labor organizations).

The Buffalo City School District is pleased to support Governor Hochul’s signature education proposals, including the \$2.1 Billion increase in education funding, the continued phase-in of Foundation Aid, full funding of current statutory formulas for Expense-Based Aids, Pandemic-related responses, and several new or expanded grant programs.

The District is also seeking specific support for the following legislative items:

1. Provide a \$3 million permanent increase in Buffalo’s **Health Services allocation** (currently \$5.3 million); bringing this total to \$8.3 million. This will offset the escalating costs of health-related services that were climbing before the Pandemic and help us meet our statutory obligation to providing services to charter and private schools in Buffalo—without compromising services for our students.
2. Ensure that **Supplemental Charter Tuition Reimbursement** is reimbursed in the same school year the tuition is paid by the District.
3. Provide districts with **veto authority for new public charter schools** when proposed charter schools do not fulfill an unmet need in the District. Otherwise, new charter schools are continuing to saturate

Buffalo with more general education K-8 seats when most of our elementary schools are in Good Standing and the District graduation rate is the highest on record.

4. Approve legislation that would require **Board of Regents approval of all new charter schools**, including those sponsored by the State University of New York Charter School Institute.
5. Appoint a timely **Independent Receiver for closed charter schools** to audit and ensure that public assets are protected and returned to the District of residence so they can be utilized to support re-enrolled children.
6. Increase the per pupil cap under **Special Services Aid** and expand funding to cover 9th grade students participating in CTE programs.
7. Increase funding for **Pre-Kindergarten programs** to reduce the local share cost and allow us to expand to 3-year-old programming.

Approval of these requests will assist our District in meeting the long-term targets in our fiscal plan. Approval will also ensure the continued resourcing and effective implementation of our strategic transformation plan, ***The Education Bargain with Students and Parents***, during and long after our recovery from the Pandemic.

Thank you for your heroic efforts in helping our schools to recover from the terrible impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Thank you for your faithful service to New York State, to the City of Buffalo, and to the wonderful children and families of the Buffalo City School District.

We stand with you—united, committed, and resolute.

Dr. Kriner Cash



Superintendent of Schools
Buffalo City School District



BUFFALO CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT 2022-2023 LEGISLATIVE REQUEST SUMMARY

Support for the Governor’s Budget Proposals:

The Buffalo City School District is pleased to support Governor Hochul’s signature education proposals, including the \$2.1 Billion increase in education funding, the continued phase-in of Foundation Aid, full funding of current statutory formulas for Expense-Based Aids, Pandemic-related responses, and several new or expanded grant programs.

Health Services Grant:

Provide a \$3 million permanent increase in Buffalo’s **Health Services allocation** (currently \$5.3 million); bringing this total to \$8.3 million. This will offset the escalating costs of health-related services that were climbing before the Pandemic and help us meet our statutory obligation to providing services to charter and private schools in Buffalo—without compromising services for our students.

Supplemental Charter Tuition Reimbursement:

Ensure that **Supplemental Charter Tuition Reimbursement** funded at 100% of the amount in legislation and reimbursed in the same school year the tuition is paid by the District.

Proliferation of Start-Up Charter Schools:

Provide districts with **veto authority for new public charter schools** when proposed new charter schools do not fulfill an unmet need in traditional public education. Otherwise, new charters are continuing to saturate Buffalo with more general education K-8 seats when most of our elementary schools are in Good Standing and the District graduation rate is the highest on record.

Approve legislation that would require **Board of Regents approval of all new charter schools**, including those sponsored by the State University of New York Charter School Institute.

Independent Receiver for Closed Charter Schools:

Appoint an **Independent Receiver for closed charter schools** to audit and ensure that public assets are protected and returned to the District of residence so they can be utilized to support the re-enrolled children.

Special Services Aid:

Increase the per pupil cap under **Special Services Aid** and expand funding to cover 9th grade students participating in CTE programs.

Pre-Kindergarten Programs:

Increase funding for **Pre-Kindergarten programs** to reduce the local share cost and allow us to expand to 3-year-old programming.