



**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTOPHER GOEKEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING STATIONS OF NEW YORK
BEFORE THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON EDUCATION
FEBRUARY 6, 2019**

Chair Krueger, Chair Weinstein, Chair Mayer, Chair Benedetto, and members of this joint committee, thank you for allowing me to testify on behalf of New York's public television stations. The Association for Public Broadcasting Stations of New York represents the nine public television stations across New York State. APBS requests an appropriation of \$15.5M in this year's budget, an increase of \$1.5M over FY 2019.

New York's public television stations are a unique private-public partnership that continues to keep its promise—to provide high-quality, trusted content that educates, inspires, and informs in ways that enrich the lives of New Yorkers. New York's nine locally-controlled nonprofit public television stations reach almost every New Yorker and uniquely serve their communities throughout the state—rural, urban, and everywhere in between. This is because public television stations were founded on a mission for universal service and community-based accountability.

While many of you would be familiar with national PBS shows like *American Experience* or *PBS NewsHour*, you might not know about all the local programming produced across New York State. Our stations create programming that matters to their local region and the state, whether it is our local news magazine *Mountain Lakes Journal* in Plattsburgh and the Adirondacks; *Long Island Business Report* from WLIW; public affairs shows like *Metrofocus* in New York City, Watertown's *WPBS Now*, Syracuse's *Connect NY* or *New York Now* in Albany; educational achievement shows like *American Graduate Day*, Binghamton's *Good to Know*, or Buffalo's *KidFest*; and medical discussion series *Second Opinion* from Rochester, which is broadcast statewide and at stations across the country. And who else but public television would produce documentaries and programming about local history or tackle local conversations about veterans issues and opioids addiction? Just this past October, public television stations partnered with the New York State Office of Alcohol Addiction and Substance Abuse to for "New York's

Opioid Crisis”, a week of special programming on television and radio to shed light on this issue and connect New Yorker’s with resources.

PBS is New York’s largest classroom. Two out of three kids below the age of eight watch PBS, and 62% of parents say that PBS is the most educational media for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that PBS content is a great source for quality educational programming.¹ In fact, PBS content can increase student performance. A 2015 study found that students using PBS Kids *Odd Squad Learning Math* increased their test scores by 14%.² Children who watched *Super Why* scored 46% higher on standardized tests than those who did not.³ Children who watched and engaged with *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood* demonstrated greater empathy, recognized emotions better, and felt more confident in social interactions than their peers who did not.⁴

PBS Kids attracts a higher proportion of views from African-American, Hispanic, and low-income homes compared to the overall population. Families in low-income communities and rural areas rely on our free, over-the-air broadcasts for quality educational programming. Online, PBS Kids attracts a higher proportion of users from Asian-American and African-American homes compared with the overall population.

Our local stations know that educational content is paramount to our mission. With last year’s launch of a free 24/7 PBS Kids channel, virtually all New Yorkers have access to this educational resource. Our local stations also produce specialized educational content, like our statewide after school call-in show, *Homework Hotline*. For those of you have not seen this daily show, master teachers answer questions live from across the state and help students work through difficult homework questions—usually in math, but often other STEM topics as well. Our Syracuse station produces *Regents Review*, a broadcast and online exam preparation series that is available statewide.

But New York’s largest classroom isn’t just on the air, we are literally in classrooms across the state. *PBS LearningMedia* is a free tool for New York’s teachers to use educational digital content in the classroom. With over 29,000 videos, 2,700 interactive digital tools, and 8,800

¹ American Academy of Pediatrics Media Guidelines 10/16/2016

² Odd Squad Learning Math with PBS KIDS Transmedia Content at School and Home, WestEd, 2015

³ Linebarger, Wainwright, and McMenamin, “Summative Evaluation of Super Why!”, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, 2009.

⁴ Rassmussen, Shafer, et.al., “Relation between active mediation, exposure to Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood, and US preschoolers’ social and emotional development,” *Journal of Children & Media*, Vol. 10, Iss. 4, 2016

lesson plans, PBS LearningMedia makes the classroom come alive. Teachers today know that their students are tech-savvy so PBS LearningMedia makes it easy for them to use video and more in the classroom. All of this free content lets the teachers use their Smart Boards, laptops, and tablets with compelling, standards-aligned content.

PBS LearningMedia is plug and play for a teacher—they can search for a lesson plan on the website, use our digital content and tools, and even allows students to access this content for free at home. PBS LearningMedia is a walled garden where children can safely view digital content away from YouTube or other sites with inappropriate or poor-quality content.

PBS LearningMedia provides content from known and trusted PBS shows like *PBS Newshour*, *Nature*, *Curious George*, *Nova*, and *Ken Burns*. We screen this content, select short video clips, create lesson plans, hand-outs, and make it easy for teachers to use them. Forty-two percent of New York’s public school teachers use PBS LearningMedia—and more sign-up every day.

State funding for public broadcasting dropped and has stayed flat for most of the past 25 years



However, in our conversations with teachers, we have heard that they need more digital content in social studies, civics, NYS history, media literacy, and science, particularly for the K-4 grades. With the New York Next Generation Learning Standards coming into effect, this gives us an opportunity to create new content and realign our existing digital content for these new standards. Once completed,

teachers would be able to point and click on the new Learning Standards to easily find the digital content and lesson plans they need.

Given the breadth of the PBS LearningMedia content and the extensive new Learning Standards, this realignment of PBS LearningMedia would be a major, multi-year undertaking by our education staff at our nine stations. We are requesting an increase of \$1.5M over the Executive Budget proposal to get started. This year’s Executive Budget once again proposes just over \$14

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million for New York's public broadcasting stations and the additional \$1.5 million appropriation would bring the total to \$15.5 million.

The Association of Public Broadcasting Stations of New York represents nine public television stations across the state, WNET (NYC), WLIW (Long Island), WCNY (Syracuse), WXXI (Rochester), WMHT (Albany), WNED (Buffalo), WPBS (Watertown), WSKG (Binghamton), and Mountain Lake PBS (Plattsburgh).

Thank you again for this opportunity to share our views on state support for public broadcasting in this year's Executive Budget Proposal.