

December 5, 2009

Governor David A. Paterson
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson,

I am dismayed to learn that you continue to propose a 10 percent cut to the appropriation AND LIABILITY for nonpublic schools, while the proposed cut to public schools is limited to 1.58 percent.

As you know, 14 percent of New York State children are educated in nonpublic schools. The nonpublic school community is respectfully urging that any cuts to education be equal, on a percentage basis, and that the state not renounce its statutory obligation to eventually reimburse our schools for 100 percent of their mandated costs.

Specifically, we ask that you DELETE "and liability" in both the appropriation language for Mandated Services Reimbursement and CAP reimbursement as well as equalize the percentage of the cut to that of public schools.

Governor Paterson, you are the first and only Governor of the great State of New York to reduce the state's liability in this 35-year-old program. This sets a precedent that represents a negative shift in the state's relationship with religious and independent schools.

Maintaining the state's liability in the program will allow the appropriation to be cut while enabling us to tell your constituents that you have maintained the core principle of 100% reimbursement and that the funds will be restored when the economy permits doing so.

Sincerely,