

## Adequate Funding for Public Schools

New York’s school superintendents are grateful to Congress for increased funding provided in the FY 2018 federal budget. But even with those increases, total funding for the U.S. Education Department remains below 2012 levels, adjusted for inflation.

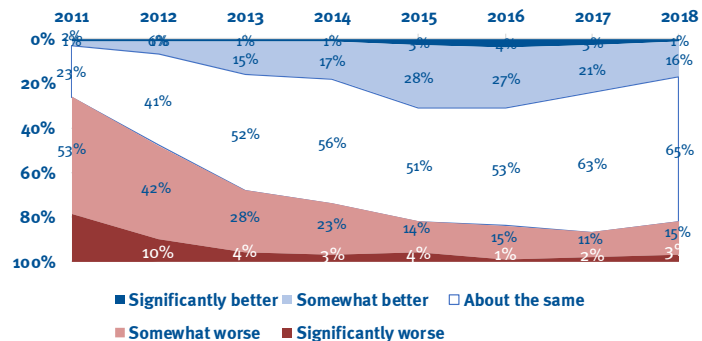
We urge increases to maintain and accelerate the progress made a year ago and we prioritize funding for **Title I** and **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** programs.

We also advocate for preserving and increasing funding for **Title II** (Preparing, Training and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and School Leaders) and increasing support for **Title IV** (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants).

The recent history of federal funding echoes broader trends we see with school district finances in our state. Many public schools suffered grievous harm because of funding reductions brought on by the Great Recession and its fiscal consequences and some have not begun to recover.

In annual surveys of our members, we found more superintendents eventually reporting that their districts’ financial condition had improved rather than worsened since the prior year. *But never in eight years of annual surveys has even one-third of superintendents reported improvement.* Accordingly, we expect there are many school systems which have seen little recovery from the damage they endured at the start of this decade.

Compared to one year ago, how has the financial condition of your district changed, in terms of its ability to fund services meeting expectations of parents in the community?



In our surveys, increasing extra academic help for struggling students has been a leading priority among superintendents every year. In recent years, we have also found mounting concern about special education costs. These priorities can be supported through increases in Title I and IDEA funding.

We also find concern growing among superintendents about needs of the children their schools serve. For example, in our 2017 survey, the share of superintendents who identified improving student mental health services as a funding priority climbed from 35 percent to 52 percent. Increasing Title IV funding can help schools help more students with those needs.

Title IV funding can also aid our state’s high need rural districts to give their students more of the opportunities we would want for our own children. According to Education Trust New York, 36 percent of the state’s high need rural districts offer only one Advanced Placement or International

Baccalaureate course, compared to 9 percent of average need districts and 13 percent of high need small city and suburban districts.

Finally, many of our districts are struggling to find qualified teachers. For example, 74 percent of North Country superintendents said that finding an adequate number of qualified teachers is a significant problem for their districts, as did 71 percent of their colleagues in the Mid-Hudson Valley.

The Federal government should not be the primary local school funding vehicle, but there is a role to play. Congress does have an obligation to fully-fund mandates imposed by the Federal government, such as IDEA funding. Congress can and should also act to supplement funding where states and localities are falling short of providing the necessary resources to ensure every student has an opportunity to succeed.

New York has been shortchanged by the current Congress under the new tax bill. Our taxpayers are being used to subsidize tax cuts for other states and corporations. At a minimum, Congress can act to provide additional education related funding to New York in return for the vast amount of money we send to the Federal government.