NEW YORK STATE EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE BOARD

School Districts and an Untimely State Budget

As state budget negotiations continue, our groups understand that state budget extenders are necessary to ensure the continued provision of government services. At the same time, it is important to highlight the quickly approaching timeline challenges that school districts will be facing as they develop their own budgets.

As required by law, school districts outside the "Big 5" cities must offer their budgets for approval by voters on May 19. State law and regulations also prescribe a series of deadlines these districts must meet in the run-up to the votes:

- **April 21 –** Districts, other than small cities, must finalize all items to appear on ballots for the May votes—board of education candidates and propositions, including proposed budgets; small city districts must do so by May 4.
- **April 24 –** Districts, other than small cities, must distribute military ballots; small city districts must do so by May 5.
- **April 27 –** All districts subject to budget votes must submit "property tax report card" data to the State Education Department; this effectively requires all district school boards to adopt the budget proposals they will ask voters to consider before the 27th, a Monday.

While the Big 5 school districts in New York State do not have local budget votes, delayed adoption of a state budget could have consequences for their local budget processes and negatively impact their ability to prepare for the upcoming school year.

The greater their district's reliance on state support and the greater the uncertainty over what final school aid figures will be, the more time local leaders may need to evaluate options and settle on a budget proposal for voters to consider.

Unfortunately, district leaders have experience with late state budgets in recent years, with final aid levels determined after they must make final decisions for issuing their ballots. But experience does not mitigate the fundamental problems posed by uncertain and untimely state revenue information that is necessary for them to meet their legally mandated budget deadlines, which can lead to unnecessarily adverse decisions on district programs and spending levels.

We urge the Legislature and Governor to come to agreement soon on a state budget that adequately and effectively supports New York's public schools.

The New York State Educational Conference Board is a coalition of seven leading public school organizations representing parents, families, teachers, paraprofessionals, building administrators, business officials, superintendents, and board members across the state.