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**Bernard P. Pierorazio**  
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Colleague,

With our state and nation facing difficult financial times, our school district is potentially facing difficult choices. You have been hearing and reading about the Superintendent's proposed budget for the 2008-2009 school year. I want you to hear directly from me what is happening as the budget process unfolds.

### **Expenses**

The \$486.6 million expenditure budget presented to the Trustees this week could reasonably be called status quo. The modest 5.73% increase in proposed spending, supports and sustains our goal of improving student achievement, and provides our staff with needed resources. Approximately 85% of the increase is for non-discretionary expenses such as employee salaries and benefits, fuel and utilities.

### **Revenues**

Based on the state aid we are to receive as of today as outlined in the Executive Budget, there is a significant shortfall. I know you understand that our expenses and revenues must match. If we cannot increase our revenue, we must decrease our expenses. To the extent possible, we cut stuff, not staff. However, that may not be enough.

The basis of current negotiations in Albany is the Executive Budget, which eliminates and cuts key Aid categories to the Yonkers Public Schools, and penalizes the District and its teachers for innovative and effective practices.

Had we never provided our youngest children with Prekindergarten, had we never provided our most at-risk students with extended day and weekend programs, had we never provided our teachers with professional development opportunities, the State would fund these programs with Contract for Excellence (C4E) money instead of forcing us to contemplate reducing or eliminating them. We currently have minimal flexibility over the use of C4E funds, even for proven and effective programs. This is a sobering and disturbing requirement of C4E that we are loudly advocating be changed, and changed now. The Superintendents of the other Big Five city school districts agree with this position, and we have joined forces to insist on the ability to preserve the programs our teachers, support staff and administrators have made work, and work well for the students of the Yonkers Public Schools.

### **Today, Tomorrow and Beyond**

The Trustees of the Board of Education, your union officials, Mayor Amicone and I have been in Albany many times since January to work with our legislative delegation and key decision makers in the Senate, Assembly and Executive branches of state government. We will be in Albany many more times in the days and weeks ahead. We have no intention of letting up, or letting you down.

I remain confident that our representatives will remember the progress our students have made and reward our efforts with appropriate fiscal support. Our students deserve better.

Sincerely,

  
Bernard P. Pierorazio