



YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*Achieving Excellence Together*

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

February 15, 2011

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**Yonkers Superintendent of Schools Lobbies in Albany for Equitable School Funding**

(YONKERS, NY) Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools Bernard P. Pierorazio traveled to Albany today to testify before the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and urge the legislators to take action against the Governor's proposed budget that depletes the District of \$17.5 million in New York State funding. "I urge you to take up the Governor's call for change," the Superintendent implored. "It's time to tear down the existing system and build a funding system that serves the one group that does not have a highly paid lobbyist here in Albany – our children."

Accompanied by the District's Chief Administrative Officer, Joseph J. Bracchitta, the Superintendent spoke about the flawed Foundation Aid formula and asked legislators to give the District the aid it is legally due and provide additional aid to account for the District's growing student enrollment. Superintendent Pierorazio also reviewed the success of the District's full-day prekindergarten program and urged lawmakers to equitably reimburse Yonkers for the youngsters it serves. The Superintendent then discussed the devastating effect of the Triborough Law and the economic strain induced by the legal obligation to provide automatic pay increases in addition to contractually agreed upon raises. The final issue addressed was unfunded mandates. The Superintendent pointed out that nearly three-quarters of the District's budget gap could be eliminated if state and federal mandates were properly funded. "But school districts cannot make the underlying statewide structural changes that will allow us to move our schools to the future," the Superintendent explained. "That job is yours."

Due to the looming cuts in state and federal funding, coupled with increases in expenses, Yonkers Public Schools faces a crippling \$87 million budget shortfall for 2011/12. The District is currently still reeling from the budget crisis of 2010/11, which forced the elimination of 439 staff positions.

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