



February 2020

Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

The Yonkers Public Schools is a **growing diverse student body of now over 26,000 students**, an increase of 4000+ students the past decade. As our enrollment has grown, we have fought to maintain our success. Year after year, our **high schools continue to rank well** in the *U.S. News and World Report* for Best High Schools of the Nation and Yonkers **My Brother's Keeper (MBK) has proven to be model program both in NYS and nationally.**

However, with the second largest enrollment growth in New York State the past ten years...more students than most entire districts...our funding has not kept pace with our students and their increasing needs. Class sizes in many of our classrooms are significantly higher than state averages. Our aging buildings are swelling to accommodate the increased enrollment, and our students need more space to address very real learning needs of today. Basements and closets have been converted into classrooms, and some of our neediest and most vulnerable students are forced to learn in hallways. While the majority of districts statewide are shrinking, Yonkers needs your help to provide resources to allow for learning environments where ALL of our children can grow and thrive.

Our **vision for our students in Yonkers Public Schools** are funds to provide universal **Pre-K for each and every student, health services for all** in need, **higher Building Aid** reimbursement that accurately reflects with our city's poverty, and Foundation Aid funding that reflects our district's needs and growth since the formula was frozen the past decade. **Our students can no longer wait, and we cannot do it without you!**

Just Some of Our Stories

Our schools are a Safe Haven for our children. They are a place where they should be able to **play sports** or **learn how to play an instrument** – sadly, that is not the case. **74% of our district is economically disadvantaged. These children come to school every day to face additional challenges.**

Social workers are in demand. If a child needs to see a social worker on Tuesday, they might need to wait until Friday. Why? Because there are only **14 social workers** in the entire district for a ratio of **1 social worker to 1,881 students**. Imagine if that was your child waiting for that social worker. Add on to that a ratio of 1 psychologist to 823 students – that's 32 for an entire district. Our guidance counselors are tasked with helping high school students through high school and getting into a career or college of their choice. That is **31 guidance counselors for a ratio of 1 to 850**. Imagine if that were your child navigating in what has become global competition.

The **mental wellness** of our community is being challenged in that **1 out of every 4 students needs assistance**. That impacts the schools, education and the community. We need an **increase in funding for mental health services** which include areas such as **pupil support services** (guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers), sports, art and music programs and safe schools. Education is the best inheritance we can leave for our children.

We thank you and our legislators for your past support of our schools and for the additional Foundation Aid Funding. We look forward to **continuing to build partnerships with you and our legislators for a bright future for our children**. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Yonkers Council of PTA/PTSAs, Parents, Teachers, Students, and Staff

PRINT NAME: _____ SIGN NAME: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ NY Zip: _____

What my child needs: _____