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NEWS RELEASE

MAJOR EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS RELEASE ANALYSIS SHOWING 64% OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS FACE CUTS IN EXCESS OF \$15,000 PER CLASSROOM; 60 DISTRICTS FACE CUTS OVER \$30,000 PER CLASSROOM DUE TO GOVERNOR PATERSON'S \$2.5 BILLION IN SCHOOL AID CUTS

EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIRWOMEN ASSEMBLYWOMAN NOLAN AND SENATOR OPPENHEIMER JOIN EDUCATION ADVOCATES IN CALLING FOR SCHOOL AID RESTORATIONS

ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR FAIR SHARE TAX REFORM

Albany--Major education advocacy groups were joined by Education Committee Chairwomen Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan and Senator Suzi Oppenheimer in releasing data showing that 64% of school districts face cuts in excess of \$15,000 per classroom with 60 districts facing cuts over \$30,000 per classroom. The education organizations called on the state legislature to reject Governor Paterson's \$2.5 billion cut to schools and instead to support Fair Share Tax Reform that would raise taxes on New Yorkers earning over \$250,000 a year.

“From the Southern Tier to the North Country and from Suffolk County to Rochester school children will have their futures robbed if these education cuts are enacted. It is simply incomprehensible that Governor Paterson is proposing to take \$15,000 to \$40,000 out of children’s classrooms in ever corner of the state rather than asking New Yorkers who earn over \$250,000 a year to pay a little more in taxes,” said Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education. “Unless the legislature rejects these cuts and takes decisive action on fair share tax reform, this budget will set back the education for a generation of school children. It is not too late to chart a different course and protect our schoolchildren by asking New York’s highest income earners to pay their fair share.”

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"This past year, the budget for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, kept the promise to fund a sound based education from Pre-K through high school graduation. The crisis that today plagues our economy will have an impact on New York State's revenues and expenditures but it will not weaken the Assembly's resolve to champion education. That is our future. It will, however, take all of us together to see our schools through difficult times," said Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan.

The Governor's 2009-10 *Executive Budget Briefing Book* identifies that his budget uses cuts of \$2.5 billion in school aid to reduce the state budget deficit—these cuts include the funding due by law under the settlement of the historic Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit. The analysis performed by the Fiscal Policy Institute and the Alliance for Quality Education calculates what these cuts translate into per pupil and per elementary school classroom for every district in the state. A full listing of the cuts per pupil and district is available at www.aqeny.org. A sampling of how the cuts impact several districts in the state is included below.

School District	Total Cut to School District	Per Pupil Cut	Cut Per Elementary Classroom	Average Elementary Class Size
Buffalo	\$41,682,005	\$1,052	\$24,193	23
Rochester	\$58,214,714	\$1,708	\$34,165	20
Syracuse	\$34,633,444	\$1,656	\$33,129	20
Albany	\$12,277,614	\$1,231	\$23,397	19
Binghamton	\$8,197,229	\$1,365	\$23,210	17
Brentwood	\$29,930,731	\$1,813	\$43,507	24
Yonkers	\$15,972,077	\$ 680	\$14,964	22
New York City	\$1,007,777,490	\$1,015	\$23,340	23

"The Campaign for Fiscal Equity spent 15 years in the courts and the legislature working to ensure that our classrooms are adequately funded to provide teachers, programs and services so that every public school student in New York receives their constitutional right to a sound basic education. This report clearly shows that Governor Paterson's proposed \$2.5 billion cut to education drives a hole in the bottom of the education funding glass emptying resources ranging from \$15,000 to \$40,000 from every classroom across the state. There is an alternative. The Fair Share Tax Reform Act asks New Yorkers who make over \$250,000 to dig a little deeper so that the we can continue to fill the education glass, and invest in the economic future of our students and, thereby, the long term economic growth of our state," said Geri Palast, Executive Director, Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Advocates expressed support of the personal income tax legislation introduced in the Senate yesterday that would raise personal income taxes for wealthy New Yorkers earning over \$250,000 annually and would generate up to \$6 billion in new revenue. Currently the highest tax rate in New York State is 6.85% for those earning at least \$40,000 annually. The new legislation would increase percentage rates for \$250,000 annual income earners to 8.25%, \$500,000 to 8.79% and for those earning over \$1,000,000 annually the rate would increase to 10.35%.

A FAIR SHARE TAX REFORM MODEL			
Income Bracket	Rate Increase	New Tax Rate	New Revenue
Above \$250,000	1.40%	8.25%	\$568 million
Above \$500,000	2.12%	8.97%	\$823 million
Above \$1,000,000	3.45%	10.30%	\$4.6 billion
TOTAL	--	--	\$6.0 billion

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute, New York State Department of Taxation and Finance

"The Governor's proposal takes much-needed resources from our schools, classrooms and children. If we as a state are going to recover from the failures of Wall Street, we must reignite the engines of economic prosperity by putting forward a budget that reflects our multi-year commitment to provide every child with a quality education in an excellent school. To have a stable and thriving economy in the future, we must start in the classrooms," said Glynda Carr, Executive Director of Education Voters of New York.

"As a parent of a New Scotland Elementary School student I am frightened that these cuts will have a drastic and negative impact on our children. Many school improvements have been fought for and have just begun to be implemented here in Albany such as; reduced class sizes, additional after-school programs, as well as increased extracurricular classes like foreign language, music and art. All of these great opportunities are now being placed on the chopping block due to these substantial state cuts to education. For the sake of our children and their success in the future, these cuts must be restored," said Leah Golby, Citizen Action member.

Sixty-four percent of the 673 school districts in the state face cuts greater than \$15,000 per classroom, with 60 districts facing cuts in excess of \$30,000 per classroom. The districts with the most dramatic cuts are spread throughout the state. Rural districts in different regions such as Bradford Central School District in Steuben County, Whitesville in Allegeny County, and Lyons in Wayne County, join Brentwood, Hempstead and Wyandanch on Long Island, large cities like Syracuse and Rochester and small cities like Newburgh, Norwich and Schenectady as examples of districts facing cuts exceeding \$30,000 per classroom.

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