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**Governor Cuomo's Budget Increases School Funding Disparities
Based on Race & Poverty:
Findings of Budget Analysis Prepared by Alliance for Quality Education for
NYS Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus Briefing**

Albany—The Alliance for Quality Education presented a budget analysis to the NYS Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic & Asian Legislative Caucus at a briefing for Caucus members held at the State Legislative Office Building in Albany today. The report was prepared by the Alliance for Quality Education and the Public Policy & Education Fund of New York. Governor Andrew Cuomo has proposed record setting \$1.5 billion in cuts to public schools. The report analyzes the differing impacts of these proposed cuts based on student demographics of poverty and race. The report, titled *Widening the Funding Gap: Race, Poverty and Governor Cuomo's Education Cuts*, also examines the impact of the cuts on funding from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity lawsuit.

In commenting on the report and the impacts of the cuts, Dr. John H. Jackson, the President and CEO of The Schott Foundation for Public Education said, "In our country, education is a civil right. The president has said it. Governor Cuomo has said it. New York has to assess what is necessary to provide students a fair and substantive opportunity to learn - and ensure that the resources necessary to do that are protected. The budget that is currently before the state does not accomplish that goal. In fact it would be a setback because it takes back the funding provided under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. As proposed the Governor's budget cuts would widen the gap in educational opportunity based on poverty, race and zip code."

Highlights of the report include:

Funding Gap Widens by 14% Under Governor's Budget Proposal

- If enacted Governor Cuomo's budget would result in a 14% growth in the funding gap between the state's lowest performing schools known as *Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI)* and schools in the state's highest income districts.
- The current gap of \$1,712 per student would grow to \$1,960 per student under the Governor's budget proposal. If the Governor's proposed cuts are enacted *SINI* schools would need \$900 million in additional funding to match the high income schools despite the fact that there is much greater need in the *SINI* schools.
- In the *SINI* schools, 69% of students are African American and Hispanic, compared with 9.73% in the higher income school districts.

High Minority Districts Face Cuts More Than Double Those in Low Minority Districts

- High need small city, suburban and rural schools with the highest concentration of Black and Hispanic students face cuts per pupil that are more than double the cuts in comparable low need districts with the lowest concentration of Black and Hispanic students. Under Governor Cuomo's budget thirty high need districts with a student population that is 71% Black and Hispanic face

cuts of \$773 per pupil compared to \$333 per pupil in thirty low need districts with 3% Black and Hispanic student enrollment.

- Four out of the five large cities in the state, Buffalo, New York City, Syracuse and Yonkers face cuts per pupil that are 1.6 to 2.5 times as large as those in the low minority districts analyzed.

Impact of Governor's Budget on Campaign for Fiscal Equity

- Out of the Governor Cuomo's \$1.5 billion in proposed cuts, 79%, or \$1.2 billion constitute cuts to the foundation aid funding that was increased as a result of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit. Coupled with last year's cut of \$1.1 billion to foundation aid (basic classroom operating aid), this year's budget would take back the remaining foundation aid funding increases that were provided to school districts in 2007 and 2008 as a result of the legislative resolution of the CFE lawsuit.
- In 2007 the legislature and the governor agreed to increase foundation aid (basic classroom operating aid) by \$5.5 billion over four years. Over 70% of this foundation aid goes to high need schools and districts in order to ensure every student has access to educational opportunity.

"The disparity of the proposed cuts based both on race and poverty is disheartening," said Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education. "If this budget goes through it will be a significant step backwards in closing the funding and achievement gaps. Most of the proposed cuts could be reversed if the Governor and the Senate Majority were not insistent about cutting taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers."

"We remain hopeful that New York's elected leaders will find a solution to the real fiscal challenges the state faces that do not setback the progress that has been made in closing the achievement gap," said Dr. Jackson of the Schott Foundation. "When it comes to priorities, record cuts for school children combined with tax cuts for the highest income earners may not make sense. New York simply cannot cut itself to prosperity." Dr. Jackson is a nationally recognized civil rights and education reform leader.