

## Is It Fair For Our Governor to Hold School Funding Hostage

Dear Parents and Community Members,

In an unprecedented move, the Governor of New York State is refusing to release State Aid runs and is withholding State Aid increases unless his personal educational reform agenda is adhered to. State Aid runs indicate the amount of funding the state provides to our school district in the upcoming year. These runs are needed for us to create and plan a budget. The Governor is attacking our public education system at all levels. He is attempting to take local control away from our public schools. There are already very good processes in place for public schools to make the decisions at the local level. All stakeholders in the school district community, including taxpayers, parents, teachers, students, school boards and other school leaders play an important role in our decisions.

The Governor wants to base 50% of a teacher's evaluation on state tests, which have a flawed scoring system. He wants to extend the tenure period for teachers from three to five years. The Governor also proposed adding more Charter Schools across the State, along with increasing their financial support from the State. He continues to attempt to force small and rural schools into mergers. He has even stated that our public school system is broken.

While we believe that no system is perfect and we recognize there is always room for improvement, we are very proud of what we have accomplished in the Chittenango Central School system and community. We provide outstanding educational opportunities for our students and continue to strive for excellence in all areas, even though our resources have been significantly depleted over the past five years. Our teachers and administrators have worked very closely and cooperatively to adjust to the demands of the new educational reform measures. The Governor does not express the level of respect that we all deserve. The Governor's agenda has nothing to do with what is best for our children.

In 2010 – 2011 the legislators approved implementation of the GAP Elimination Adjustment (GEA) reductions to State School Aid. Chittenango Central Schools' reduction in 2010 – 2011 was \$2,989,176. Our cumulative GEA loss over the past five years totals \$12,899,393. We have cut positions and programs, consolidated resources, are participating in cooperative purchasing, sharing services, have had employee concessions and are closing Lake Street Elementary School in order to maintain financial stability. It is time to say "enough is enough". We need the money owed to our students in order to provide the educational opportunities needed to be successful in college and their careers.

Please contact our local legislators and urge them to push back against these misguided proposals. Let them know that we need the GEA restored in its entirety. You may utilize our school website at: [www.chittenangoschools.org](http://www.chittenangoschools.org). You can find legislative contact information under the public information section on our website.

We welcome you to attend the initial public budget informational meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 17, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in the Chittenango Middle School cafeteria. We will begin to present our projected 2015 - 2016 budget without knowing our State Aid budget projections for next year.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Schiedo  
Superintendent of Schools