

I am Martha Oldfield, President of the Frankfort-Schuyler Teachers Association. The Frankfort-Schuyler School District has a student enrollment of more than 1100.

Of the 1100 students, 37% receive free and reduced price lunches. This means more than one in three of our students live in poverty and qualify for financial assistance in purchasing their school lunch. Children living in poverty often require additional services in order to maintain academic progress.

We have invested in early childhood programs such as Universal Pre-k and serve over 36 children in our Pre-k program.

The State uses the Combine Wealth Ratio to measure community wealth for the purposes of calculating state aid. This ratio is comprised equally of an income per pupil and the full value of property per pupil. An average district has a Combined Wealth Ratio of 1.0. In Frankfort-Schuyler, our CWR is 0.43. This means we have less than half the wealth of an average school district in New York.

Despite our low wealth we are making a strong local effort. The local property tax levy has been increased by 15% from 2009-10 to 2012-13.

Even though we are a low wealth, high poverty, high tax community Frankfort-Schuyler has been significantly impacted by recent State Aid cuts.

State Aid has been reduced from \$10.24 million in 2009-10 to \$9.51 million in 2012-13. This is a 7% reduction over three years.

Given the State Aid cap that will limit growth in State aid, it is not clear if we will ever fully recover from the effects of the cuts.

The lack of resources is having a direct impact on our educational program. Since 54% of our revenues come in the form of State Aid, these reductions have had a significant impact on programs for our students.

Given that we are already a high tax district it is not realistic to ask local taxpayers to make up the difference in these lost funds. The tax cap only complicates this issue further.

The loss of funding to Frankfort-Schuyler has impacted the programs that we can offer our students.

1. Class sizes at the elementary level have increased. Kindergarten is now in the low 20s and there are upper elementary classrooms with 27 children.

2. The closing of one of our two elementary schools in 2011 has created an increase in bus time for the students who now no longer have a neighborhood school to go to and the combined elementary school is bursting at the seams. Multiple special education programs are being run in the same classroom and teachers don't even have room to store their supplies within their classrooms.

3. The Laying off of teachers or the reduction of positions to part time has left elementary students with reduced time for elementary art, band and chorus; the foreign language teachers instructing 6 preps in at least four levels and cut the seventh grade foreign language program. Our elementary art teacher will have 527 students this year. How is that conducive to student growth?

4. Distance learning has been attempted to offer students electives, but it is not the solution. Our students drop the classes at an alarming rate because of the lack of access to a classroom teacher.

5. Cuts in supplies have left some teachers buying their own and the music program relying on the \$10,000 they won from a Glee competition to purchase music.

6. There is no longer a late bus from school, so students who need extra help have to find a ride or teachers give up their lunch and preparation periods to provide assistance.

In short, while Frankfort-Schuyler has taken significant steps to balance the budget during a time of fiscal austerity, we have reached a point where the problem cannot be solved at the local level. We need additional state aid to continue to provide a high quality education to our needy students. Eliminate the gap elimination. Fully fund CFE. Eliminate the tax cap supermajority requirement. Thank you.