

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C.

September 14, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We are writing to request your immediate support and assistance in securing funding for two school districts in the North Country that have been left out of all COVID-19 relief and ignored by former Governor Cuomo's Administration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected students and teachers in every school across New York State. Fortunately, the unprecedented level of federal support has equipped the vast majority of New York's schools with the resources necessary to safely resume in-person learning and address the many impacts of the pandemic on our students, educators, and communities. However, Indian Lake Central School District and Long Lake Central School District have not received any supplemental federal funding and remain in dire need of support as they welcome students back into the classroom for the new school year.

New York State has received over \$14 billion in supplemental federal funding through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund for K-12 school districts to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and support schools dealing with the added costs of safely reopening and making up for lost instructional time. While 90 percent of the supplemental funding was required by law to be allocated to school districts based on their Title I-A allocations, much of the remaining 10 percent was discretionary funding for New York State to allocate based on the state's determination of emergency needs. Even with the state-level reservations required in the most recent ESSER allocation, New York State was provided the flexibility to direct over \$728 million from the multiple rounds of ESSER funding towards addressing the unmet needs of students and school districts.

As you know, very small school districts are not included in the annual Title I-A allocations if they lack a minimum number of eligible children. Many states recognized this issue and used a portion of their ESSER discretionary funds to ensure all small rural school districts receive some funding to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 as they continue to serve the students and families in their communities. Yet to date, these two school districts in the North Country have not received any supplemental federal funding.

To equip all students across the state, regardless of the size of the school they attend, with the necessary support to overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we request your administration direct available funds to provide immediate assistance to Indian Lake Central

School District and Long Lake Central School District. Based on projections generated from the FY2020 Title I-A allocations used to distribute most of the supplemental federal funding to school districts, had these two school districts not been excluded due to their size, they would have received at least the following amounts in supplemental funding:

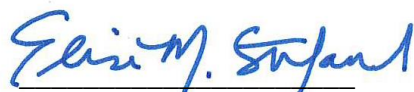
- Indian Lake CSD: \$98,400
- Long Lake CSD: \$68,900

A possible source of funding is the \$10 million in Bullet Aid that your administration is in the process of allocating to school districts, public libraries, and non-profit institutions. Additionally, New York State could use funds from the \$12.75 billion in federal aid provided through the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund to cover the costs of eligible expenses incurred by these two school districts.

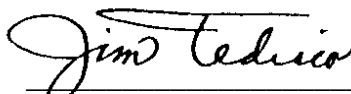
We made similar requests to former Governor Cuomo's Administration, including a July 9th letter to the Division of Budget highlighting the existing inequity and urging a swift solution to ensure these North Country school districts receive an equitable amount of COVID-19 relief funds. The Cuomo Administration did not even dignify the needs of these two school districts with a response and appears to have made no effort to act on our proposed solutions. Your administration must do better for our students and communities.

We look forward to working with you to secure funding for these two North Country school districts to ensure all children have the resources and opportunity to receive an excellent education as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

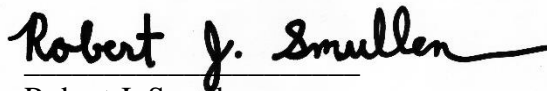
Sincerely,



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



James N. Tedisco
49th Senate District



Robert J. Smullen
Colonel US Marine Corps (Ret.)
Member of Assembly, 118th District