



**CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY  
SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION**  
c/o Pam Brown  
P.O. Box 33, Panama, NY 14767  
716-483-4340 or 716-782-4688

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Raymond Fashano  
Executive Director

Pam Brown  
Administrative Assistant

Date

Senator Catharine Young  
District Office  
Westgate Plaza  
700 W. State Street  
Olean, NY 14760

Dear Senator Young:

As a voter, taxpayer and resident of the \_\_\_\_\_ Central School District, I urge you to support and fight for:

- The repeal of the Gap Elimination (GEA) in the 2015-16 school year, and
- Use the state's financial sanctions windfall to restore funds already taken by the GEA.

The total aid taken by GEA from the Chautauqua County Association of School Boards districts is staggering! During the past three years, our districts have also operated under the tax levy gap, which is particularly toxic in our region of low wealth communities. In a high wealth community, a one or two percent levy can raise huge amounts of money. The Chautauqua County region doesn't have that kind of wealth, so the one or two percent raises are only minimum amounts, while continuing to place a greater financial burden on local property owners. If the state were paying its share and restoring funding taken by the GEA, there would be far less reliance on local property taxes. Our programs cannot sustain and our mission cannot be accomplished without adequate resources. The financial plight of school districts has not diminished; it is deeper than ever due to the state's systematic withdrawal of funding. Without resources, there are cuts in programs and staff and fund balances are used for emergencies.

Schools are unique in that they are made up of people, so when program funding goes, people lose their jobs. It is estimated that several hundred jobs have been eliminated in Chautauqua County Schools.

Districts are running out of places to make significant reductions. Districts are running out of fund balance savings. Districts cannot continue to fund unfunded mandates imposed by New York State.

We call on New York State to step up to its constitutional and moral obligation to adequately fund education for the children in this state and in our country.

Sincerely,