

My name is Joseph Gill, and I am the Vice President of New York ACORN. I am writing to you to urge Gov. Spitzer to continue the education funding implemented for the first time in the previous fiscal year, which we greatly appreciated. We have started down the path to excellence, but now is not the time to waver from that path – we need to continue the funding past the down payment that was placed last year. While my home school district, the Hempstead School District, received \$4.19 million in 2007, we need the remaining money that has been promised to us if our kids are going to continue toward excellence.

Additionally, it is critical that the entire fund is delivered through the foundation formula and that no politically motivated money is targeted to wealthy school districts at the expense of other school districts that are in bad condition. The foundation formula must be the sole vehicle for distributing classroom aid. We also need every school district to sign the contract for excellence, which was a landmark achievement from the Spitzer administration. Unfortunately, many districts, including Hempstead, were not required to sign the contracts. This must change, and all districts must partake in this incredible mechanism for ensuring accountability in school funding.

Thank you for taking my input into consideration, and I would once again like to urge you to follow through on the school funding for the 2008-09 school year.

Joseph Gill
Vice President, New York ACORN
Co chair, Hempstead East ACORN