



**Lower Hudson Council  
of School Superintendents**  
A Non-Profit Corporation In Pursuit of Education Excellence



February 28, 2017

Dear NYS Assembly and Senate Members representing Westchester County,

We are writing on behalf of the Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents and the Westchester Putnam School Boards Association in support of legislation that would amend the rate-setting mechanism for Special Act Public School Districts (Bill # A5618 Abinanti/S4530 Murphy).

Six of the remaining ten Special Act Districts are in Westchester County, and they struggle to survive based on an inadequate funding formula and a very high need student population. Special Acts are public school districts, subject to all of the mandates, regulations and expenses of public schools (employee benefits - TRS and ERS, APPR, audit requirement, curriculum and graduation requirements, etc). However, their rates are set using the same methodology as 853 (c) private schools and therefore these public school costs are not included in their rate.

We support Assemblyman Tom Abinanti and Senator Terrence Murphy's legislation to amend the statute governing special act school districts (Article 89) by removing the word "a" and changing the word "methodology" to "methodologies." This simple change will allow for more than one rate setting methodology, allowing the NY State Education Department to create a new separate methodology that will reflect the unique needs of Special Act Public School Districts, including public school district costs.

The Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents and the Westchester Putnam School Boards Association know that this legislation is an important step towards implementing a rate-setting mechanism that will appropriately accommodate the needs of these children, their success and the viability of each special act school district depends on it.

Thank you for your support of this time-sensitive legislation and your ongoing support of public education.

Sincerely,

Lisa Davis, Executive Director,  
Westchester Putnam School Boards Association

Mary Fox Alter, President,  
Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents