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ABSTRACT

A look at the figures in a recent report, "The State of Learning," reveals that for the students in New York City, who are almost one third of all those in the State's public schools system, the state of learning is deplorable. The children who are most at risk receive fewer resources than their more advantaged peers. Minorities constitute 82 percent of the City's public-school enrollment, and the City has by far the greatest concentration of poor children and students with language deficiencies. In addition, 11.1 percent of the City's students are in special education. New York City spent substantially less per pupil than comparably-sized districts in the downstate area and received less state aid per pupil than the state average. The City had the largest number of uncertified teachers, the greatest percentage of inexperienced teachers, and fewer teachers and staff per pupil than other state districts. Almost uniformly, the City's schools had the lowest levels of performance on state-administered tests. While the report reiterates the state's commitment to the principles that every child can learn and that every child is entitled to the resources necessary to provide opportunity, the current inequities must be addressed in order to focus on the children's needs. Six tables provide supporting data. (SLD)

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# The State of Learning

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## The State of Learning

*New York: the State of Learning.*<sup>1</sup> That is the title of the most recent report to the Governor and the Legislature on the educational status of public and private schools in New York state. Dated February, 1994, it is the sixth annual accounting submitted by the State Education under Section 655 of the State Education Law.

A look at the figures reveals that for the children in New York City almost a third of all those in the state's public school system – the state of learning is, indeed, deplorable. In the words of the report, "those children who are most at risk of school failure receive fewer resources than their more advantaged peers."<sup>2</sup>

Who are these children at risk?

- Minorities constituted 82 percent of New York City's public school enrollment, compared to 17.3 percent of public school enrollment elsewhere. In New York City 77.8 percent of minority students attended schools with relatively few non minority students.<sup>3</sup>
- New York City had by far the greatest concentration of poor children by both poverty measures used in the report.<sup>4</sup> 67 percent of the state's students attending public schools with concentrated poverty attended school in New York City.<sup>5</sup>
- Pupils with language deficiencies (LEP pupils) were concentrated in New York City, where public and non-public schools enrolled 79 percent of all identified LEP pupils in the state.<sup>6</sup>
- The majority (91 percent) of the 159,000 state students eligible for aid under the Emergency Immigrant Education Assistance Program attended New York City schools. One in seven City public school pupils was eligible for the program.<sup>7</sup>
- New York City serves 108,331 students (11.1 percent of enrollment) in special education programs. The report found an over representation of Blacks and Hispanics in ungraded, self-contained special education classrooms.<sup>8</sup>

What resources were invested to provide for these children?

- New York City received \$ 3,140<sup>9</sup> in state aid per pupil in 1991-1992 compared to the state average, \$3,346 per pupil<sup>10</sup>. The average for all suburban districts was \$3,033.<sup>11</sup>
- New York City spent substantially less than comparable districts in the downstate area, \$7,495 per pupil, compared to median expenditures per pupil of \$7,634 statewide and \$ 11,362, the median expenditure in the downstate suburban areas surrounding the City.<sup>12</sup>

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- New York City's wealth under the formula is below average for the state. Its property value per pupil and income per pupil were below the state average throughout the decade. With the state average wealth ratio approximately at 1:00, New York City's combined wealth ratio (CWR) was 0.976 in 1991-92.<sup>13</sup>

What effect did this serious lack of resources have on educational outcomes?

- New York City had the largest number of uncertified teachers, the greatest percentage of inexperienced teachers and a median teacher salary level that was close to the median salary level for the state. While the City employed the highest percentage of teachers with more than a masters' degree, City schools with the largest minority enrollment had the fewest of these teachers.<sup>14</sup>
- New York City staff ratios show that it has substantially fewer teachers and professional staff per pupil than other districts. New York City's elementary classes averaged 5 more pupils – and secondary classes averaged 7 to 9 more students – than classes outside the Big five.
- New York City pupils had fewer computers to use than students elsewhere. They had less access to public and cable television and there were fewer library books per student in the City schools. The number of books per student in New York City, 9.5 was half the number in Rural (21), Suburban (20.6) and Other City Districts (18.2).<sup>15</sup>
- Almost uniformly, schools in New York City had the lowest level of performance on state administered tests.<sup>16</sup> New York City, "which, compared to other school categories, had relatively low expenditures per pupil, larger class sizes, larger percentages of uncertified teachers, and higher teacher turnover, as well as fewer technological resources and library books, was the least successful category on every measure."<sup>17</sup>

The disparities reflected in these data reveal the inequities in the use of resources and educational outcomes that are reported to the Governor and the Legislature in the Chapter 655 report. These disparities have grown over the last five years. According to the report, "Little was accomplished, however, in reducing the disparities among districts in expenditure per pupil, although changes in State aid legislation, if fully implemented, have the potential to do so."<sup>18</sup>

The report reiterates the state's commitment to two principles: that every child can learn and "Every child in New York State is entitled to the resources necessary to provide the sound, basic education which the State Constitution requires. The requirement is not equality of input but equity of outcomes." These statements represents a clear challenge to the legislature. Lawmakers in 1994 *can* achieve greater equity in the distribution of state aid. But to do so they must break through old patterns of political trade-offs and focus on the needs of children.

<sup>1</sup> The State Education Department, Fiscal Analysis and Services Unit, Albany, N.Y. *New York: the State of Learning*, a Report to the Governor and the Legislature on the Educational Status of the State's Schools: submitted February 1994.

<sup>2</sup> *New York: the State of Learning*, Vol.I. p. xxiv.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 1.7 and 1.8 p.25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 93-94.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 93-94.

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<sup>9</sup> *Analysis of School Finances in New York State School Districts, 1991-92*. State Education Department, Fiscal Analysis and Services Unit. Albany, N.Y. November, 1993. Table 14, p.22. Pupil count is CAADM. No separate figure for NYC state aid appears in the 655 report.

<sup>10</sup> *New York: the State of Learning*, Table 3.2 p.42. The pupil measure used in this figure is CAADM, combined Adjusted Average Daily Membership.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 3.3., p.37.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 82-87.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxxi.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.123.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.

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**TABLE 1**  
**STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**  
**FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE**

| Location             | Enrollment |               |               |                  | Annual Attendance Rate | Dropouts and Youth at Risk |                      |                            |          | Graduates    |                         |                    |
|----------------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|----------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|                      | Total      | Percent White | Percent Black | Percent Hispanic |                        | Percent Other              | Census Poverty Index | Percent Free/Reduced Lunch | LEP Rate | Dropout Rate | Percent Regents Diploma | Percent to College |
| New York City        | 971,690    | 18.0%         | 37.3%         | 35.7%            | 9.0%                   | 30                         | 79.2                 | 15.3                       | .062     | 21           | 81.9                    | 16.2               |
| Large City Districts | 122,733    | 36.6          | 46.1          | 14.5             | 2.8                    | 32                         | 76.9                 | 7.4                        | .072     | 20           | 70.9                    | 14.0               |
| Other City Districts | 249,448    | 76.1          | 15.9          | 5.8              | 2.2                    | 17                         | 45.3                 | 2.6                        | .043     | 39           | 75.7                    | 14.2               |
| Suburban Districts   | 1,061,621  | 86.9          | 6.1           | 4.1              | 2.9                    | 6                          | 18.9                 | 2.0                        | .018     | 46           | 82.8                    | 14.3               |
| Rural Districts      | 232,253    | 95.1          | 1.9           | 1.5              | 1.5                    | 14                         | 37.7                 | 0.5                        | .025     | 41           | 70.3                    | 13.7               |
| Total State          | 2,637,745* | 58.9*         | 20.0*         | 16.1*            | 5.0*                   | 18                         | 48.8                 | 7.1                        | .040     | 38           | 80.3                    | 14.4               |

\*Includes students enrolled in BOCES programs.

**TABLE 2**  
**STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**  
**FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE**

| Location             | Classroom Teachers |                          |               |                   |                     |               | Fiscal Data       |                                   |                       |               |                     |             | % Distribution of Expenditures |       |           |                              |           |      |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|------|
|                      | % Minority         | Annual Turn-over Percent | Median Salary | Certification     |                     |               | Median Years Exp. | Percent Master's +30 or Doctorate | Expend Per Pupil Unit | Fiscal Data   |                     |             | Instruction                    |       |           | Distribution of Expenditures |           |      |
|                      |                    |                          |               | Percent Permanent | Percent Provisional | Percent Other |                   |                                   |                       | NYS Revn Shar | Combnd Wealth Ratio | Exclu Fr Bn | Fmg Bnft                       | Total | Cent Admn | Tran                         | Debt Serv | Misc |
| New York City        | 32.9               | 13                       | 43,217        | 67.3              | 22.8                | 9.9           | 13                | 44.3                              | 7,495                 | 43.9          | 0.976               | 64.0        | 14.6                           | 78.6  | 2.0       | 5.4                          | 3.1       | 11.0 |
| Large City Districts | 17.8               | 8                        | 55,797        | 76.9              | 17.4                | 5.7           | 17                | 22.7                              | 8,483                 | 56.1          | 0.710               | 60.6        | 15.0                           | 75.6  | 1.3       | 6.4                          | 3.3       | 13.5 |
| Other City Districts | 4.8                | 6                        | 44,600        | 84.1              | 11.1                | 4.8           | 18                | 21.7                              | 8,234                 | 46.9          | 0.863               | 61.1        | 13.7                           | 74.8  | 1.8       | 4.1                          | 5.7       | 13.7 |
| Suburban Districts   | 2.6                | 7                        | 51,451        | 86.5              | 9.4                 | 4.0           | 19                | 29.0                              | 9,115                 | 32.8          | 1.122               | 60.7        | 13.6                           | 74.3  | 2.1       | 5.3                          | 4.6       | 13.7 |
| Rural Districts      | 0.9                | 7                        | 37,119        | 81.2              | 13.4                | 5.3           | 16                | 11.4                              | 7,169                 | 58.1          | 0.548               | 59.2        | 12.7                           | 71.9  | 2.7       | 5.7                          | 7.0       | 12.7 |
| Total State          | 13.9               | 8                        | 44,999        | 77.8              | 15.3                | 6.9           | 17                | 30.7                              | 8,241                 | 40.9          | 0.998               | 61.7        | 14.0                           | 75.7  | 2.0       | 5.3                          | 4.3       | 12.7 |

\*Percentages may not add to 100% because of rounding.

**TABLE 3**  
**STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**  
**FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE**

| Location             | Pupil Evaluation Program<br>% Above SRP |                 |                    |                    |                 | Program Evaluation Tests<br>Mean Scores |        |                        |                              |                              | PCT<br>% Above SRP |                    |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---|--------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                      | Grade 3<br>Reading                      | Grade 3<br>Math | Grade 5<br>Writing | Grade 6<br>Reading | Grade 6<br>Math | Grade 4 Science                         |        |                        | Grade 6<br>Social<br>Studies | Grade 8<br>Social<br>Studies | Grade 8<br>Reading | Grade 8<br>Writing |
|                      |   |                 |                    |                    |                 | Objective Test<br>Content               | Skills | Manipulative<br>Skills |                              |                              |                    |                    |
|                      |   |                 |                    |                    |                 |   |        |                        |                              |                              |                    |                    |
| New York City        | 65                                      | 82              | 80                 | 65                 | 78              | 20                                      | 10     | 26                     | 38                           | 40                           | 82.8               | 87.7               |
| Large City Districts | 75                                      | 92              | 89                 | 74                 | 88              | 21                                      | 10     | 30                     | 40                           | 43                           | 86.9               | 88.7               |
| Other City Districts | 88                                      | 98              | 96                 | 90                 | 96              | 24                                      | 12     | 32                     | 44                           | 48                           | 92.7               | 93.0               |
| Suburban Districts   | 93                                      | 99              | 97                 | 93                 | 98              | 24                                      | 13     | 33                     | 46                           | 52                           | 96.6               | 95.7               |
| Rural Districts      | 90                                      | 99              | 95                 | 92                 | 97              | 24                                      | 12     | 33                     | 45                           | 51                           | 96.3               | 93.9               |
| Total Public         | 82                                      | 92              | 90                 | 83                 | 90              | 22                                      | 11     | 31                     | 43                           | 47                           | 90.9               | 92.2               |

**TABLE 4**  
**STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**  
**FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE**

| Location             | Regents Examinations     |              |                            |                          |              |                            |                          |              |                            |                          |              |                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
|                      | Comprehensive English    |              |                            | Global Studies           |              |                            | U.S. History/Government  |              |                            | Comprehensive French     |              |                            |
|                      | % of<br>Enroll<br>Tested | %<br>Passing | % of<br>Avg Enr<br>Passing | % of<br>Enroll<br>Tested | %<br>Passing | % of<br>Avg Enr<br>Passing | % of<br>Enroll<br>Tested | %<br>Passing | % of<br>Avg Enr<br>Passing | % of<br>Enroll<br>Tested | %<br>Passing | % of<br>Avg Enr<br>Passing |
| New York City        | 28.3                     | 68.2         | 19.3                       | 40.1                     | 65.4         | 26.2                       | 21.1                     | 71.1         | 15.0                       | 4.6                      | 93.1         | 4.3                        |
| Large City Districts | 41.8                     | 76.0         | 31.8                       | 48.1                     | 64.2         | 30.9                       | 38.8                     | 71.4         | 27.7                       | 10.0                     | 78.8         | 7.9                        |
| Other City Districts | 54.8                     | 88.2         | 48.4                       | 62.7                     | 79.9         | 50.1                       | 53.6                     | 87.1         | 46.7                       | 14.1                     | 91.6         | 12.9                       |
| Suburban Districts   | 64.1                     | 91.0         | 58.4                       | 72.1                     | 85.7         | 61.8                       | 64.4                     | 89.9         | 57.9                       | 15.7                     | 94.7         | 14.9                       |
| Rural Districts      | 59.6                     | 89.7         | 53.5                       | 69.4                     | 80.9         | 56.2                       | 57.5                     | 86.4         | 49.7                       | 19.1                     | 92.5         | 17.7                       |
| Total Public         | 49.6                     | 85.6         | 42.4                       | 59.0                     | 79.1         | 46.7                       | 46.8                     | 85.7         | 40.1                       | 11.8                     | 93.3         | 11.0                       |

TABLE 5  
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

| Location             | Regents Examinations  |           |                      |                    |           |                      |                    |           |                      |                     |           |                      |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|
|                      | Comprehensive Spanish |           |                      | Sequential Math I  |           |                      | Sequential Math II |           |                      | Sequential Math III |           |                      |
|                      | % of Enroll Tested    | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing | % of Enroll Tested | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing | % of Enroll Tested | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing | % of Enroll Tested  | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing |
| New York City        | 22.6                  | 95.1      | 21.5                 | 47.5               | 65.0      | 30.9                 | 30.5               | 68.8      | 21.0                 | 20.0                | 74.0      | 14.8                 |
| Large City Districts | 24.5                  | 81.6      | 20.0                 | 60.8               | 52.5      | 31.9                 | 40.3               | 53.3      | 21.5                 | 25.4                | 66.6      | 16.9                 |
| Other City Districts | 26.7                  | 94.1      | 25.1                 | 65.0               | 80.9      | 52.6                 | 54.2               | 78.2      | 42.4                 | 38.1                | 80.6      | 30.7                 |
| Suburban Districts   | 35.3                  | 95.4      | 33.7                 | 78.7               | 86.1      | 67.8                 | 66.3               | 82.4      | 54.7                 | 49.0                | 84.0      | 41.2                 |
| Rural Districts      | 25.4                  | 95.5      | 24.2                 | 77.4               | 82.1      | 63.6                 | 60.3               | 79.0      | 47.7                 | 40.5                | 80.7      | 32.7                 |
| Total Public         | 28.8                  | 94.8      | 27.3                 | 65.8               | 78.7      | 51.8                 | 51.3               | 77.9      | 39.9                 | 36.3                | 80.9      | 29.3                 |

TABLE 6  
STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
FEBRUARY 1994 REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND THE LEGISLATURE

| Location             | Regents Examinations |           |                      |                    |           |                      |                    |           |                      |                    |           |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|
|                      | Earth Science        |           |                      | Biology            |           |                      | Chemistry          |           |                      | Physics            |           |                      |
|                      | % of Enroll Tested   | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing | % of Enroll Tested | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing | % of Enroll Tested | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing | % of Enroll Tested | % Passing | % of Avg Enr Passing |
| New York City        | 13.0                 | 63.4      | 8.2                  | 33.0               | 57.9      | 19.1                 | 22.2               | 65.3      | 14.5                 | 12.8               | 71.5      | 9.1                  |
| Large City Districts | 33.7                 | 51.6      | 17.4                 | 37.7               | 59.8      | 22.5                 | 23.7               | 61.2      | 14.5                 | 14.9               | 65.7      | 9.8                  |
| Other City Districts | 52.0                 | 78.1      | 40.6                 | 51.6               | 80.0      | 41.3                 | 36.5               | 79.8      | 29.2                 | 20.0               | 85.5      | 17.1                 |
| Suburban Districts   | 64.3                 | 83.1      | 53.4                 | 67.2               | 84.0      | 56.4                 | 48.1               | 85.3      | 41.1                 | 26.0               | 90.2      | 23.4                 |
| Rural Districts      | 66.9                 | 78.0      | 52.2                 | 62.7               | 80.9      | 50.7                 | 40.5               | 82.2      | 33.3                 | 20.7               | 89.2      | 18.5                 |
| Total Public         | 44.5                 | 78.9      | 35.1                 | 52.3               | 76.9      | 40.3                 | 36.4               | 79.7      | 29.0                 | 19.9               | 84.8      | 16.9                 |