



## Lansingburgh Central School District

District Office

55 New Turnpike Rd • Troy, NY 12182

Dr. Antonio W. Abitabile, Ed. D.

Superintendent

(518) 233-6850

September 17, 2020

Lansingburgh School Community,

As some of you may have seen in the news recently, the Director of New York State Division of Budget, Robert Mujica, asserted yesterday in the *Times Union* that “some school districts are acting prematurely as they undertake mass layoffs; the fact is the state hasn’t withheld 20 percent of school aid” (Source: <https://tinyurl.com/y4tbfymm>). Unfortunately, this simply is not entirely accurate nor does it consider the long term effects for our district. I felt it necessary to communicate with all of you so that everyone has a better understanding of the situation.

To date, our school district has already received a cut in its Excess Cost Aid, which is a delayed payment from the 2019-20 school year that arrives over the summer. The district was expecting to receive about \$777k for that aid payment, but received \$160K less. That not only represents a cut greater than 20% but it also came without any notification from NYS.

I know there have also been some stories in the news about the state now saying that aid payments in September will not be cut by 20% as previously announced. This is indeed encouraging news and we are grateful that the state will not be withholding these funds. However, it still is not enough to safely open additional buildings.

Expense driven state aid is a broad term that encompasses about nine different types of revenue that school districts receive. Throughout the year, the district receives aid in different amounts, depending on the category, with some months getting significantly more than others. The district only receives 30% of our state aid from July through February, but during that same time it experiences about 65% of its expenses or costs. It would be financially irresponsible of us not to make our recent expense cuts in anticipation of likely losing further state aid in the coming months. For example, if we physically opened more of our school buildings now and our state aid payments were cut in March, we would not have enough cash on hand to finish out the school year.

With the cancellation of the September aid cut, it now reduces our potential loss in money from state aid to \$5.8 million, which is only slightly less than the \$6.5 million we originally anticipated. This does not include the added costs associated with safely reopening the schools due to COVID-19. Our hope is that we will continue receiving assurance from the state that the rest of our aid money will be dispersed as the school year continues, enabling us to open all of our buildings safely and return our children to school.

I apologize in advance, as trying to explain school budgeting is never easy even in normal times. If you would like to talk about this further, I am always available to talk or answer your questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Abitabile'.

Dr. Antonio W. Abitabile, Ed. D.



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**D.**

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