



Achieve with us.®

**29 British American Blvd.
2nd Floor Latham, NY
12110
518-439-8311
thearcny.org**

Dr. John Kowalczyk
President

Erik Geizer
Chief Executive Officer

Executive Committee

Daniel Martindale
Senior Vice President/
Vice President Capital Region

Cheryl Englert
Vice President Western Region

Anne Gordon
Vice President Metro Region

Susan Lucas
Vice President Hudson Valley Region

Richard Rima
Vice President Capital Region North

David Irish
Vice President Finger Lakes Region

Ellen Feldman
Vice President Central South Region

Rosa Rodriguez
Secretary

Joseph Zifchock
Treasurer

Steven Drobysh
Assistant Treasurer

Rose Mary Cella
Member-at-Large

Saundra Gumerove
Immediate Past President

September 29, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

RE: S.6516-A (Mannion)/A.8013 (Benedetto)

The Arc New York is a family-led organization that advocates and provides supports and services to people with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities, emphasizing choice and community engagement. With 37 Chapters across New York state, our organization supports more than 60,000 individuals and families and employs more than 30,000 people statewide.

The Arc New York strongly supports S.6516-A (Mannion)/A.8013 (Benedetto), which amends the Education Law to establish a tuition methodology for 4410 special education preschools and 853 special education schools to provide annual growth commensurate with that of public school district foundation aid.

The Arc New York Chapters across the state operate schools that provide special education services to preschool children ages 3-5 (4410 schools) and school-age students ages 5-21 years (853 schools) for their local school districts. 4410 and 853 schools serve students whose local school districts and BOCES are unable to educate them because of the severity of their disabilities. The children who attend our 4410 and 853 schools are public school children who are placed by their school district's Committee on Special Education (CSE) or Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) only after all public settings have been considered and determined inadequate to meet the needs of the student. For those children placed by their school district in approved special education schools and preschools, our programs meet the federal mandate to provide a "free and appropriate public education" (FAPE).

Unfortunately, these educational institutions have historically and inequitably been underfunded, which has caused teachers to be underpaid for their contributions and makes it increasingly difficult to attract and retain these valuable and critical educators. Students and children with intellectual and other developmental disabilities deserve the same level of funding afforded to all other children in New York. 4410/853 schools provide a federally mandated FAPE in the least restrictive environment, while addressing their individual needs.

(Mannion)/A.8013 (Benedetto), aims to begin to correct this injustice by ensuring that 4410 special education preschools and 853 special education schools receive the same funding increases as public schools, even though this does not address current gaps in funding between public schools and special education schools.

As we seek to close disparity gaps in education across the state, we hope you will include children with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities by signing S.6516-A (Mannion)/A.8013 (Benedetto) into law. This funding crisis has been years in the making, but now we finally have the opportunity to take one more step towards a more equitable system of supports and services for children. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to provide information on this important topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erik Geizer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Erik Geizer
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Robert Mujica
Dan Fuller
Senator Mannion
Assemblymember Benedetto