



**City School District of Albany  
2020-21 Legislative Priorities  
Provide Financial Support to School Districts to Address  
Unintended Consequences of Raise the Age**

The City School District of Albany fully supports raising the age of criminal responsibility to 18. Governor Cuomo's efforts to raise the age and implement other reforms including PINS, Bail and Discovery are the right thing to do for New York's children.

However, as an unintended consequence of these reforms, school districts like ours have had a dramatic increase in justice-involved students in our schools. Those students need additional services, and our district needs financial support to provide those services so that we can do our part to ensure that the state's Raise the Age law will have a positive impact on our community.

In Albany, statewide juvenile and criminal justice reforms have coincided with an increase in at-risk behavior among youth in the community, placing a greater burden on community resources that our district once counted on to assist with students most in need of academic, social-emotional and behavioral support. The result is a meaningful impact on student behavior in our schools.

Our district addresses the needs of justice-involved students through the Family and Student Support Team (FASST) and the Connecting Youth in Transition (CYT) program. Raise the Age has strained both.

- FASST is a grant-funded program that seeks to divert students away from the legal system by directing them to alternative resources such as anger management, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health and trauma services. FASST funding is limited and provides only 10 hours a week for a trained professional to assist students and families in creating the service plan necessary to link them to critical resources.
  - FASST had 10 referrals for the 2018-19 school year and already had five through October of this year. We request funding to expand FASST staffing to one full-time employee.
- CYT is a federally funded program that works to connect teens and young adults ages 14-24 who have had contact with law enforcement, have dropped out of school or are in danger of dropping out of school without the support services that are vital to leading them toward positive outcomes.
  - CYT served 36 students during the 2018-19 school year and had eight referrals through October of the current year. However, funding for the CYT program is scheduled to expire next August. We request support from the state to maintain this program in 2020-21.

We also urge the state to provide additional support for social-emotional and behavioral staff to provide meaningful programming that will assist students in matriculating back into a comprehensive educational program, and to assist school districts in meeting the complex needs that justice-involved teens present when they are being supervised in the community with a matter pending in the legal system.

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**VISION STATEMENT**

*The City School District of Albany will be a district of excellence with caring relationships and engaging learning experiences that provide equitable opportunities for all students to reach their potential.*

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*We will work in partnership with our diverse community to engage every learner in a robust educational program designed to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for success.*