



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Local Electeds Join Westchester and Rockland Students to Fight for Literacy Education**

Yonkers, N.Y. – Westchester and Rockland County literacy students, volunteers and administrators, as well as Westchester and Rockland County local electeds, will gather Thursday, April 1 on the steps of Yonkers Riverfront Library to call on state lawmakers to restore funding to local literacy programs across the state.

*Details of the press conference are as follows:*

**Where: Yonkers Riverfront Library**

**1 Larkin Center**

**Yonkers NY 10601**

**When: 1:30 p.m.**

The current state budget proposals would cut more than \$2 million – or about one-third of all state funding to literacy assistance programs across New York. This cut is in addition to a \$612,000 cut from the 2009-10 Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP). With last year's DRP reduction of funding, literacy programs throughout the state are now looking at a nearly 40% cut over last year's funding.

“Twenty-two percent of New Yorkers are below basic literacy level,” said Patricia P. Rajala, President/CEO of Literacy Volunteers of Westchester and Rockland Counties, Inc. “That is the same percentage found in Westchester and Rockland County. Our volunteers and staff serve over 200 students each year in Yonkers alone. This literacy program not only supports and educates those with significant literacy needs,” said Rajala, “but it provides the community and the state with an educated workforce will ultimately give back ten-fold.”

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*Since 1977, Literacy New York (LNY) has been a leading advocate for adult literacy in New York State and nationally. Literacy New York provides technical, program, and training assistance and workshops to a network of 37 local, community-based affiliates who annually provide over 400,000 hours of reading and basic skills instruction to adult learners.*