New York, NY – September 20, 2012 – The Citizens Budget Commission (CBC) today released an interactive map of school districts in New York State that enables comparisons of how per-pupil spending varies throughout the state. School districts in New York spend, on average, much more than the national average – $18,825 versus the U.S. average of $10,292 in 2010; however, there is a high degree of variation among districts. Among the findings that the interactive map reveals are the following:

- Average spending per pupil ranges from a low of $15,014 in the Mohawk Valley to a high of $20,706 on Long Island. New York City spends $20,276. Within the highest spending regions there is also a high degree of variation. For example, Montauk in Long Island spends $36,700 per pupil while Floral Park spends $13,950. In the Hudson Valley, Elmsford spends $27,868 per pupil and Wappingers Falls spends $14,210.

- On average, districts across the state are spending $13,578 per pupil, or 72 percent of the total, on instructional versus support services. The national average is 64 percent. However, the results for individual districts range from lows of 54 percent in Wyoming in the Finger Lakes and 57 percent in Garrison in the Hudson Valley, for example, to a high of 80 percent in New York City.

- The percentage per pupil spent on fringe benefit costs, including pensions and health insurance in New York, is much higher than national norms. Statewide, districts spent 20 percent on fringe benefits compared to a U.S. average of 13 percent. This amounts to a per-student figure that is nearly three times the U.S. average – $3,688 per pupil versus $1,330.

“The wide variation in per-pupil spending across New York should be the topic of public discussion,” said Elizabeth Lynam, CBC’s Vice President and Director of State Studies. “In addition, New York is way out of line when it comes to paying fringe benefits, and this too should be addressed, given the continuing need to rein in state and local spending.”
The map – and additional information describing it and its use – is available here. To participate in the conference call at 2:00 pm with Elizabeth Lynam, a leading expert on State funding of education, please dial 424-203-8075, and enter access code 370598#. Callers are asked to announce themselves and their affiliations when joining the call.

*Founded in 1932, the Citizens Budget Commission is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, civic organization devoted to influencing constructive change in the finances and services of New York State and New York City governments.*