

March 2005

Education

From the NYS Assembly · Sheldon Silver, Speaker
 Steve Sanders · Chair, Education Committee
 Sandra R. Galef · Chair, Libraries and Education Technology Committee

Assembly budget invests in our children's future Plan provides \$790.5 million more for schools

The Assembly passed a budget resolution that provides a sound investment in our children's future - increasing school aid by \$790.5 million over last year ([Resolution C322](#)). The Assembly's plan provides more resources and reforms, and it establishes a foundation formula to more equitably distribute education funds - one based on, among other variables, student need.

Providing a sound education for every child

The new foundation formula sets the stage for the kind of real education funding reform called for under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) case. That's a step toward providing a good education for every

What the experts are saying about the governor's budget...

"Pataki's most recent refusal to propose a realistic solution to the school funding crisis - yes, crisis - smacks of the most cynical sort of political and legal gamesmanship. That he rolled out the same proposal by another acronym - SBE or Sound Basic Education plan - means he is more interested in stalling than easing the plight of a million children in the city and beyond."

- New York Newsday editorial

"Of course, the \$526.2 million state aid increase is still far short of what districts need to keep up with inflation and for the state to meet the requirements of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity court decision demanding more aid for schools."

- Alan Lubin, Executive Vice President, New York State United Teachers

"At a time when the federal government's commitment to funding our schools is decreasing, New York has to step up and provide fair funding to the state's public schools, BOCES and higher

child in this state - ensuring that every school has sufficient resources and enhancing accountability.

As the Assembly has done in each of the last 10 Pataki budgets, it rejected the governor's education cuts - cuts that would be felt by both students and local taxpayers. Highlights include:

- rejecting the governor's BOCES cut as well as the governor's cuts to special education for handicapped children and other educational programs
- adding funding for high-need districts, minor maintenance, transportation services, teacher training programs and instructional materials
- fully funding early education (LADDER) programs like universal pre-K and class-size reduction to last year's levels
- increasing funding for the Extended Day/School Violence Prevention Program by \$1.5 million - restoring the governor's veto of last year

To further improve public accountability, ensure better fiscal oversight and ultimately save tax dollars, the Assembly budget also provides \$2.9 million

education institutions. The governor has presented again a state budget proposal that is severely lacking, falling far short of what the Regents recommend and the courts have ordered."

- Robin Rapaport, President,
National Education Association of
New York

"The governor wants to build the rainy day fund, but the courts have made it clear that it's already a rainy day for schoolchildren in New York. Our kids can't wait any longer for a quality education - the schoolhouse roofs are leaking, literally and figuratively."

- Karen Schaff Co-chair, Alliance
for Quality Education

"It's utterly inadequate. It's both trivial and insufficient. The governor is woefully underfunding our schools."

- Shamira Ahmed, Deputy Director,
Campaign for Fiscal Equity

"Full funding as provided in the Assembly proposal could save a librarian's job or help restore a book budget. After six years of having to cut budgets, this funding would be a small step back in the right direction."

- Bill Pontius, Director, Friends of
the Rochester Public Library

"The Assembly's budget resolution, which provides full funding under the 2000 Census, will help libraries provide more services to the community such as downloadable audio-books, DVDs and access to the Internet. The restorations will aid library resource sharing -

for school district audits to be conducted by the State Comptroller.

reducing the burden on local taxpayers. "

- Josh Cohen, Executive Director,
Mid-Hudson Library System

Supporting community libraries

The Assembly also restores nearly \$4.5 million in aid for local libraries that was vetoed by the governor last year. This restoration would generate \$500,000 in federal matching funds that were lost last year due to the governor's veto. The Assembly provides an additional \$2.6 million to ensure that library aid is distributed based on the 2000 Census - correcting the fact that the governor has deliberately ignored New York City's population growth and, as a result, is drastically underfunding its libraries. Additionally, the Assembly's proposal protects libraries that lost population. For a look at the Assembly's library funding restorations, visit: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/Lib/2005Library/>.

Rejecting the governor's irresponsible budget

The Assembly believes it cannot allow the governor to balance his flawed budget on the backs of students and taxpayers. The governor's budget will gamble our children's future on funding from video lottery terminals (VLTs) while speeding up a tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent of New Yorkers - those making over half a million dollars a year. His priorities are misplaced. We must invest in education to unlock our children's full potential - not gamble on their future with risky fiscal schemes. That's why we reject the governor's proposal to create eight new non-racetrack franchises to operate VLTs as well as his tax break for the wealthy.

The Assembly's plan truly invests in New York's students and ensures that those resources make it to the teachers in our classrooms to produce the results we need for a better tomorrow.

With school districts planning their budgets, it's critical to know how much school aid to expect. For a comparison of the Assembly's school aid funding for your district compared to the governor's, visit:

www.assembly.state.ny.us/comm/Ed/2005AssmEdRuns/.

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