

July 2004

Education Special Session

From the NYS Assembly • Sheldon Silver, Speaker
Steve Sanders • Chair, Education Committee

"The school funding proposal advanced yesterday by the governor is a joke. It only pretends to meet the court-mandated obligation to provide a sound, basic education to the city's children"

Assembly rejects governor's flawed school funding proposal

*School aid cuts are **not** reform*

Just days before the deadline to comply with a court decision mandating a sound, basic education for New York's school children, Governor Pataki simply dusted off his previously inadequate proposal and tried to pass it off again as a meaningful solution.

The Assembly rejected the governor's legislation and has called on the Senate to meet in public conference committees to negotiate a solution that will provide all of New York's children with an education that will allow them to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.

What the experts are saying...

"The governor's plan rehashes an inadequate proposal that was dead on arrival six months ago."

– *Michael Rebell, Campaign for Fiscal Equity executive director (New York Times, 7/21/04)*

"We do not believe that the funding reform package (Pataki) proposes for public education will prove acceptable to the courts. We are disappointed by his failure to endorse the Legislature's plan for funding education on a two-year cycle."

The Assembly rejected the governor's so-called CFE plan for one very simple reason – no matter how he tries to spin it, *school aid cuts are not reform*.

Pataki's proposal jeopardizes all schools

The governor's proposal fails to meet the court's mandate. The governor's last-ditch, last-minute legislation was merely a warmed-over version of the failed proposal he put forward earlier this year after missing deadline after deadline.

Instead of showing leadership and providing a *real* solution, the governor continues to play his game of delay and denial.

In fact, Pataki's proposal:

- Contains no school aid runs, so school districts don't know what to expect
- Goes backwards, providing even less to high-need New York City schools than his previous proposal
- Wastes money on creating a new bureaucracy, instead of strengthening existing oversight and ensuring that education dollars are spent in the classroom
- Ignores the capital needs of our schools and the fact that children can't learn in overcrowded, antiquated classrooms
- Doesn't even mention the federal aid he said is part of his proposal

In addition, the \$2.5 billion he's proposing for regular school aid over five years is actually less than what has been historically provided by the Legislature for overall education aid.

One of the most troubling parts of the governor's proposal is that because it could be found lacking by the courts, it risks creating a "Robin Hood" situation which jeopardizes schools all across the state. Financial gains made by New York City schools could come at the expense of struggling Upstate schools.

Assembly plan invests in New York's children, New York's future

The Assembly is the only one who has passed a comprehensive school financing reform plan that complies with the four requirements of the court's decision in the CFE case:

- Establish the cost of a sound, basic education

– *Timothy Kremer, New York State School Boards Association executive director (7/20/04, NYSSBA press release)*

“Pataki needs to cut out the games and show some leadership.”

–*New York Post editorial (7/21/04)*

“The governor and Senator Bruno are still being irresponsible in failing to reach an agreement with the Assembly due to their stubborn support of a school aid plan that doesn't meet the requirement of the state's constitution.”

– *Regina Eaton, Alliance for Quality Education Executive Director*

“We feel that (the governor's) bill would hurt teachers, educators and ultimately the children of New York due to the onerous aspects of this legislation.”

– *National Education Association of New York*

- Reform the funding formula
- Ensure that every school has sufficient resources
- Enhance accountability

Unlike the governor and Senate, the Assembly's plan provides real details and real numbers. See for yourself on the Assembly Web site at:

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/Press/20040602a/schoolaid.html>.

The Assembly's plan is the right choice for our children and for the future of New York State. Each year, it's the Assembly that must fight to provide schools with the resources they need to meet high academic standards. The Assembly is committed to making the right choice, and we will continue to fight the governor's reckless plan and work to ensure all of New York's children have an equal opportunity to succeed.

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