

Letter from Chair



Dear Friends:

The Assembly Education Committee has worked to increase funding to education. The 2013-14 state budget will increase school aid by \$936 million for a total of \$21.2 billion. This will allow us to strengthen our schools, encourage innovation and promote positive learning environments for all of our students in New York State. The Education Committee reported bills on topics including student privacy, oversight of pre-school special education and standardized testing.

This has been a challenging assignment and I am grateful for the support of the Speaker and my colleagues who serve on this committee. I look forward to continue advocating for the many students in New York State.

Sincerely,

Catherine Nolan
Catherine Nolan
Chairwoman

2013 -14 Education Budget

The 2013-14 state budget increased funding to education by \$936 million for a total of \$21.2 billion. The budget included \$25 million for additional half-day and full-day pre-kindergarten slots and \$20 million for extended learning time. The budget also authorizes the State Education Department to establish a teacher and principal “bar exam” that will produce a higher quality student-teacher experience.

In addition, the budget also includes:

- \$14.26 million for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers;
- \$86.9 million in Aid to Public Libraries;
- \$137.5 million in Aid to Nonpublic schools;
- \$4.5 million for Safety Equipment for Nonpublic Schools;
- \$693,000 for the conservation and preservation of library materials and the Talking Book and Braille Library;
- \$16.8 million for summer programs for the Blind and Deaf in order to prevent the upfront cost shift onto school districts for these programs;
- \$5.16 million for the administration of the High School Equivalency Diploma exam;
- \$5.2 million for Adult Literacy Education;
- \$1 million for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) transition funding;
- \$150,000 for the Executive Leadership Institute;
- \$250,000 for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards;
- \$6.9 million for Supplemental Valuation Impact Grants;
- \$250,000 for the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities at SUNY Albany; and
- \$450,000 for the Council of the Humanities

Commissioner King addresses the committee



Commissioner John King spoke at one of our committee meetings. He highlighted the State Education Department's priorities. He also answered several questions from committee members pertaining to state aid, teacher evaluations and student records. The Education Committee looks to hold hearings regarding these issues, including one on testing. We will continue to hold the State Education Department accountable and work to ensure that every student in the state gets a quality education.

Education highlights

Changes to the high school equivalency diploma

The General Education Development test is changing. In 2011, the American Council on Education and Pearson came together to form a new for-profit entity called GEDTS. The new company will now administer the GED test. This year GEDTS announced that the price of the test will increase to \$120, more than doubling the original price. In addition, students must take the test on the computer; the option to use paper and pencil will be eliminated.

In response to this announcement, the New York State Education Department put out a request for proposal for the development and administration of a new high school equivalency exam. Several companies responded and, in March, the State Education Department entered into an agreement with CTB/McGraw-Hill for a new test. The new test will start in January, 2014, use a phase-in approach for computer-based testing, be aligned to the new common core standard and cost approximately \$54 a test. The state will continue to pay the cost of the test.

The Assembly was successful in negotiating into the budget \$5.16 million in funds to cover startup costs to fund the new test. This new contract will allow the state to continue delivering the exam in a more cost-effective way without hurting people.

Increased oversight of pre-school special education

This year the Assembly Education Committee reported and both houses of the legislature passed A.7302-A (Nolan) which would mandate audits of every special education services program provider for preschool children with disabilities in the state.

This bill will increase the oversight of special education services and programs for preschool children with disabilities. More specifically, this bill requires a committee on preschool education (CPSE) that recommends placing a child in an approved program which conducted an evaluation to indicate in writing that such recommendation is an appropriate placement for the child. They would also have to provide notice to the Education Commissioner about the placement.

The bill will also require the New York State Comptroller to audit expenses of each 4410 provider at least once before March 31, 2018 and inform the Governor and Legislature of its findings. SED will also be required to study the feasibility of adopting alternative cost reimbursement methodologies for funding 4410 schools. The New York Times detailed problems with these programs and our committee will continue to review this issue.

Legislation to protect student privacy

This year the Assembly Education Committee reported and the Assembly passed A.7872-A (Nolan) which would allow parents of students and students age 18 or older – to opt out of the State Education Department's disclosure of personally identifiable information to a third party.

Recently, the New York State Education Department agreed to share confidential student information with inBloom Inc. (formerly known as the Shared Learning Collaborative). inBloom will compile a database of private student information on behalf of the State Education Department.

The Assembly's legislation allows parents and students to opt out of the distribution of personally identifiable student information to inBloom Inc. and other third-party companies. It also directs the State Education Department to develop the information and forms necessary for parents and students to do so.

New NY Education Reform Commission

The Commission has traveled around the state for regional public meetings to hear from stakeholders including superintendents, principals, policymakers, teachers, parents and students about their experiences and concerns. The Commission has reviewed testimony and has put out a draft report that begins to solve the challenges that public education faces today. Some of the proposals in the report were funded by the 2013-2014 state budget:

1) Full-Day, High-Quality Pre-K Program: \$25 million toward higher need students in lower wealth communities/school districts and will be awarded via a competitive process through the State Education Department.

2) Extended Learning Time: \$20 million to support high-quality extended day and/or extended school year programs that are academically enriched. Funds will cover full cost of expanding learning time for students and will be awarded via a competitive process through the State Education Department.

3) Community Schools: \$15 million to community schools to integrate social, health, mental health, and other critical services to support students and their families. The Council of Children & Families will develop the RFP and SED will administer it.

4) Reward High Performing Teachers: \$11 million to reward our best and brightest educators starting with those who teach secondary math and science.

5) Early College High School Programs: to improve college access and success by offering students the opportunity to get an early start on college during their high school years.

Legislation reported by the Assembly Education Committee in 2013

Education bills passed by both houses of the Legislature:

A.1398-A - Authorizes boards of cooperative educational services to enter into contracts with public libraries for high-speed telecommunications services.

A.2126-A - Authorizes students and camp attendees to carry and use topical sunscreen products in school with the written permission of their parents.

A.4772-C - Relates to the powers and duties of the joint schools construction board of the city of Syracuse and the city school district.

A.5565 - Extends for two years provisions of law relating to bus maintenance contracts for the Madison-Oneida board of cooperative educational services.

A.6435 - Authorizes a board of cooperative educational services to establish a repair reserve fund.

A.6708 - Extends for three years the state law that allows local governments to donate surplus computer equipment to schools, libraries and other not-for-profit organizations.

A.6881-A - Requires notice to a parent about their right, upon written request, to have an additional parent on a Committee on Preschool Special Education for annual review of the child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

A.7197 - Relates to extending the leases of real property by boards of cooperative educational services.

A.7433-A - Requires a study concerning the cost of installing hard-wired carbon monoxide detectors in schools.

A.8049 - Extends until December 31, 2013, implementation of teacher training requirements established by the Dignity for All Students Act.

Education bills passed by the New York State Assembly:

A.29 - Relates to siting requirements for the New York city school construction authority's leasing program.

A.121 - Requires the Board of Regents to give the public adequate notice of its meetings, the agendas and actions taken by the Board.

A.151-A - Restricts the sale, lease, transfer and certain uses of existing outdoor school playgrounds.

A.3805 - Authorizes school districts to purchase manipulatives with money that has otherwise been set aside for the purchase of textbooks.

A.6058-A - Requires compliance with the uniform land use review procedure for the disposition of school property in New York City.

A.6593-A - Prohibits the use of standardized tests of students in kindergarten through grade two.

A.6715-A - Establishes procedures for the orderly closure of a special act school district.

A.6995-A - Provides that the Rochester city school district may provide transportation to pupils that live more than one-half mile from the school.

A.7428 - Relates to the cost allowance used to compute aid for capital improvement projects for the South Country Central School District.

A.7484-A - Authorizes the reorganization of the Alexandria Central School District and the Thousand Island Central School District into a new central school district.

A.7714 - Creates a new tier of charter school transition aid for school districts with high concentrations of students in charter schools.

A.7756 - Requires boards of education to determine whether to close school on a day when a considerable number of students may be absent for the celebration of a religious or cultural day.

A.7873 - Prohibits a fee for any exam that would award a high school equivalency diploma.

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NYS Legislature re-elects two members to the Board of Regents



On March 12, 2013 a joint session of the legislature voted to re-elect both Regent Geraldine Chapey and Regent Betty Rosa to another 5-year term. New York State Assemblymembers Benedetto, Sepúlveda, Gjonaj, Nolan, Gibson, Dinowitz and Crespo joined in congratulating Regent Rosa on her re-election to the Board of Regents.



New York State Assemblymembers Moya, Weprin, Nolan, Clark, Titus and Senator Stavisky joined in congratulating Regent Chapey on her re-election to the Board of Regents.

2013 Update from the New York State Assembly



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Sheldon Silver, Speaker • Catherine Nolan, Chairwoman

Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Chair

New York State Assembly Committee on Education

Legislative Office Building, Room 836

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