



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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2014-2015 State Budget Increases School Aid by \$1.1 Billion

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO April 30, 2014

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The New York State Senate passed the 2014-15 education budget that will increase school aid by \$1.1 billion, bringing total support for public schools to \$22.1 billion. The 2014-15 State Budget distributes school aid fairly and equitably across the state, will help reduce pressure on local property taxpayers, provides additional support for charter schools and for early education programs, and makes important changes to address serious concerns raised about the Common Core program.

Senator John Flanagan (R-C-I, East Northport), Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said: “This budget, when you include funding for the STAR program, provides \$25.7 billion in state support for public schools across the State of New York. That represents a five percent increase over last year, the single largest area of growth in the entire state budget. Our single largest obligation is to ensure the best possible education for our children. We have addressed many areas of concern raised by parents, teachers and schools, so we can achieve that goal.”

Education highlights of the 2014-15 State Budget include the following:

GEA – The Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) was an unfair school aid cut imposed by Democrats in 2010 when they controlled all three branches of government. Every Senate Republican voted no on the GEA, which has cost school districts to lose significant state aid.

Due largely to the Senate Republican Conference, the state is reducing the GEA by \$602 million in this year’s budget, the single largest reduction in the GEA since it was implemented over our objections.

Common Core Delay – To respond to serious concerns regarding the state’s Common Core program and over-testing in schools, the budget includes the following actions:

- Prohibits administering standardized tests to students in Pre-K through grade two;
- Prohibits state assessment test scores for grades three through eight from being recorded on a student’s permanent record;
- Prevent school districts from making any student promotion or placement decision solely based on the state-administered assessment tests for grades three through eight;

- Limits the amount of time that can be spent on state assessment tests, locally-developed standardized testing, and test preparation; and
- Protects the privacy of personally identifiable information and creates a parents bill of rights for data privacy and security.

Pre-K Funding – The state’s new pre-kindergarten program will provide \$1.5 billion over five years. Every school district across the state can receive up to \$10,000 per child for full day pre-K.

Charter Schools -- The 2014-15 State Budget provides additional aid to charter schools over the next three years of \$250 per student in 2014-15; \$350 in 2015-16; and \$500 per student in 2016-17. Charter schools will also be eligible for Pre-K funds. The budget also recognizes that local districts will be held harmless from any additional costs associated with charters in their communities.

Smart Schools Bond Act – Voters will decide this fall on a proposed \$2 billion bond act that would provide schools with funding for new technologies such as: high-speed broadband or other wireless connectivity in schools; and new learning technologies including interactive whiteboards, tablet, laptop, and desktop computers.

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