



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Senator Lanza Fights to Return One Billion to Schools by Eliminating the GEA

ANDREW J LANZA February 11, 2015



Senator Andrew Lanza joined with his Senate Republican colleagues in Albany to call for the complete elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) to protect our public schools and taxpayers. The Conference proposed a plan that would return \$1 billion to schools across the state by accelerating the complete elimination of the GEA in the 2015-16 state budget.

“As a member of the Senate Education Committee, my priority has been, and will continue to be, the complete elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA). Since regaining control of the Senate in 2011, the Senate Republican Majority has worked to restore more than \$1.6 billion in funding that was lost to schools under the GEA. Today, we’re making it clear that we will continue to work together to make record investments in education funding with our primary focus on eliminating the devastating effects of the GEA,” stated Senator Lanza.

The GEA was first imposed on New Yorkers as a budget gimmick in 2010 by former Governor David Paterson and the Democrats who controlled the Senate and Assembly. Senator Lanza and the entire Senate Republican Conference voted against the GEA because it created severe cuts to the bottom lines for public schools and harmed taxpayers and students.

Since it was first approved, Senate Republicans have been leading the effort to abolish the GEA and deliver major funding increases to help mitigate the GEA's impact on education. The GEA cuts have been reduced by 62 percent – from a high of \$2.6 billion in the 2011-2012 budget to \$1 billion in the 2014-15 budget – to help restore billions of dollars in state aid to schools.

Last year alone, the Senate Republicans successfully negotiated an additional \$602 million – 86 percent more than the Governor proposed and nearly seven times more than what the Assembly proposed – to help schools overcome the GEA challenge created by Democrats. That funding represented a major step towards lessening the GEA's burden on school budgets, but there is still more than \$1 billion in GEA budget cuts anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Governor's Executive Budget proposes an overall \$1.1 billion increase in education funding over last year. However, that increase is not specifically tied to the elimination of the \$1 billion needed for this year's GEA.

The Senate Majority is currently preparing its own budget proposal which will include revenue estimates for the next fiscal year, reviews of all new initiatives, and sources of funding that can be found within the Executive proposal. The conference will be proposing a budget that uses the majority of the \$1.1 billion increase proposed in the Executive budget – up to \$600 million – and is working to identify the sources for the additional \$300-\$400 million needed this fiscal year to eliminate the GEA once and for all.