

2017 State Aid Proposal and Budget & Legislative Priorities

Every year, the Board of Regents and State Education Department considers the legislative, policy and state aid funding proposals that are needed for our schools to continue to improve and provide our students with the best education possible.

This year we are focused on providing equitable educational opportunities for all of New York's children. To do this, there must be proper and equitable funding, and our State Aid Proposal is aimed at making that happen.

First, the Foundation Aid formula should be phased in over the next three years.

Second, it's also important that the Formula be updated to address long-outdated student need measurements and remove artificial limits on aid to high-need districts.

Third, the Regents and I propose increasing investments in education including \$1.8 billion more for Foundation Aid increases

In addition, we are proposing \$290 million for priority investments to support key four areas:

- expand Universal Prekindergarten toward achieving the goal of providing pre-k for every four-year old in the state;
- support the education of English language learners;
- increase support for Career & Technical Education College and Career Pathways; and
- provide additional resources for Professional Development for both teachers and principals.

In addition to increased funding, we need commonsense policies that will strengthen our schools and benefit our students across the state.

It's time to make a robust investment and align the existing state-funded Pre-K programs into one streamlined system that is allocational – not competitive. Our districts and our kids should not have to compete against each other for programs we know will help all of them succeed. The Board and I support legislation to simplify and consolidate the funding process for prekindergarten programs.

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve our assessments, we are proposing changes to help our English Language Learners. We want to enable these students to demonstrate their knowledge in their home language by developing a native language arts exam. In addition, we would like to translate required state tests into more languages.

Further, we support reinstating the Language Other Than English Regents Exams in the most frequently taught languages in New York State high schools to provide additional options to meet graduation requirements.

The Board and I also want to ensure all students have the same access and opportunity to higher education. The Regents Education Equity for DREAMers Act would eliminate Education Law

provisions requiring students to be a US citizen or permanent lawful resident to receive general awards, including TAP, academic performance awards, scholarships or other financial assistance. Through this legislation, all of New York's students would have equal opportunity and access to higher education.

Finally, in the East Ramapo Central School District we are seeing great progress being made in the school through the work of our State Monitors and the district's new leadership. We want to build upon that progress next year with continued funding so we can carry on this important work.

With these state aid and policy proposals, we can help every child in New York State reach their full potential in the classroom and in their adult lives.

We look forward to working with our colleagues in the Legislature and in the Executive's office to move this important agenda forward to support New York's children.

Thank you.