



# LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS...

April 2011

## 2011-2012 State Budget On Time!

With a March 31 late-night passage of the state's 2011-2012 budget, Governor Cuomo and Assembly and Senate leaders fulfilled the promise of an on-time budget. The spending plan provides a restoration of aid of \$230 million from the governor's proposed \$1.5 billion cut to education support. The resulting \$1.2 billion reduction mirrors the amount lost in federal stimulus money and remains one of the largest total education cuts in our history. While affording school districts some predictability, this 7% reduction will force significant reductions in staffing, program and depletion of reserves for many.

Important components of the adopted School Year (SY) 2011-2012 budget for education:

- Total state funding for SY2011-2012 will total \$19.6 billion.
- For the next two years, growth in education aid will be capped at the growth in state personal income (approx. 4% this year) with a legislative commitment to provide an \$800 million increase for SY 2012-13.
- Expense driven aids such as transportation, building and special education will run at current reimbursable formulas (not wealth formulas), an increase of \$315 million. Building aid will not be competitive as originally proposed by the governor.
- The school lunch program will receive an increase of \$800,000.
- Payments to charter schools are frozen.
- Adult literacy, bilingual education, library aid, universal pre-K and teacher centers are restored at prior levels.
- School districts and BOCES are authorized to use excess EBALR (unused sick and vacation time) reserve funds to offset the aid reduction.
- Computer hardware, software and textbook aids have been combined to provide districts greater flexibility in prioritizing instructional purchases.
- Funding for school districts already obligated to projects utilizing reorganizational building aid remains.
- Teacher/Teacher mentor programs will be maintained.
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for non-public schools will be maintained
- Reimbursement of MTA tax remains intact.
- The governor's proposal for competitive grants for school administrative efficiency or proven academic progress will be subject to the RFP process and the total amount has been modified from \$500 million to \$50 million (\$25million each).
- Excludes proposed changes to eliminate BOCES aid for non-instructional services.
- Excludes proposed shift of costs for special education summer school to local districts.
- Excludes proposed shift of costs for 4201 schools (schools for blind, deaf and severely disabled students) to local districts. The state will continue to support 90% of the cost.

New York State PTA continues to monitor the legislative process. Minor restorations are appreciated, yet this historic reduction and capping of state spending sets New York's public

schools on a precarious path. And, while we are grateful that a provision for a tax levy cap was excluded from the budget process, we must be mindful that the gauntlet has already been thrown down to consider this as a separate action in the current legislative session. We must remain vigilant – in combination with the adopted budget actions, a tax levy cap will essentially bring our most challenged school districts to the brink of bankruptcy. Notably, we must also hold true to the principle of local determination as reflected in our 1982 adopted resolution to oppose any imposition of a spending ceiling on local school districts.

For state budget details:

<http://www.nyscoss.org/pdf/upload/AssemblySUMmaryofConferenceAgreementson201112StateBudget.pdf>

For your school aid run:

<http://www.budget.state.ny.us/pubs/schoolAid/schoolaidruns30mar2011.pdf>

### **New York's Tobacco Prevention Program At-Risk**

New York's Tobacco Use Prevention Control Program (TCP) has proven effective in cutting teen and adult smoking rates. This is a program that is intended to help people across the state overcome their addictions to nicotine and tobacco. New York State PTA has supported the provisions of, and sustainable funding for, the state's model program, New York Comprehensive Tobacco Control and Prevention Program.

In his budget proposal for the current year, Governor Cuomo proposed keeping funding for the TCP at \$58.4 million. However, the New York State Assembly proposed massive cuts (\$14 million) to the program including eliminating its public outreach efforts. For more information about the program and the effect of New York's media campaign and hotlines, go to:

<http://acscan.org/action/ny/campaigns/savetobaccoprevention/>  
[http://acscan.org/ovc\\_images/file/action/states/ny/TCP\\_flyer.pdf](http://acscan.org/ovc_images/file/action/states/ny/TCP_flyer.pdf)

### **SUNY Chancellor Proposes Five-Year Tuition Plan**

State University of New York Chancellor Nancy Zimpher may be one step closer to having the five-year tuition plan she has been pushing for.

The SUNY Board of Trustees unanimously passed a resolution March 22 authorizing the chancellor to pursue negotiations with the governor and the Legislature to design a tuition plan for resident undergraduate students. For details:

<http://www.suny.edu/sunynews/News.cfm?filename=rationaltuition.htm>  
[http://www.suny.edu/Board\\_of\\_Trustees/webcastdocs/Tuition.pdf](http://www.suny.edu/Board_of_Trustees/webcastdocs/Tuition.pdf)

### **Public Comment Period for Implementation of USDA's Child Nutrition Legislation**

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act allows the USDA, for the first time in over 30 years, opportunity to make real reforms to the school lunch and breakfast programs by improving the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children. The USDA invites comments to the newly proposed regulations until April 13, 2011. For a comprehensive look at the legislation, provisions and opportunity to provide comment, go to:

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR\\_2010.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/CNR_2010.htm)