



NEWS

From Bill Magnarelli

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LET'S TALK EDUCATION!

The approved New York State budget for 2014-15 reflects the Assembly Majority's commitment to investing in our kids' education and to making needed reforms to Common Core.

I am proud to announce that I helped lead the charge in this historic investment in education. The 2014-15 state budget increases school aid by \$1.1 billion, or 5.4 percent, which is \$551 million over the executive budget proposal (A.8556-D). Included within this increase is \$251 million additional funding for Foundation Aid and \$602 million in restorations to the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), helping to reduce the negative financial impact on schools statewide.

My entire tenure in the New York State Assembly has been dedicated to ensuring that every child in New York benefits from a great education. With an increase in school aid of more than 5 percent, significant funding for statewide full-day Universal Pre-K and a bond act proposal to modernize classroom technologies, this year's state budget represents New York's largest investment in our children's future in recent memory.

We have a responsibility to provide our schools and educators with the resources they need to succeed. But for years, our schools have struggled with tough budget cuts, resulting in our students and educational programs suffering. Now, with our economy slowly regaining strength, it's time to fully invest in our schools, students and teachers.

This newsletter is dedicated to providing you details of our investment in education.

Sincerely,

Reforming Common Core

The 2014-15 state budget incorporates recent legislation passed by the Assembly that helps fix the flawed implementation of Common Core. It protects students from unfair consequences based on test results and ensures the security of sensitive student data. The reforms also:

- ban standardized tests for students in grades K-2;
- prohibit Common Core test scores from solely or primarily determining grade promotion;
- delay the use of test results from becoming part of the permanent record for students in grades 3-8;
- make changes to assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners pursuant to a federal waiver submitted by the State Education Department (SED);
- significantly limit the amount of classroom time used for test preparation and assessments;
- direct SED to provide tools, resources and materials to assist teachers in professional development related to the new standards;
- place restrictions on the sharing of student data and requiring SED to appoint a chief privacy officer who will serve a three-year term;
- require the student privacy officer to set guidelines for sharing student data and develop policies to deal with any data breaches;
- require third-party vendors to notify the school or SED of any data breaches and establish penalties for failing to do so;
- create a "Parents Bill of Rights" that places limitations on sharing student data with third-party vendors;
- provide for the elimination of inBloom and require SED to request that all student information already provided to inBloom be deleted; and
- allow schools to opt out of sharing private student information with similar entities and certain privately run data dashboards.

Big Bump in School Aid

The 2014-15 state budget increases school aid by \$1.1 billion, or 5.4 percent over the 2013-14 school year. High-need school districts will receive nearly 70 percent of this increase, helping to ensure that school aid is allocated to the areas where it is needed most. The final state budget also includes:

- \$40 million for UPK programs outside of New York City;
- \$14.2 million in restored support for Teacher Resource Centers; and
- an additional \$5 million in support for public libraries.

The numbers shown are this year's budget increases over last years for the school districts in the 129th Assembly District:

West Genesee \$1,806,505

Westhill \$379,033

Solvay \$1,663,046

Baldwinsville \$1,550,756

Syracuse \$11,910,455



Building Smarter Schools

The final state budget also includes a “Smart Schools” initiative, a \$2 billion bond act that voters will consider that will provide new educational technologies to schools across the state. Eligible projects include infrastructure improvements that bring high-speed Internet to schools as well as the purchase of new technologies for student use that will strengthen classroom instruction. Additionally, Smart Schools enables long-term projects that improve full-day pre-K by constructing new classroom space and investing in high-tech school safety measures.

Boosting TAP, other college opportunity programs

To help students afford the rising cost of college, the budget increases funding for TAP for the first time in 14 years. The maximum TAP award will be increased by \$165 for a maximum award of \$5,165 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student. The budget also addresses an inequity in TAP that treats foster care children or wards of the state as independents rather than dependents, causing their awards to be calculated at a lower rate. This year’s budget remedies this so that TAP awards for these students are calculated at the higher rate that dependent students receive.

The budget also provides \$102 million in funding for college opportunity programs, an increase of \$4.2 million over the executive proposal. The funding restores cuts and provides a 3 percent increase for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program and the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP).

Additionally, the budget connects the NY Youth Works program to community colleges in an effort to create more employment opportunities for urban youth.

Investing in Higher Education

This year’s state budget provides an additional \$20.2 million for community colleges, increasing base aid to SUNY community colleges by \$75 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student, bringing the total to \$2,497 per FTE. This is the third consecutive budget increase in community college funding.

This year’s budget also includes \$8 million in funding for a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) scholarship program. This would provide full tuition scholarships to the top 10 percent of high school graduates attending SUNY colleges or universities if they pursue a STEM career and then work in New York for five years after graduation.

SUNY Downstate Health Science Center, Upstate Medical University and Stony Brook Health Science Center are world-class teaching hospitals. Recognizing the importance of these institutions, this year’s budget restores \$18.5 million to SUNY health science centers.

The budget also restores \$1 million for SUNY ATTAIN computer labs to increase access to technology for those in economically challenged areas. In addition, the budget provides for two loan forgiveness programs, including an increase of \$250,000 for the Social Work Loan Forgiveness Program and \$100,000 for the new Farmers Loan Forgiveness Program.

The final budget also restores \$653,000 to SUNY Child Care Centers, to provide overall funding of \$1.7 million at SUNY.

The budget restores \$1.7 million to SUNY’s Graduation, Achievement and Placement (GAP) program.

Improving our Learning Environments

This year’s budget increases capital spending at SUNY schools by \$272.9 million, for a total of \$1.3 billion. The increases include:

- \$91.9 million for SUNY community colleges;
- \$33 million for SUNY state-supported campuses; and
- The budget also includes \$30 million for the Higher Education Capital Matching Grants program to provide capital grants for private colleges and universities.



Assemblyman Magnarelli recently met with Upstate Medical Students and Dr. Eastwood to discuss the budget’s impact on tuition and financial assistance.



Letter from Sharon L. Contreras Superintendent, Syracuse City School District

I am writing with some especially good news this evening. Today the NYS budget was approved and the Syracuse City School District will receive an additional \$7.4 million in state aid. This additional funding covers our budget gap and actually exceeds it by \$400,000.

We are extremely grateful to **Senators John DeFrancisco** and **Dave Valesky** as well as **Assemblymen Sam Roberts** and **Bill Magnarelli** for their leadership and support during this budget process. **Senator DeFrancisco** staunchly supported the District in his role as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee and **Assemblyman Magnarelli** was instrumental in putting forth and securing an additional \$2 million dollars to support the District's proposal to provide **additional behavior support staff** that will support social-emotional learning in our schools beginning September 2014.

I want to thank **each of you** who took the time to advocate for a fair funding formula. You are on the front lines and clearly understand the impact that budget cuts have on a school district, its staff and the children that you serve every day. While we certainly have not reached the point of fair and equitable funding in New York State, we are getting closer.

I would also like to thank the hard work of **United Syracuse**. This advocacy coalition made up of numerous community organizations, including the **Syracuse Teachers Association**, and spearheaded by **Pam Percival** from **Parents for Public Schools** and **Patrice Chang** from the **NAACP**, was instrumental in helping to ensure that the voices of our 21,000 students were heard in Albany.

These additional funds will prevent hundreds of layoffs as well as the reduction of essential district programs. The New York State budget further includes \$340 million for expansion of universal pre-kindergarten programs. While we do not yet know our district's allocation, we are excited about providing full-day pre-kindergarten for more four-year old children in Syracuse.

Thank you as always for your continued service to our students and families.

~Sharon



About New York State Assemblyman William B. Magnarelli

Assemblyman William Magnarelli represents the 129th Assembly District, which includes the Northside, Westside, Eastwood and Valley areas of the City of Syracuse, as well as the towns of Geddes and Van Buren. He first won election in 1998 for an open Assembly seat and was reelected in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012. During his previous six terms in office, Assemblyman Magnarelli has focused his efforts on bringing more jobs to Central New York, lowering taxes, providing our children a better education at every level, improving our healthcare and keeping our families safe. For more information, contact Assemblyman Magnarelli's District Office at (315) 428-9651 or visit <http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/magnarelli>.