

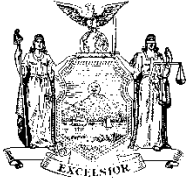
New York State Assembly

Annual 2024 Report

Committee on
Education



Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Michael R. Benedetto, Chair



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEES
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MICHAEL BENEDETTO
82nd Assembly District
Bronx County

December 15, 2024

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie, Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

I am pleased to submit to you the annual report for the Assembly Standing Committee on Education. Thanks to your leadership, the Committee continued to invest in the success of students, teachers, and schools across New York State.

The 2024-25 enacted state budget increased funding for General Support for Public Schools (GSPS) by \$1.3 billion for a total of \$35.3 billion for the 2024-25 school year. The budget increased Foundation Aid by \$934.5 million, for a total of \$24.9 billion. In addition, the Hold Harmless Provision was restored along with an increase of the inflation factor to 2.8 percent. The enacted budget also requires the Rockefeller Institute of Government to examine and recommend potential modifications to the Foundation Aid formula, which must be fiscally sustainable for the state, taxpayers, and school districts.

The Assembly Majority also championed important educational measures including the establishment of a new teacher and principal evaluation system that attempts to restore local control and focuses on professional development and support rather than standardized assessments.

As we move forward into the 2025 legislative session, the Committee will continue to ensure the best for all of our students, teachers and staff in the many city, suburban, and rural school districts across the state.

Sincerely,

Michael Benedetto
Chair
Committee on Education

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Michael Benedetto, Chair

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New York State Constitution states that, “[t]he Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated” (Article 11, Section 1). This constitutional provision establishes the foundation for the areas of responsibility of the Assembly’s Standing Committee on Education.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing educational policies and programs affecting prekindergarten, elementary, and secondary education for approximately 2.8 million children attending both public and nonpublic schools. Within New York State, there are more than 700 school districts, including the nation’s largest, the New York City School District, which enrolls over 1 million students. In addition, 37 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provide occupational education, shared services, special education, and academic programs on a regional basis. The Committee also participates in the process for selecting persons to serve on the New York State Board of Regents.

The Committee works diligently to ensure that the public schools of this large and diverse state provide the range of opportunities that all students need to fulfill their potential. The Committee supports equitable funding and strengthening the quality of public education in the state.

During the 2024 Session, 578 bills were referred to the Education Committee. The Education Committee has broad jurisdiction over all aspects of public education. This report provides a detailed examination of the Committee’s budgetary and legislative achievements in 2024.

II. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Legislature accepted the Executive budget proposal to increase funding for General Support for Public Schools (GSPS) by \$1.3 billion, for a total of \$35.3 billion for the 2024-25 school year.

The following summary provides a brief description of the State Budget:

Foundation Aid

The Foundation Aid formula was established in the 2007-08 school year and acts as a mechanism to ensure that educational resources are distributed to school districts in a comprehensive and equitable manner pursuant to the New York State Court of Appeal's Campaign for Fiscal Equity decision. The formula is based on the average cost of educating students in successful schools, and is adjusted for regional cost differences, poverty levels, pupils with limited English proficiency, and special education needs. In addition, the formula is based on enrollment rather than attendance.

The Legislature increased Foundation Aid by \$934.5 million over the 2023-24 school year, for a total of \$24.9 billion.

The Legislature rejected the Executive's proposal to remove the hold harmless provision.

The Legislature modified the Executive's proposal related to the inflation factor to increase the factor to 2.8%.

The Legislature accepts the Executive's proposal to modify the state sharing ratio.

The Legislature provided \$2 million for the Rockefeller Institute of Government at State University of New York to conduct a comprehensive study of the Foundation Aid formula and issue a report to the Governor and Legislature on or before December 1, 2024. The study, which must be conducted in consultation with the State Education Department and stakeholders, would examine, evaluate, and recommend potential modifications to the formula.

Early Childhood Education

The Legislature provided \$1.2 billion for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK), which includes an additional \$100 million that remains available for districts to expand their prekindergarten programs from a prior year.

The Legislature removed "supplement, not supplant" language that would allow school districts to use their Universal Pre-kindergarten (UPK) and Statewide Universal Full-Day Pre-kindergarten (SUFPK) grants to supplement other funding or grants they receive for pre-kindergarten programs.

The Legislature required the State Education Department to conduct a study on consolidating pre-kindergarten funding streams and make recommendations on potential modifications to streamline the universal prekindergarten funding process and remove barriers with findings to be presented by December 1, 2024.

Teacher Programs

The Legislature restored \$14.3 million for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers.

The Legislature restored \$1.5 million for the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE), for a total of \$13 million.

The Legislature provided \$1 million for the Executive Leadership Institute.

Special Education

The Legislature restored and added funding for the following schools: the Lavelle School for the Blind (\$1 million), the Henry Viscardi School (\$903,000), the New York School for the Deaf (\$903,000), the Lexington School for the Deaf (\$903,000), the Cleary School for the Deaf (\$500,000), the Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf (\$500,000), the Rochester School for the Deaf (\$300,000), and the Saint Francis de Sales School for the Deaf (\$150,000).

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for St. Mary's School for the Deaf.

The Legislature provided an additional \$1.5 million in funding for schools for the blind and deaf (4201 schools), for a total of \$113.4 million.

The Legislature accepted the Executive proposal to extend the deadline for the State Education Department to present its recommendations and analysis from the special education tuition rate-setting methodology study from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2027.

Bilingual Education

The Legislature restored \$385,000 in funding for training programs to increase the number of teachers providing bilingual or multilingual education.

BOCES Aid

The Legislature provided funding for BOCES Aid at its present law level of \$1.3 billion.

Special Services Aid

The Legislature provided funding for Special Services Aid at its present law level of \$225.2 million.

Building Aid

The Legislature provided funding for Building Aid at its present law level of \$3.4 billion.

The Legislature provided a double multi-year cost allowance for the Binghamton City School District.

Transportation Aid

The Legislature provided funding for Transportation Aid at its present law level of \$2.6 billion.

The Legislature provided full funding for Summer Transportation Aid at its present law level of \$5 million.

The Legislature modified the funding cap for Transportation After 4 pm by \$5 million, for a total of \$29.9 million.

The Legislature accepts the Executive's proposal that would allow funds from the New York State Environmental Bond Act to be used for zero emission school bus transition costs without affecting a school district's transportation aid.

High Tax Aid

The Legislature provided funding for High Tax Aid at \$223.3 million.

Nonpublic School Aid

The Legislature provided an additional \$1.9 million for Nonpublic School Aid, for a total of \$241 million.

The Legislature provided an additional \$2.5 million for nonpublic schools to hire science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers, for a total of \$75.5 million.

The Legislature provided an additional \$25 million for capital funding for health and safety projects at nonpublic schools, for a total of \$70 million.

The Legislature provides an additional \$500,000 for Academic Intervention Services for Nonpublic Schools, for a total of \$1.4 million.

The Legislature provided \$1 million for nonpublic schools for additional costs of complying with immunization requirements.

Miscellaneous Aid

The Legislature provided \$180 million to help provide school meal reimbursement at the free-lunch funding level to school districts that participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program.

The Legislature unfroze Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid to provide increased aid to schools seeking to reorganize.

The Legislature provided \$12 million for the Yonkers City School District.

The Legislature provided \$2 million for the Amityville Union Free School District.

The Legislature provided \$2 million for tax certiorari grants.

The Legislature provided an additional \$500,000 for Adult Literacy Education, for a total of \$9.8 million.

The Legislature restored \$1.2 million for the Buffalo City School District Health Services Grant.

The Legislature restored \$1.2 million for the Rochester City School District Health Services Grants.

The Legislature provided \$1.7 million for the Mind Builders Creative Arts Center.

The Legislature provided \$1.1 million for implicit bias training.

The Legislature provided \$750,000 for the Long Island Pre-K Tech Assistance.

The Legislature provided \$650,000 for NYC Kids RISE.

The Legislature provided \$632,000 for Professional Performing Arts School NYC.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for the Teacher Diversity Pipeline Pilot Program.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for the Center for Educational Innovation.

The Legislature restored \$500,000 for the Magellan Foundation.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 to review and update curriculum on the Holocaust.

The Legislature provided \$461,000 for the Bard Early College High School-Queens Program.

The Legislature provided \$400,000 for the Biobus.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for the Universal Hip Hop Museum.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for CWE Credentialling.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for the Fund for the City of New York-Promise Project.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for the Queens College Townsend Harris High School.

The Legislature provided \$240,000 for the Future Giants Advancing Classroom Technology Program.

The Legislature restored \$225,000 for the East Ramapo Central School District monitor.

The Legislature provided \$200,000 for Education through Music, Inc.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the Rochester City School District monitor.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the Hempstead Union Free School District monitor.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the Wyandanch Union Free School District monitor.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for a fiscal consultant for the Rochester City School District.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for BRIC Arts Media.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for the DIA Arts Foundation.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for the Underground Railroad Cultural Education Center.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for the Project Witness.

The Legislature provided \$125,000 for the Oneida Herkimer Madison BOCES School Milk Pilot Program.

The Legislature provided \$125,000 for the Evander Childs Educational Campus.

The Legislature provided \$120,000 for the Bronx Bethany Community Corporation.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for Global Kids.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Hillside Children's Center.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the African American Cultural Museum.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Center for Jewish History.

The Legislature provided \$75,000 for the Storm King Arts Center.

The Legislature provided \$50,000 for Long Island Latino Teachers Association.

The legislature provided \$50,000 for the Organizacion Latino Americana of Eastern Long Island (OLA).

The Legislature provided \$50,000 for the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation.

Miscellaneous Article VIIIs

The Legislature modified the Executive's proposal to extend mayoral control for the New York City School District for two years by increasing the Panel for Education Policy (PEP) to include one independent voting member who shall serve as chair of the PEP, making permanent New York City's maintenance of effort, and ensuring New York City's budget is in compliance with certain requirements.

The Legislature accepted the Executive's proposal to remove the smart schools review board from law and require the Commissioner of Education to carry out the responsibilities of the board.

The Legislature established a zero-emission school bus resource center within New York State Energy Resource and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to provide information for school districts regarding the transition of zero-emission buses.

The Legislature rejected the Executive's proposal to authorize student data to be shared with the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), State University of New York (SUNY), and City University of New York (CUNY) for educational purposes pursuant to the federal Family and Educational Rights Act and for financial program evaluation.

The Legislature modified the Executive's proposal related to requiring the Commissioner of Education to provide and update school districts with instructional best practices for the teaching of reading instruction for students in prekindergarten through grade three to provide the Commissioner until January 1, 2025 to provide instructional best practices, require school districts to only verify best practices once to the Commissioner, and require the Commissioner to define terms necessary to implement the proposal.

The Legislature modified the Executive's proposal related to requiring Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion to ensure a student is not penalized or punished for not completing a FAFSA, DREAM Act application, or waiver form and to provide that schools notify students two times a school year on scholarships instead of four times.

B. BUDGET AND OPERATIONS

A.1390, Paulin; Chapter 571 of the Laws of 2024: This law provides that school district elections may be held in any building owned or leased by a school district.

A.4917-D, Anderson; Chapter 544 of the Laws of 2024: This law adds school anti-violence education programs as an allowable school safety activity under the omnibus school violence prevention grant program, and requires that such programs include school-based or school affiliated programs that are operated by nonprofit organizations which provide evidence-based trauma support and group counseling for youth impacted by gun violence, anti-gun violence education, or youth empowerment programming for students impacted by gun violence.

A.6310-A, Brown K; Chapter 467 of the Laws of 2024: This law allows the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District to establish a reserve fund to reserve against or lessen or prevent increases in the school district's real property taxes or a significant shift in tax liability due to a tax certiorari settlement or judgment.

A.8335, Barclay; Chapter 525 of the Laws of 2024: This law allows the Fulton City School District to establish an insurance reserve fund.

A.9091, DiPietro; Chapter 515 of the Laws of 2024: This law allows the Iroquois Central School District to establish an insurance reserve fund.

A.9218, Norris; Chapter 486 of the Laws of 2024: This law allows the Clarence Central School District to establish an insurance reserve fund.

A.9469, Benedetto; Chapter 132 of the Laws of 2024: This law extends for five years a provision of law allowing BOCES to enter into leases with private entities not to exceed twenty years.

A.9470, Benedetto; Chapter 133 of the Laws of 2024: This law extends for five years a provision that allows BOCES to contract with out-of-state school districts to provide special education, career and technical education services, and online courses relating to the professional development of educators.

A.9934, Magnarelli, Chapter 309 of the Laws of 2024: This law changes the name of the "Syracuse Comprehensive Education and Workforce Training Center" to the "Syracuse Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics" high school.

C. TRANSPORTATION

A.9238-A, Woerner; Chapter 563 of the Laws of 2024: This law changes the amortization period of zero-emission school buses from 12 years to 8 years.

A.9761, Cruz; Chapter 140 of the Laws of 2024: This law bill extends for five years a provision of law directing the Commissioner of Education to promulgate regulations limiting the engines of school vehicles to remain idling while parked or standing on school grounds.

A.10274, Eichenstein; Passed Both Houses: This law limits the allowable transportation aid for Transportation After 4pm by a formula tied to the personal income growth index for the 2025-26 school year and thereafter.

D. GOVERNANCE

A.9855-A, Woerner; Chapter 311 of the Laws of 2024: This law requires boards of education and BOCES supervisory boards to designate at least one student as an ex officio member of such board and removes the requirement that such student be a senior.

A.10042-A, Thiele; Chapter 567 of the Laws of 2024: This law allows the Tuckahoe Common School District to be reorganized as a union free school district.

E. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A.9011-A, Eachus; Chapter 596 of the Laws of 2024: This bill requires that all public schools and BOCES develop a policy for ensuring the health and safety of students and employees on extreme heat days, and to take action to relieve heat-related discomfort. In cases where educational or support services spaces reach eighty-eight degrees or higher, such spaces can no longer be occupied.

A.9777-B, Benedetto; Chapter 361 of the Laws of 2024: This law requires the Commissioner of Education to promulgate rules and regulations on the establishment of statewide protocols for toileting and diapering of students in public schools.

F. TEACHER EVALUATION

A.9849, Benedetto; Chapter 143 of the Laws of 2024: This law requires every school district and BOCES to develop and adopt, through a collective bargaining agreement, a performance review plan to conduct performance reviews of classroom teachers and building principals no later than June 30, 2032. School districts can conduct annual professional performance reviews pursuant to their approved teacher and principal evaluation plan under section 3012-d of the Education Law prior to June 30, 2032. The Commissioner of Education is required to review and approved all updated plans. Teachers and principals would be assigned ratings on each applicable teaching or educational leadership standard as well as an overall rating of Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, or Level 4. Furthermore, this law repeals section 3020-b of education law regarding streamlined removal procedures for teachers rated ineffective.

G. SPECIAL EDUCATION

A.3982, Jackson; Chapter 122 of the Laws of 2024: This law extends for three years provisions that conform state law to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004.

A.8492, Carroll; Chapter 76 of the Laws of 2024: This law is a chapter amendment to Chapter 758 of the Laws of 2023 related to the establishment of a dyslexia and dysgraphia task force to effectuate the law.

A.10315-A, Shimsky; Chapter 521 of the Laws of 2024: This law ensures that funds held by Special Act school districts, 4410 programs, and 853 schools in reserve are not counted against future disbursements from the State.

IV. OUTLOOK 2025

During the next legislative session, the Committee on Education will continue to ensure that all students are college and career ready upon graduation. The Committee will also continue to fight for fair, equitable, and adequate funding, especially in our state's most struggling schools, and strive to advocate for the necessary resources and funding to provide all students of this state with a sound, basic education.

V. SUMMARY SHEET

2024 SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS
REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON

Education

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 7

ASSEMBLY SENATE TOTAL
BILLS BILLS BILLS

BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:

Codes	1	0	1
Judiciary	0	0	0
Ways and Means	10	0	10
Rules	3	0	3
Floor	8	0	8
TOTAL	22	0	22

COMMITTEE ACTION

Held For Consideration	15	0	15
Defeated	0	0	0
Enacting Clause Stricken	24	0	24
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	549	31	580

BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:

Higher Education 1
Governmental Operations 1
Ways and Means 6

TOTAL	8	0	8
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