

# EDUCATION





The Executive Budget reflects Governor Hochul's strong commitment to education by providing additional funding and services to meet the needs of students, teachers, and schools amid the pandemic. The Executive Budget provides a \$2.1 billion (7.1 percent) annual School Aid increase, for a record total of \$31.3 billion, largely driven by the second year of the three-year phase-in of full funding of the Foundation Aid formula.

## OVERVIEW

- New York State's 673 major school districts educate approximately 2.4 million children in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Public education in New York State represents a significant commitment of State and local resources. With total State, local, and Federal spending levels exceeding \$75 billion, education is both the largest area of State spending and the largest component of local property taxes.
- New York State has ranked first nationally in school district spending per pupil for 15 straight years, a reflection of the State's longstanding commitment to provide all students with the opportunity to excel as learners, workers, and citizens.
- With this Executive Budget, School Aid increases will total \$11 billion over 10 years – a 55 percent increase over that period.

## RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

**Providing Masks and Tests to Schools.** In the current school year, the State has distributed more than 4.4 million reusable adult- and child-sized masks to school districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools statewide. Further, to meet the expanded need for COVID-19 testing in schools due to the Omicron variant, the State has issued over 7.5 million rapid, over-the-counter COVID-19 tests to school districts, charter schools, and nonpublic schools.

**Promoting Vaccination of Students and School Staff.** Under Governor Hochul's direction, the Public Health and Health Planning Council passed an emergency regulation to ensure that school staff are either vaccinated or tested regularly for COVID-19. The Governor also launched a multi-faceted #VaxtoSchool campaign to support increasing COVID-19 vaccination rates among school-

aged children, including pop-up vaccination sites and mobile vaccination buses.

**Addressing Student Learning Loss and Mental Health.** The pandemic created an unprecedented disruption to education in New York State and across the country, leaving students months behind on reading and math and widening existing disparities. The Executive Budget includes a total of \$100 million over two years for a new State matching fund, the Recover from COVID School Program (RECOVS), for school districts with the highest needs to address student well-being and learning loss in response to the trauma brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Districts will be required to match these State grants with their federal pandemic relief funds.

**Historic Funding for Schools to Respond to the Pandemic.** In addition to the historic State aid increases provided to school districts in the FY 2022 Enacted Budget and FY 2023 Executive Budget, New York's public schools were also awarded \$14 billion of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, available for use over multiple years. School districts were required to create plans for how the Federal funding would be prioritized for expenses such as safely returning students to in-person instruction or purchasing educational technology.

**Free Meals for Students.** Since the start of the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has authorized schools to provide free meals to all students regardless of income eligibility, benefitting approximately 3 million students attending nearly 6,000 public and nonpublic schools in New York State. This flexibility is currently set to continue through the end of SY 2022.

## PROPOSED EXECUTIVE BUDGET ACTIONS

**School Aid.** The Executive Budget provides \$31.3 billion in total School Aid for SY 2023, the highest level of State aid ever. This investment represents a year-to-year increase of \$2.1 billion (7.1 percent) compared to SY 2022, including a \$1.6 billion Foundation Aid increase and a \$466 million increase in all other School Aid programs.

**Foundation Aid.** Foundation Aid is the State's main education operating aid formula. It is focused on allocating State funds equitably to all school districts, especially high-need districts, based on student need, community wealth, and regional cost differences. The Executive



Budget provides a \$1.6 billion (8.1 percent) increase in Foundation Aid, supporting the second year of the three-year phase-in of full funding of the current Foundation Aid formula and ensuring each school district receives a minimum year-to-year increase of 3 percent.

**Expense-Based Aids.** The Executive Budget includes full funding of current statutory formulas that reimburse a portion of certain school district expenses, such as school construction, pupil transportation, services from boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), and the educational costs of certain students with disabilities. In total, these aid categories are projected to increase by \$464 million (5.9 percent), largely reflecting the reduced impact of the pandemic on school operations in SY 2022 compared to SY 2021.

**Prekindergarten Programs.** New York State appropriates over \$952 million annually to support public prekindergarten programs, providing access to over 136,000 students statewide, including nearly 125,500 four-year-old children and over 10,500 three-year-old children. Funding has historically been prioritized for students in high-need school districts. The Executive Budget continues current funding for prekindergarten programs.

## OTHER P-12 EDUCATION

The Executive Budget provides funding for new and recurring initiatives outside of traditional School Aid to help rebuild the school system in New York State.

**RECOVS Learning and Mental Health Grants.** The Executive Budget includes a total of \$100 million over two years for a new State matching fund, the Recover from COVID School Program (RECOVS), for school districts with the highest needs to create or expand summer learning, after school, or extended-day and extended-year programs to help students recover academically. It will also support the hiring of mental health professionals, the expansion of school-based mental health services, and other evidence-based mental health supports to help students and school staff recover socio-emotionally. School districts will be required to match this State grant funding with their Federal pandemic relief funds.

**Charter Schools.** Approximately 180,000 students attend 331 charter schools in New York State. Charter schools receive tuition payments made by school districts, funded through State and local

sources; these tuition rates are established for each school district based on the average annual growth in the district's spending. The Executive Budget increases New York City charter schools' per-pupil funding by 4.7 percent. This will allow charter schools to continue to innovate, recruit high-quality teachers and staff, and provide strong educational options for New York's families and students.

**Nonpublic School Programs.** Approximately 370,000 students attend roughly 1,700 nonpublic schools statewide. The Executive Budget provides \$295 million in State support for nonpublic schools, an increase of \$44 million (18 percent), which includes: \$193 million in aid to reimburse nonpublic schools for costs of State-mandated activities; \$55 million for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) instruction; and \$45 million for capital health and safety projects, including critical repair and maintenance of nonpublic schools' facilities. The Executive Budget also authorizes any unobligated federal Emergency Assistance to Nonpublic Schools funds to be used to reimburse nonpublic schools for allowable pandemic-related costs through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund.

**Special Education.** Approximately 80,000 preschool-age children with disabilities receive services, 14,000 school-age students with disabilities are educated in private settings and special act school districts during the school year, and 50,000 school-age students with disabilities receive summer services. Funding for these providers is determined through an annual rate-setting process. The Division of the Budget will administratively authorize a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 11 percent for the SY 2023 tuition rates, increasing providers' annual funding by more than \$240 million. The State will ultimately reimburse roughly 60 percent of these costs, which are paid in the first instance by school districts and counties.

## OTHER BUDGET ACTIONS

**Zero-Emission School Buses.** To improve air quality, the Executive Budget requires that all new school bus purchases be zero-emissions by 2027 and all school buses on the road be zero-emissions by 2035. The Executive Budget ensures that the State provides Transportation Aid for zero-emission bus infrastructure, including charging stations, and purchasing or leasing electric buses. Additionally, the Executive Budget authorizes school districts to lease or finance zero-emission buses for 10 years, double the



current five-year limitation for diesel buses, in order to help districts meet this goal.

**Building/Transportation Aid Penalty Forgiveness.** The Executive Budget addresses Building and Transportation Aid penalties once and for all by authorizing the State Education Department to forgive all such penalties that the Department deems to be a result of inadvertent clerical errors.

**NYC Mayoral Control.** The Executive Budget provides a four-year extension of Mayoral control of the New York City school system.

**Major Capital Investments in Native American Reservation Schools.** The Executive Budget provides \$35.7 million for capital improvements to the three State-owned schools on Native American reservations, including the St. Regis Mohawk School (\$17.8 million), the Tuscarora School (\$11.8 million), and the Onondaga School (\$6.1 million).

EXECUTIVE BUDGET SCHOOL AID				
SCHOOL YEAR BASIS	2021-22 <i>[MILLIONS OF DOLLARS]</i>	2022-23 <i>[MILLIONS OF DOLLARS]</i>	DOLLAR CHANGE <i>[MILLIONS OF DOLLARS]</i>	PERCENT CHANGE <i>[%]</i>
FOUNDATION AID	19,816	21,417	1,600	8.1
OTHER FORMULA-BASED AIDS	8,860	9,331	471	5.3
SCHOOL AID ON THE RUN	28,677	30,748	2,071	7.2
CATEGORICAL AIDS <sup>1</sup>	308	300	[7]	[2.3]
COMPETITIVE GRANTS	230	232	2	0.9
TOTAL SCHOOL AID	29,214	31,280	2,066	7.1

<sup>1</sup>Projected decline on an annual basis under current law is due to a one-time, timing-related increase in 2021-22.

