

## **Advocates: Cuomo's proposed \$1B school aid hike falls short**

Carolyn Thompson, Associated Press Writer Updated 5:12 pm, Wednesday, January 13, 2016  
BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Gov. **Andrew Cuomo** on Wednesday proposed a two-year \$2.1 billion increase in school aid that he said would lift New York's education spending to an all-time high of \$25 billion.

But the amount included for the first year, about \$991 million, is less than half of what groups including the state Board of Regents and New York State Association of School Business Officials had recommended.

"The governor's proposed 2016-17 executive budget is a good starting point for negotiations with the Legislature, but is woefully short of the funding that is needed," NYSASBO Executive Director **Michael Borges** said, noting the state's cap on property taxes would further strain districts.

His group had recommended a \$2.3 billion school aid increase for the coming fiscal year. The Regents' recommendation was \$2.4 billion. The **Alliance for Quality Education** said the governor's proposal is about \$2 billion short of what schools need, while the **New York State School Boards Association** also said it was much less than what it would take to maintain current programs and services.

Cuomo said he wants the increase to go toward ending the Gap Elimination Adjustment, a policy that takes back some school aid to balance the state budget, as well as the establishment of more community schools that give families access to additional services, such as medical care and legal aid.

"We will not rest until our K-through-12 system is the best in the nation," Cuomo said during his combined State of the State and budget address in Albany.

The state's largest teachers union, which has battled with Cuomo over teacher evaluations and standardized testing, called the governor's address "a starting point that sets a positive tone for public education."

"As we have the opportunity to review details in the days ahead," the **New York State United Teachers** said in a statement, "we look forward to working constructively with the Legislature and the governor to advance public education, from preschool through post-graduate."

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