

# Governor proposes \$1 billion boost in education funding

By [Zachary Matson](#) January 13, 2016

While Gov. Andrew Cuomo argued his budget proposal unveiled Wednesday would take education spending to record levels, education advocates said it still doesn't go far enough.

As Cuomo laid out his education priorities in his annual State of the State address, he called for increasing K-12 funding by nearly \$1 billion in the 2016-2017 budget — about \$25 billion in total spending — and \$2.1 billion over two years.

But education groups across the state said the funding proposal was inadequate, especially in the face of increasing costs and tax caps projected to be near zero, limiting districts' ability to raise revenue from local taxpayers. Separate funding requests from a coalition of education groups and the Board of Regents sought over \$2 billion in new education spending this year alone.

(2015-16 levels/Proposed 2016-17 levels/ Percent Change)

## Albany County

Albany City: \$60,847,349/\$64,344,006/5.7 percent

North Colonie: \$9,470,275/\$10,035,408/6 percent

Guilderland: \$12,252,074/\$12,882,734/5.1 percent

South Colonie: \$13,808,795/\$14,371,813/4.1 percent

## Fulton County

Northville Central: \$2,790,106/\$2,845,908/2 percent

Greater Johnstown: \$14,230,689/\$14,539,455/2.2 percent

Mayfield: \$6,304,997/\$6,494,972/3 percent

Broadalbin-Perth: \$9,901,268/\$10,161,696/2.6 percent

Gloversville: \$26,268,267/\$27,019,380/2.9 percent

Wheelerville: \$950,764/\$969,779/2 percent

## Montgomery County

Amsterdam: \$25,634,175/\$26,393,004/3 percent

Canajoharie: \$7,837,422/\$8,033,793/2.5 percent

Fonda-Fultonville: \$10,173,567/\$10,502,430/3.2 percent

Fort Plain: \$8,640,812/\$8,877,551/2.7 percent

Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville: \$8,205,045/\$8,427,353/2.7 percent

Saratoga County

Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake: \$11,932,067/\$12,239,636/2.6 percent

Shenendehowa: \$24,422,804/\$25,278,617/3.5 percent

Galway: \$5,541,174/\$5,736,276/3.5 percent

Mechanicville: \$6,369,860/\$6,512,136/2.2 percent

Ballston Spa: \$16,659,722/\$17,185,907/3.2 percent

South Glens Falls: \$16,064,488/\$16,444,569/2.4 percent

Schuylerville: \$10,325,433/\$10,536,376/2 percent

Saratoga Springs: \$19,013,859/\$19,679,750/3.5 percent

Stillwater: \$5,825,579/\$6,029,036/3.5 percent

Waterford-Halfmoon: \$3,976,695/\$4,087,627/2.8 percent

Schenectady County

Duanesburg: \$4,211,256/\$4,322,127/2.6 percent

Scotia-Glenville: \$12,080,643/\$12,383,968/2.5 percent

Niskayuna: \$8,448,249/\$8,961,915/6.1 percent

Schalmont: \$6,399,246/\$6,644,235/3.8 percent

Mohonasen: \$12,160,277/\$12,469,957/2.5 percent

Schenectady: \$78,927,316/\$80,675,816/3 percent

Schoharie County

Schoharie: \$6,486,529/\$6,678,658/3 percent

Sharon Springs: \$3,259,835/\$3,338,005/2.4 percent

Cobleskill-Richmondville: \$12,761,348/\$13,162,869/3.1 percent

Middleburgh: \$6,879,708/\$7,020,952/2.1 percent

Source: State Budget Office

“While the governor suggested many laudable programs in our public schools, his funding proposal for enacting those programs falls short,” New York State School Board Association Executive Director Timothy Kremer said in a statement following the speech.

Michael Borges, executive director of the State Association of School Business Officials, said the budget proposal fell “woefully short” of what districts need.

Sen. Hugh Farley, R-Niskayuna, after the speech said he expects the Senate to approve even more education spending than the governor proposed.

“I think you might even see more there,” Farley said. “Because there are some needs in education.”

It was well into the speech before the governor first mentioned his education proposals, which included a \$200 tax credit to reimburse teachers who buy classroom supplies, a goal of converting SUNY facilities to renewable energy by 2020 and urging the state Education Department to rework education standards and annual testing.

He called for \$100 million statewide to turn “failing” schools into community schools, emphasizing the broad challenges — poverty, malnutrition, single-family homes — that the state’s struggling schools face. Schenectady schools, where Lincoln and Hamilton elementary schools are considered struggling, would receive over \$600,000 to fund mentoring, after-school and summer programs, medical and dental treatments and other social services.

While the governor’s plan eliminates the Gap Elimination Adjustment — over \$430 million owed to largely affluent districts — over two years, Senate Republican Leader John Flanagan said this was the year to “do away with every dollar” of the Gap Elimination.

Niskayuna schools, for example, are owed over \$1.6 million in outstanding Gap Elimination funds, but the governor’s proposal would reimburse just over \$500,000 of that this year.

“I hope it doesn’t include any [Gap Elimination] restoration or it would be woefully inadequate,” Niskayuna Superintendent Cosimo Tangorra Jr. said of the district’s funding proposal after the speech.

Cuomo also drew a direct line between the state’s “failing” schools, which populate low income urban and rural regions, to the state’s prison population, calling for investing millions more in pre-kindergarten programs.

“Let’s invest in the right help early on, so we are not paying for problems later on,” Cuomo said.

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