



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents  
**FROM:** Elizabeth R. Berlin *Elizabeth R Berlin*  
**SUBJECT:** Regents 2016-2017 Proposal on State Aid to School Districts  
**DATE:** December 7, 2015  
**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

## SUMMARY

### **Issue for Decision**

Does the attached Regents 2016-2017 State Aid proposal reflect the Regents' priorities for State Aid to school districts?

### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

Policy implementation.

### **Proposed Handling**

This detailed State Aid Proposal will be presented to the full board for approval at the December 2015 meeting of the Board of Regents.

### **Procedural History**

Each year the Board of Regents, through its State Aid Subcommittee, develops a proposal on State Aid to support public education. In developing the proposal for the 2016-2017 School Year, the State Aid Subcommittee has designed an approach to school finance that provides both fundamental support for district operating needs and targeted support for critical

educational needs identified by the Board of Regents. The recommendations made here would allocate significant new operating funding to school districts through Foundation Aid, it would restore the remaining \$434 million of the Gap Elimination Adjustment, and it will support several of the Board's programmatic priorities.

In September and October, the State Aid Subcommittee reviewed information regarding the fiscal circumstances local school districts are likely to face during the 2016-2017 school year. As a result of its discussions, the Subcommittee recognized the need to provide substantial increases in basic operating support to districts. The Subcommittee has also identified critical educational needs that the State must address.

The attached proposal presents the results of these discussions. Based on feedback from the field, the Full Board has focused on early childhood education, multiple pathways to graduation and college, career and citizenship readiness, and the needs of English language learners. The State Aid Subcommittee has aligned its fiscal recommendations with these needs. The detailed State Aid Proposal comes before the Subcommittee at the December meeting, and the Subcommittee will make a recommendation to the full Board to approve.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board take the following action: VOTED that the Regents adopt the attached report as their proposal on State Aid to school districts for the school year 2016-2017.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

Immediate. The Regents State Aid proposal is a recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature. The Governor will issue his budget recommendations in January and ask the Legislature to approve a State budget by April 1.

Attachments

**Attachment 1A: 2016-2017 Regents Proposal Summary**  
**General Support for Public Schools(GSPS)**  
(\$ in millions)

Program	2015-2016 School Year	Regents 2016- 2017 Request	Increase
<b>General Purpose Aid</b>	<b>\$16,106</b>	<b>\$17,780</b>	<b>\$1,694</b>
Foundation Aid	\$15,856	\$17,116	\$1,300
Gap Elimination Adjustment	(\$434)	\$0	\$434
High Tax Aid	\$223	\$223	\$0
Academic Enhancement Aid	\$28	\$28	\$0
Charter School Transitional Aid	\$32	\$35	\$3
Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid	\$8	\$8	\$0
Supplemental Public Excess Cost Aid	\$4	\$4	\$0
Aid for Early Childhood Education	\$389	\$386	(\$3)
<b>Support for Pupils with Disabilities</b>	<b>\$854</b>	<b>\$932</b>	<b>\$78</b>
Public High Cost Excess Cost Aid	\$533	\$601	\$68
Private Excess Cost Aid	\$321	\$331	\$10
<b>BOCES\Career and Technical Ed.</b>	<b>\$1,031</b>	<b>\$1,073</b>	<b>\$42</b>
BOCES Aid	\$819	\$862	\$43
Special Services Aid	\$212	\$211	(\$1)
<b>Instructional Materials Aids</b>	<b>\$278</b>	<b>\$282</b>	<b>\$4</b>
Hardware & Technology Aid	\$37	\$38	\$1
Library Materials Aid	\$19	\$19	\$0
Software Aid	\$45	\$46	\$1
Textbook Aid	\$177	\$179	\$2
<b>Reimbursement-Based Aids</b>	<b>\$4,529</b>	<b>\$4,809</b>	<b>\$280</b>
Building Aids	\$2,831	\$3,026	\$195
Transportation Aids	\$1,698	\$1,783	\$85
<b>Other GSPS</b>	<b>\$287</b>	<b>\$288</b>	<b>\$1</b>
<b>Total GSPS</b>	<b>\$23,085</b>	<b>\$25,184</b>	<b>\$2,099</b>

Totals may not add due to rounding.

**Attachment 1B: 2016-2017 Regents Proposal Summary –  
Support for Additional Educational Needs Identified by the Board**

<b>Additional Program Investments</b>	
<b>2016-2017 School Year</b>	<b><u>\$345,000,000</u></b>
Support for Struggling Schools	\$75,000,000
Expansion of Prekindergarten Programs	\$125,000,000
Professional Development	\$45,000,000
Support for English language learners	\$75,000,000
Funding for Family and Community Engagement	\$25,000,000
<b>2017-2018 School Year</b>	<b><u>\$290,000,000</u></b>
College and Career Pathways	\$65,000,000
Continued Expansion of Prekindergarten Programs	\$125,000,000
Additional Funding for Family and Community Engagement	\$50,000,000
Digital Learning Aid	\$50,000,000

## ATTACHMENT 2

### 2016-2017 Regents State Aid Proposal

#### Introduction

Each year, the State Aid Subcommittee makes a recommendation on the level and nature of state support for public schools that will be necessary for the coming school year. This fall, as part of its annual process, the Subcommittee has considered the general fiscal circumstances schools will face in the coming year, as well as particular educational needs that must be addressed.

In its September and October meetings, the State Aid Subcommittee reviewed current levels of state support under the 2015-2016 Enacted Budget. It noted the additional \$1.4 billion in state aid the Governor and Legislature had provided for school districts compared to 2014-2015. In their discussion of the fiscal circumstances school districts will face in the coming 2016-2017 school year, the members noted the potential impact of the Property Tax Levy Limit statutes, which will likely permit no (i.e., 0 percent) growth in local revenues for many school districts in the 2016-2017 school year. Due to this constraint on growth in local support for school operations, the Subcommittee found that the State's role in supporting school district spending must grow to meet the needs of school districts, a perspective shared by many of the state's leading organizations of educators and school leaders. To meet this need, in November the Subcommittee considered a conceptual framework of this State Aid Proposal that included \$2.1 billion in additional formula aids, as well as targeted investments totaling \$300 million additional annually in both the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, which has changed slightly in this final recommendation to reflect the Board's discussion.

While this approach would increase state aid by roughly ten percent, it would support only an approximately 3.3% increase in total school district spending, due to the lack of growth in local support under the Property Tax Levy Limit statutes in the absence of overrides by district voters or approval of the increase by a supermajority of a municipal board where applicable. This rate of annual spending growth is in line with recent trends. The additional state support would simply allow districts to maintain current levels of service, while providing targeted new funding to support statewide policy priorities and changes in student populations. The additional proposed funding is provided largely through the permanent repeal of the Gap Elimination Adjustment—a full restoration of funds to all school districts—and a significant phase-in of the Foundation Aid formula.

The 2016-2017 Regents State Aid Proposal addresses the specific needs of our schools by targeting new support for focused programs. The additional Regents Priority Program requests are as follows:

- Funded in 2016-2017 (\$345 million):
  - Struggling Schools - \$75 million

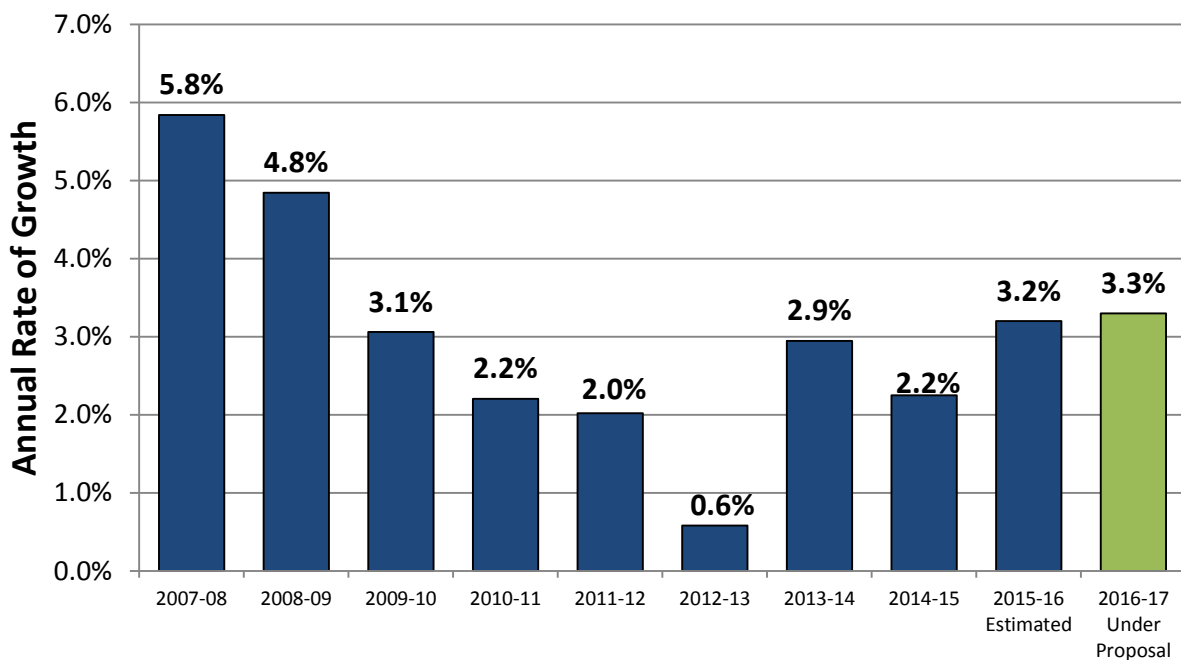
- Education of English language learners - \$75 million
- Continued Expansion of Prekindergarten Services, including the alignment of existing programs into a single program - \$125 million
- Professional Development for Teachers and Principals - \$45 million
- Family and Community Engagement - \$25 million
- Authorized in 2016-2017 but reimbursed in 2017-2018 (\$265 million):
  - College and Career Pathways - \$65 million
  - Support for the Transition to Digital Learning - \$50 million
  - Additional Prekindergarten Expansion - \$125 million
  - Additional Family and Community Engagement - \$25 million

The following describes, in detail, each of the proposed investments and how they will meet the goals of the Board of Regents and the needs of school districts across the state.

### **\$2.1 Billion Formula-based Aid Increase**

The Regents State Aid Proposal represents an increase of approximately 3.3% over projected school district expenses for the current year. Though school district costs have grown an average of less than three percent in recent years, districts face many financial challenges, including increases in teacher contracts, health care costs, the need to acquire optical scanning voting machines and the potential of a substantial minimum wage increase.

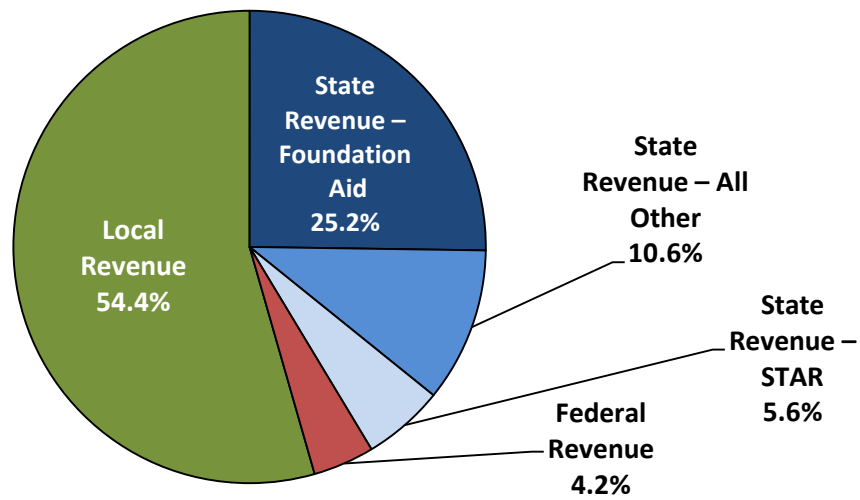
**Chart 1. Annual Rate in School District Spending Growth, 2007-2008 through 2016-2017 Proposal**



Source: School District Fiscal Profiles

School districts support their operations and any cost increases through three primary sources of revenue: state aid, local tax levy and federal revenues. For 2016-2017, federal revenues are not expected to increase. In addition, without overrides by a supermajority of local voters, the local property tax levy limit will likely permit no growth in local levies for most school districts. District voters retain the capacity to override the tax levy limit, but based on historical patterns, the majority of school districts will likely remain within its constraints. Unless additional State aid is provided, school districts, particularly high needs districts, may struggle to maintain a full range of quality educational services for their students because of increases in fixed costs such as contractual obligations and legacy costs. The Regents State Aid Proposal is intended to address this concern and avoid program reductions.

**Chart 2. Statewide School District Revenues, by Source**



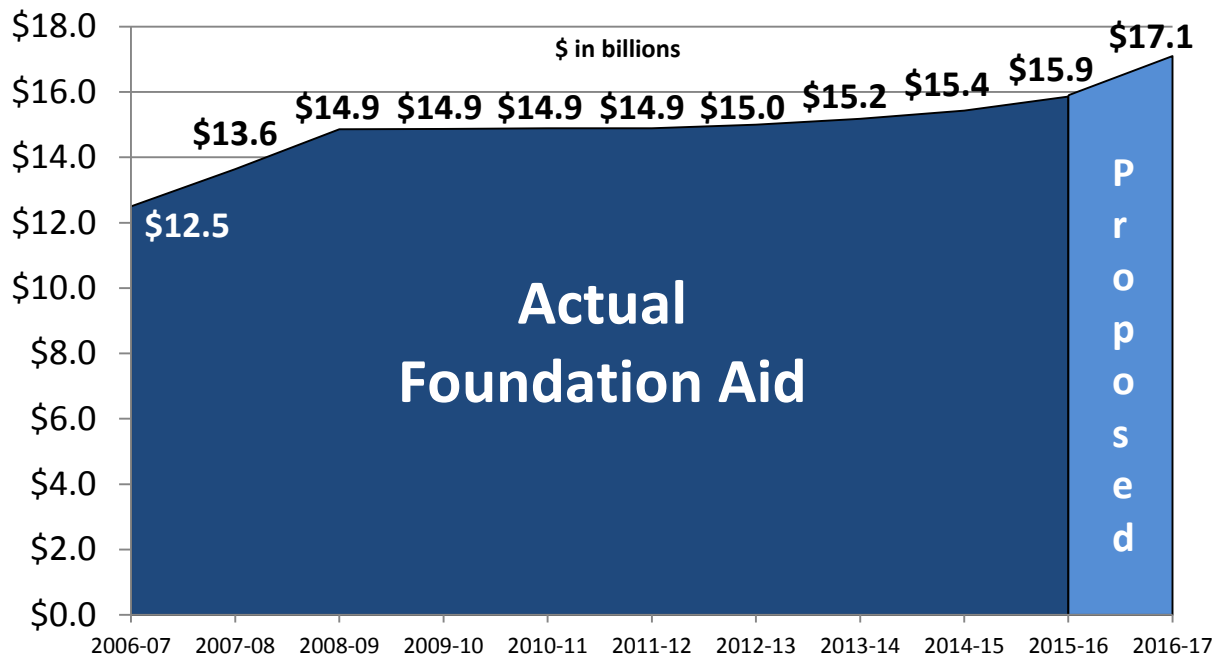
Source: 2013-14 School District Fiscal Profiles

**Foundation Aid (additional \$1.3 Billion recommended)**

Over a decade ago, the Board of Regents proposed Foundation Aid as a means to provide equitable State funding to support instruction that meets Regents standards, with proportionally greater funding flowing to low wealth school districts and districts with a concentration of students who need it the most—those with special education needs, English language learners and economically disadvantaged students. These students may not have the resources and support at home to enable them to meet the Regents’ college- and career-readiness standards without additional supports in school. The Board has historically maintained its commitment to the Foundation Aid approach, and at this time renews its commitment to phasing-in Foundation Aid within a reasonable time, with a substantial increase in Foundation Aid in 2016-2017, the elimination of the Gap Elimination Adjustment, and a continued phase-in of Foundation

Aid over the next three years to allow districts to plan for the effective expenditure of the additional funds to improve instruction.

**Chart 3. Total Foundation Aid, 2006-2007 through 2016-2017 Regents Proposal**



**Gap Elimination Adjustment Restoration (\$434 million, formula-based reduction eliminated)**

The GEA is a formula created in the aftermath of the Great Recession which deducts certain amounts from the calculations for the majority of the formula-based aids. The GEA remains in statute and it deducts approximately \$434 million from the aid that would otherwise be paid to school districts in the 2015-16 school year. The Board of Regents recommends a permanent repeal and full restoration of funds to all school districts in the state.

**Reimbursement-based Aids (\$403 million in increased reimbursement – based on current formulas)**

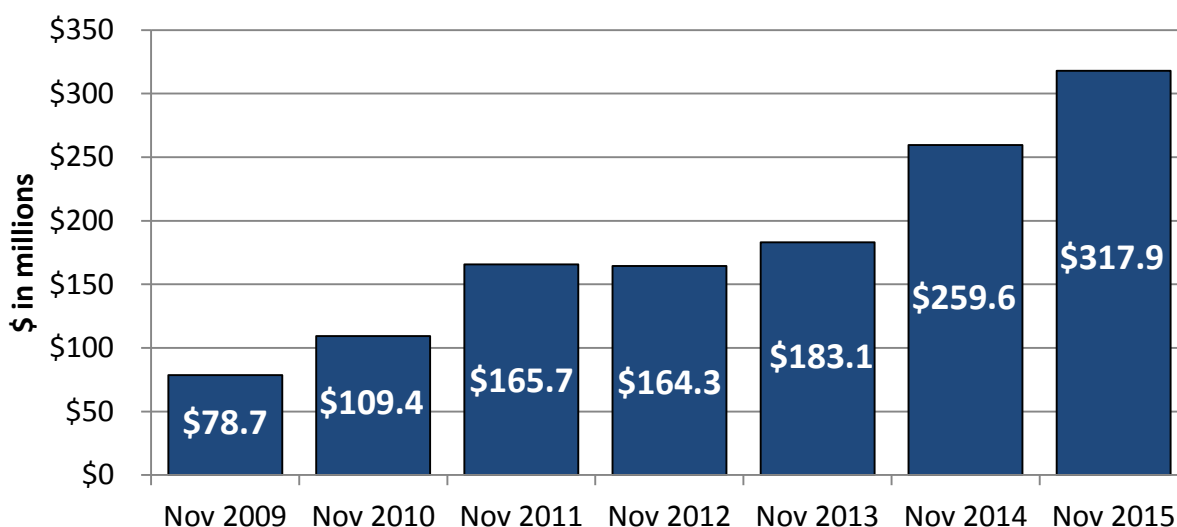
The Regents propose funding all reimbursement-based aids at their statutory levels for the 2016-2017 school year. This includes Building Aid (\$195.1 million), Transportation Aid (\$85.2 million), Public and Private Excess Cost Aid for special education services (\$77.6 million), BOCES Aid (\$42.8 million), and other minor increases (\$2.46 million).



## Reimbursing Schools for Prior Year Aid Claims

For the reimbursement-based aids, state law creates certain timeframes within which districts have to file their claims for aid in order for the aid to be paid in the next school year, which is standard practice established by statute. Once those timeframes have elapsed, state law creates another period within which the claims can be made and paid in a later year, under an appropriation made specifically for the prior year aid claims. The prior year claims are put in a pool and paid in the order of approval, but in recent years, the appropriation has not grown at the same rate as the pool, resulting in rapid growth in the amount of money that the state owes to districts.

**Chart 4. Growth in Prior Year Claim Liabilities, 2009 - Present**



The 2015-2016 Regents State Aid Proposal included a call for the state to utilize one-time settlement revenues to pay off the \$260 million “prior year adjustment” claim pool. This was not enacted, so due to the mismatch between the appropriation and the rate of growth, the total amount awaiting payment has grown to nearly \$320 million since last year, with a majority of the funds owed to High-Need districts. If appropriation levels remain the same, it would take seventeen years to pay off a claim filed today, with the length of the backlog affecting new claims growing each year. In its Mid-Year Financial Plan Update, the Division of Budget has announced that the state still has \$2 billion in “unbudgeted” settlement funds remaining. Reimbursing districts for the entire amount of outstanding Prior Year Aid claims is a fiscally responsible use of one-time revenue sources that would be a significant benefit to school districts. The Board again recommends that the full amount of prior year claims (\$320 million) be paid for the 2016-2017 school year.

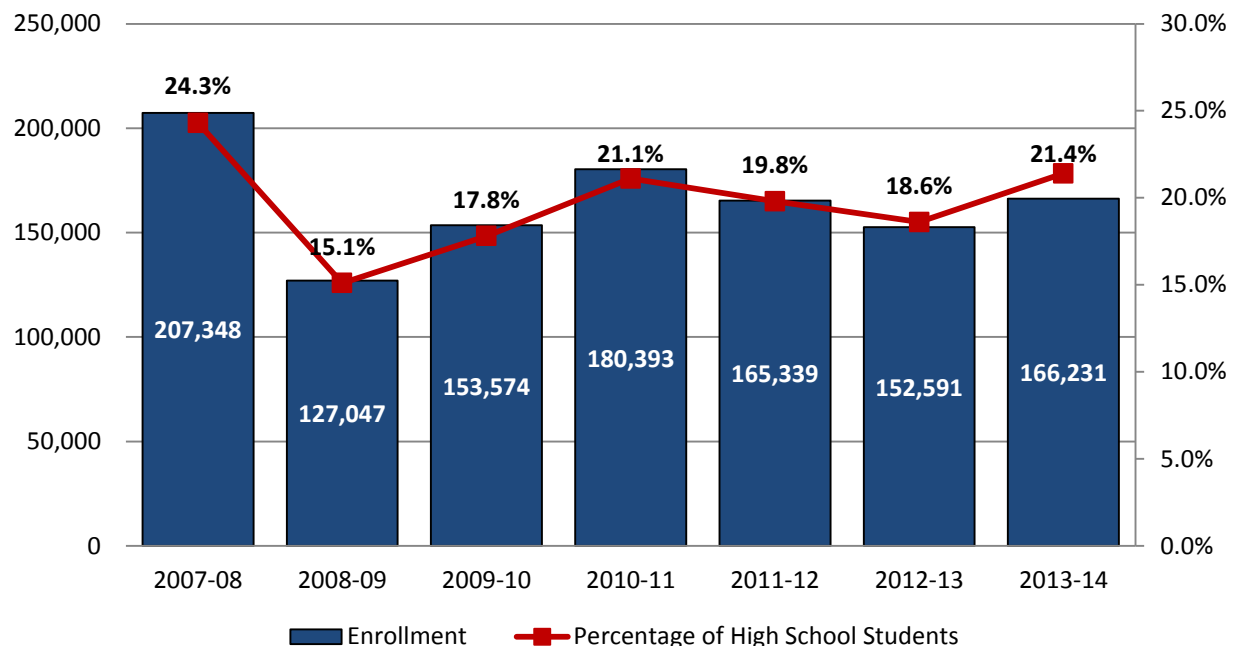
## Targeted Funding to Address Educational Needs

In October and November, the Subcommittee discussed several emerging policy goals and directed staff to develop a proposal that reflects these objectives. The 2016-2017 Regents State Aid Proposal recommends fiscal support of the following programs.

### **1. Increase Support for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathways to Graduation (\$65 Million to be reimbursed in 2017-2018)**

Last year, the Board of Regents voted for the Multiple Pathways Initiative, which will provide multiple pathways to graduation, including a 4 + 1 option which will allow students to take four Regents exams and a comparably rigorous CTE exam. This was an important step toward preparing more students to meet the goal of readiness for college and career. However, elements of the primary aid programs that support high quality Career and Technical Education programs have not been adjusted for inflation in many years. As a result, the state's real level of support for these programs shrunk at the same time local revenue growth has been limited by the economy and the property tax cap, making it hard for many districts to make these new options available to students.

**Chart 5. Participation in CTE Programming (total enrollment in CTE and CTE enrollment as a percentage of public high school enrollment).**



Components of a comprehensive CTE aid package include:

- **Enhanced BOCES Aid for CTE Pathways programs.** The instructional salary eligible for BOCES Aid has remained fixed at \$30,000 per year since 1992. Since this flat reimbursement amount has not kept pace with the actual costs to employ well-prepared teachers to run strong programs, the state has effectively reduced its direct support for these programs over time. This may have reduced the ability of school districts to send their students to high quality programs offered by the BOCES. As the chart above illustrates, recent years have shown reduced participation in career and technical education programming, even as the Board was working to incorporate success in the most rigorous programs into the State's graduation pathways.

To address this issue and reap the benefits of high quality CTE programming both for students and the state's economy, the Regents recommend that the aidable salary for high-quality BOCES CTE programs be doubled over the next five years, with 20 percent of the gap funded for services provided in 2016-2017, and 20 percent annually for four years thereafter, with any further adjustment necessary to bring the reimbursement salary into alignment with the effects of inflation occurring in the following year. After that, the reimbursement salary level should be indexed to the rates of growth in professionals' salaries (available in federal data) to avoid the re-emergence of similar distortions in the future.

The Board also notes that increasing the BOCES salary cap for all instructional salaries and not just those for teachers in career and technical education programs would be an effective way to encourage the regionalization of services. This would make specialized coursework such as, but not limited to, advanced placement, a larger variety of foreign languages and the arts more available to students, especially as additional Pathways to Graduation are recognized by the Board. This would counteract the reduction in curricular opportunities that has occurred in recent years, especially in districts experiencing rapidly declining enrollments combined with fiscal stress.

- **Enhanced and Expanded Aid for High Quality CTE programs Operated by the Big Five Cities and Non-component School Districts.** The Board recommends that the state change its method of reimbursing the expenses for Career and Technical Education programming for the large cities and other non-BOCES component districts. The current program pays a flat, per-pupil amount, which has not been adjusted for inflation in some time. This has made it difficult for the non-BOCES component districts to maintain quality programs. To reflect the changes in the cost of operating career and technical education programs that provide the rigorous preparation necessary for success in the world of work, the Subcommittee recommends that the reimbursement model for these districts be made more similar to that used for BOCES-operated programs.

In addition, the Big Five Cities currently provide CTE programming for many 9<sup>th</sup> graders, even though the current funding stream does not consider them to be eligible for aid. Currently, there are over 3,000 such students in Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester and Yonkers.

Since the existing program is funded on a current year basis, there would need to be a transition to the reimbursement model. The Board recommends that for 2016-2017, these districts would receive funding under the existing model, with additional reimbursement for 2016-2017 services paid at the same levels available for BOCES. Prospectively, the non-BOCES component districts would then be funded at a level aligned with the BOCES model. Since the formula would support a larger percentage of the costs, these districts could gradually increase the quality of their programming and the number of student places available. These programs, like those in the BOCES, will be expected to move toward the provision of higher quality services, the development of stronger linkages to employment and higher education, and thus result in successful transitions to the world of college or work for their students.

- **Expanded NYS Pathways in Technology Early College High School (NYS P-TECH) Program:** Consistent with the goals of the Board's Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color, this recommendation includes \$6.5 million for additional rounds of the successful NYS P-TECH Program, specifically for expanding participation rates of boys and young men of color. High quality CTE programs provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and reinforce both academic and technical skills as well as experiences in work-based learning where on the job mentoring can play a critical role in developing life-long, transferable employability skills for a constantly changing global economy. More examples of the NYS P-TECH model need to be implemented in our large cities to provide targeted populations with the opportunities to experience academic and career-focused success at an early grade level. Outreach in middle schools for such programs helps students and families make decisions on education, and careers that can transform lives. They provide work-based learning opportunities that enable students to connect what they are learning to real-life career scenarios and choices. Redefining college readiness to include these components will also help lead our students to successful rewarding employment and success in life.

## **2. Expand Access to Full-Day Prekindergarten and Align the State's Multiple Pre-K programs (\$125 Million in current year programming, with an additional \$125 million in new programming in 2017-2018)**

Research has shown that early childhood programs that incorporate certain key elements are an effective way to enable students to begin school ready to learn and to close the early preparedness gaps that cause some children to struggle throughout their school careers. The Board recommends expanding New York's investment in early

childhood programs by \$125 million in 2016-2017. This expansion would be based on the \$10,000 per child level that has been used to support expansions of early childhood programs in recent years. The Board recommends that the State align the existing Pre-K programs to create a single program with:

- Adequate support to ensure that districts participate and offer quality, full-day programs;
- Services targeted first to the districts with the neediest children, and then expanded to include every four-year old child;
- Funding that is allocated to districts using State Aid formula-factors;
- Predictable, long-term funding;
- Flexible financing that permits mid-year program expansions, reimbursed on a pro-rata basis, so districts are able to begin programs mid-year if they discover the need; and
- Consistent, rigorous quality standards, streamlined data reporting methodologies, and amended regulations that reflect the current research on quality early education regarding staffing, curriculum, and facilities, among others. The Department recommends that all of the State's Pre-K programs be brought into alignment with the quality requirements of the Priority Pre-K program.

The Board's recommendation for a \$125 million expansion in support for early childhood programs will allow a significant increase in the number of seats available to children next year. For 2016-2017, this \$125 million would allow school districts currently receiving allocations from the \$25 million in Priority Pre-K funds, which are set to expire at the end of 2015-2016, to transition to a regular formula-based aid without disruption in their programs. It would also support an additional \$100 million in new investments. The Board recommends an additional \$125 million in new support be provided in the following year.

To align the elements of the current programs to the high standards set under the Priority Pre-K program, support for some existing prekindergarten programs must be increased. Providing a per pupil maximum of \$10,000 would result in fewer new seats being available for the first year, but would provide improved quality of existing programs. Once existing prekindergarten seats are funded to provide a high quality experience, available funds would be used to expand quality programs to all children. The current programs have been focused on the districts that serve high-need children, the children that research has shown gain the most from participation in strong early learning programs, so additional support for quality in districts with existing programs will have direct benefits to closing school readiness gaps for our youngest learners. As the program expands over time, the State should ensure that every child has access to early childhood classrooms with the following research-supported characteristics:

- Teachers who are certified in early childhood education and well-prepared to teach our youngest learners; dedicated to their work in early childhood settings, and strong in the areas of cultural responsiveness and family engagement;
- Developmentally-appropriate activities;

- Alignment to developmentally appropriate early childhood standards through New York’s Pre-K Foundation of Learning Standards;
- Linkages to the school-age curriculum that provide good transitions to kindergarten; and
- Effective evaluation practices that keep programs moving toward excellence.

### **3. Support English language learners’/Multilingual Learners’ Success (\$75 million for current year, 2016-2017)**

In 2014-2015, New York served a total of 241,068 English language learners (ELLs) and Multilingual Learners (MLLs). This represented 8.8 percent of the public school students in New York State (NYS). These students spoke over 200 languages. To ensure that these students meet rigorous academic standards that make them ready for college and career, critical stakeholders have been engaged in direct work that promotes and expands academic opportunities for ELLs/MLLs. These stakeholders have recognized that in order to ensure that academically and linguistically relevant instruction is provided to our students, districts must be provided with the appropriate tools, such as assessments in the home language, professional development and instructional resources.

Currently, funding for these services for ELLs is provided through state categorical funding in the amount of \$13.5 million, and the federal Title III, Part A program provides more than \$59.8 million annually to New York State. In addition, assistance is provided through Foundation Aid through by including the count of ELL students in the pupil need weighting. However, since the full implementation of Foundation Aid has been delayed, districts with large numbers of ELLs need additional funding because the amount of aid generated through Foundation aid has not kept pace with the demand for services caused by the influx of new immigrant students and the need to provide the full range of services required under statute and regulation to students in a variety of languages. Those changes reflected the most current research-based findings in the best-practices for the provision of services to ELLs/MLLs and enhanced the level of programming and delivery of instruction to meet their needs. This requires a significant investment to support these services. The Board of Regents recommends an additional \$75 million in focused aid for districts serving ELLs; this would be in addition to the increased funds that will be available through the recommended expansion of Foundation Aid.

The additional state aid could be used to provide support for the following areas:

- **Co-teaching:** Co-teaching approaches will ensure that Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) instruction is age and grade appropriate, academically and linguistically relevant, and that ELLs/MLLs have complete access to the rigorous Common Core Learning Standards. This approach would match teachers with training and certification in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Bilingual Education (BE) with content area teachers;

- **Family Engagement:** The creation of materials and resources that will enable parents and guardians of ELLs/MLLs to make informed decisions about their children's education. In addition, aid could be used for increasing opportunities for parental engagement, and the translation of resources and materials for parents and guardians of ELLs/MLLs making state-wide information accessible in a language that is best understood;
- **Services to Students with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education:** In New York, students with interrupted/inconsistent formal education (SIFE) make up 8.7 percent of the total ELL/MLL population (based on 2014-2015 data). In order to meet the uniquely diverse needs of this sub-population of students in secondary (middle and high) school, support is needed to provide rigorous instruction, appropriate interventions and professional development that accelerate learning for these students;
- **Materials Creation:** This would support the use of materials and instructional resources that are age and grade appropriate, academically and linguistically relevant, and aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards; or
- **Professional Development:** Funds would support substantial and sustained opportunities for all teachers and administrators serving ELLs/MLLs, to participate in meaningful and high-quality professional development that builds capacity for the recognition and understanding of the vision and expectations for meeting the diverse needs of ELLs/MLLs.

#### **4. Support for Struggling Schools (\$75 million for current year, 2016-2017)**

The Department has identified over 120 schools across the states which are struggling to provide their students adequate preparation for college and career. While these schools have outcomes that are slightly above that of the schools defined as 'persistently struggling,' the 80,000 students who attend these schools still suffer the consequences of very low performance. The majority of the elementary school students in these schools are performing at Level 1 (the lowest level), and in the high schools with this categorization, the majority of students fail to graduate within four years. This low performance is a tragic waste of student time and school funds, and it is not acceptable to simply wait until these schools fall down into the persistently struggling group to rethink their approach. As a result, the Board recommends that the state provide a separate stream of funds that would be targeted toward sustainable, research-based investments in comprehensive school-wide reform in these schools, and in the districts in which they are located.

These funds would be provided each year for three years to the districts that contain any one of the 124 schools currently on the Struggling Schools list. If the funds were allocated on a per school basis, that would make approximately \$600,000 available for each school for each of the three years. Districts with these schools will be required to

engage in certain non-negotiable activities that have a proven track record for successful school turnarounds. These activities would be focused on building a sustainable model for the turnaround school that will outlast the three years of funds. The Department will provide schools a menu of other activities with strong records of success, from which to choose based upon locally defined needs. These activities will be evaluated based upon clear and measurable goals defined by the district and shared with the Department.

These funds would support the following required items that will build long-term capacity for improved performance in the school:

- **Resource Allocation Review:** A rigorous review of district and school resource allocation practices, including:
  - A zero-based budget that eliminates any non-research supported spending,
  - Review of teacher assignment practices to and within the struggling school; and
  - Consideration of scheduling opportunities that will enable the school to focus extra support for students where it is needed, at a reasonable cost;
- **Leadership Strength:** Investments in leadership strength, such as mentorship, preparation for cultural competency and support for strong instructional leadership; and
- **Aligned Management:** Where it does not already exist, the introduction of an aligned management system at the district level.

The Board envisions an approach where the first year of funding addresses those non-negotiables. After this time spent identifying areas where the districts' and schools' systems need improvement and the start of those improvements, districts with struggling schools will begin to implement the recommended systemic reforms. Districts will also use this time to identify research-supported reforms on the menu. These could include:

- Programs to combat chronic absenteeism by identifying and addressing the root causes;
- Extended learning time – flexibly organized to meet student needs, such as early starts for learners who need extra assistance;
- Community schools that bring families into the school beyond the normal school day and week;
- Investment in data systems that help teachers identify areas where their students need more help.
- Personalized, blended learning approaches that use technology to extend the school day, allow for focused skill development, give students access to pre-loaded age- and reading-level appropriate books to read at home.



## **5. Professional Development for Teachers and Principals (\$45 million for current year, 2016-17)**

The Board of Regents has emphasized the need for improved professional development opportunities for teachers and principals. These improvements will enhance the ability of our workforce as the higher standards are implemented. The Board continues to recommend the creation of an Instructional Development Fund, building upon the success of the Race to the Top-funded STLE Initiative. This would be the first year of a five year investment into the Instructional Development Fund. It would support the capacity-building work of districts that are prepared to work in collaboration with their teachers and their bargaining units, to bring about systemic change to the human capital capacity of the district workforce. This would include, but not be limited to, more professional development and increased collaborative planning time in the school day and year.

Within the \$45 million request, \$10 million would be set-aside for recommendations from the Board's Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color Young. This component would support school professional development programs that expand knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to provide competent educational approaches and practices to improve outcomes for boys and young men of color.

This recommendation would reflect the first of a five year commitment to fund the creation of skilled teams of professional development experts who would provide state-approved professional development programs, which also reflect an understanding of local teaching needs. These expert teams will be sited close to the communities whose teachers they serve, so that they can provide high quality embedded support to districts' human capital investment plans. The Board envisions that these teams will help districts and their teachers arrive at a systemic approach to the recruitment, development and support of high quality teachers, like that recommended by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Foundation's research finds that school district human capital systems that:

### **Acquire Strong Instructional Staff for the School:**

- Get the right teachers in the right positions on time;
- Partner with teacher suppliers;
- Responsive to district needs;
- Detect and forecast personnel needs;
- Build pool of high quality applicants;
- Enact strong hiring processes; and
- Match based on content, grade, pedagogy, connection to community.

### **Develop School Instructional Staff:**

- Support professional growth in school-based learning communities;
- Socialize new teachers into the school community;
- Ensure supportive coaching/mentoring relationships for new teachers; and
- Provide individualized PD opportunities in response to demonstrated needs.

**Sustain Schools' High Quality Staff:**

- Nurture, reward, and challenge high-performing teachers;
- Provide competitive compensation packages;
- Uphold professional working conditions;
- Recognize high-performing teachers; and
- Offer differentiated career opportunities and career ladders so high performers remain in teaching.

**Evaluate Schools' High Quality Staff to Help them Continue to Improve:**

- Inform evidence-based personnel decisions;
- Assess teaching practice;
- Provide feedback; and
- Develop plans to improve teachers who need extra support.

(Source: Carnegie Foundation, A Human Capital Framework for a Stronger Teacher Workforce, 2013, available online at [http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Human\\_Capital\\_whitepaper2.pdf](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Human_Capital_whitepaper2.pdf))

Since some of this work must occur at the level of district level systems and some must occur within the local school, the Board recommends the creation of high level teams with the expertise to work with district leaders to make the necessary structural changes and to develop the local capacity to do the work in local schools. These funds would support those teams.

**6. Support for the Transition to Digital Learning (\$50 million, reimbursement-based in 2017-2018)**

As the state moves toward increased use of digital technology in instruction and the full implementation of computer-based testing, additional funds are necessary to support targeted professional development for instructional personnel, the provision of new, high quality digital content and to fill in gaps in districts' device capacity. Even in the midst of the rollout of the \$2 billion Smart Schools Bond Act gaps in state support remain, since that program is funded through tax-exempt bonds that cannot be used to pay for badly needed professional development or content. This recommendation would activate an existing, but not currently funded, formula that provides reimbursements to districts for actual expenditures, so that \$50 million in aid will support nearly \$100 million in additional expenses statewide. To the extent practicable, software and technologies purchased through this aid category will be eligible for loan to nonpublic school students, consistent with the existing Instructional Materials Aids. This will assist those schools with the transition to computer based testing, which will affect many of them as well.

The Board recommends the use of these funds to further increase access to devices, and also support the costs of online content and instruction and provide professional development to teachers, consistent with the recommendations of the Online Advisory

Council. The Board recognizes that research does not suggest that a wholesale transition to online education would increase student outcomes. However, it is clear that New York must make progress in certain areas in order to take advantage of the opportunities that technology does make available. We must ensure that:

- Students have the opportunity to use online education, where appropriate, to obtain specialized coursework that cannot be offered in the local school building (e.g. advanced math or science coursework for students in rural or high needs urban districts);
- Districts, teachers and students have sufficient access to devices and are prepared for computer-based testing; and
- Technology is sufficiently well-supported (both financially and through teachers who are well-prepared to use it) and available that we can begin to reap the benefits of the individualized blended learning and practice it can provide for students at every level of performance.

## **7. Family and Community Engagement (\$25 million in current year aid in 2016-2017 and an additional \$50 million in 2017-2018)**

Strong connections between communities, families and schools create a supportive framework of high expectations, parent engagement in the school and knowledge of how to negotiate both school systems and school work to help children succeed. The Board initiative will provide support to districts that serve large numbers of children living in poverty or recent arrivals to this country – who may need some assistance to make the most of school opportunities. In addition, 50 percent of the new funds to be added in each of the two years (for a total of \$25 million) would be committed to specific initiatives recommended by the Workgroup for Men and Boys of Color. These set-aside funds would be granted to school districts with high percentages of students from families in poverty and/or high percentages of ELL students that could be used to develop intra-district engagement strategies and provide the necessary staff to achieve those goals. In addition, this program would support work such as:

- Encouraging consistent attendance at school;
- Parental outreach in the family’s home language to explain the school curriculum, school programming, special education options, enrichment programs, and other opportunities;
- Community schools projects that open the doors of the school to families beyond the regular school day and week; and
- Family activities that bring the school and family together in comfortable settings to build relationships that foster success.

## **Conclusion**

The Regents 2016-2017 State Aid Proposal seeks to meet basic school operating needs in a year when local revenues are likely to be flat due to the impact of the

Property Tax Levy Limit statutes. It does so by recommending a \$1.3 billion increase in Foundation Aid and the full restoration of \$434 million in Gap Elimination Adjustment deductions. It also recommends that the state continue to fund the reimbursement-based aid programs at their statutory levels. The Board recommends that the State address the long and growing queue of prior year aid claims in a fiscally responsible manner – through the use of the one-time settlement funds.

The proposal also addresses specific educational needs identified by the Board. In particular it recommends increased investment in high quality prekindergarten and career and technical education programs, while also improving the connection and alignment between different streams of those programs. It recommends new support for the education of English Language Learners, professional development for teachers and principals, family and community engagement, for systemic reform in struggling schools and for online education. These initiatives provide the targeted support necessary to overcome particular obstacles to educational success for younger children and college and career readiness for older students. While the amount of funding recommended for these programs is not large relative to the total magnitude of state and local support for public education in New York, their tight focus on the needs to be address and the research that defines the best solutions would yield an outsized benefit to our state's schools and students.