



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:** James A. Kadamus *James A. Kadamus*

**COMMITTEE:** Subcommittee on State Aid

**TITLE OF ITEM:** Legislative Advocacy for Regents 2003-04 Proposal on State Aid to School Districts

**DATE OF SUBMISSION:** January 22, 2003

**PROPOSED HANDLING:** Discussion

**RATIONALE FOR ITEM:** Policy Implementation

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** Goal 2

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** *Richard P. Mills*

**SUMMARY:**

With approval of your aid proposal at your December 2002 meeting, I offer materials and suggest a discussion of legislative advocacy efforts for the February meeting of the Subcommittee. Attached is a draft plan for advocacy, for your consideration.

Also available by the time of your meeting will be a briefing on the Governor's budget recommendations for school year 2003-04.

Attachment

**Plan for Legislative Advocacy**  
**Regents Proposal on State Aid to School Districts**  
**For School Year 2003-04**

**State Aid and Improving Student Achievement**  
**In Difficult Times**

1. Purpose

The Regents goal is to close the gap between actual and desired student achievement through greater equity, transparency and predictability in school aid. The proposal seeks to:

- Consolidate eight aids into Comprehensive Operating Aid
  - Increase the aid per child
  - Provide aid for pre-k pupils
  - Adjust for regional cost differences
- Provide strategic limits on aid increases and losses to help districts close the achievement gap
- Consolidate five aids into a new Gap Aid to provide extra time and help to students who need it
- Consolidate three aids into a new, flexible Instructional Materials Aid for public and nonpublic school students
- Provide a greater incentive to educate students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers
- Increase aid for educationally related support services to prevent unnecessary referral to special education
- Provide comparable State support for career and technical education around the State
- Eliminate the Wicks Law to reduce school construction costs
- Improve maintenance of effort requirements for New York City schools and extend the requirement to the Large Four cities

2. Fiscal Note

- The proposal recommends an increase of \$516 million, 3.5 percent, over school year 2002-03. It proposes that 76 percent of the increase in computerized aids go to high need school districts to help close the student achievement gap.

3. Goals

- Long Term: Passage of the proposal during the 2003 legislative session.
- Short Term: Support for the proposal from the Governor (Division of the Budget), the leadership of the Assembly and Senate, and the chairs of the education and financial committees.
- Interim Checks:
  - ⇒ Inclusion of concepts in the Executive budget proposal

- ⇒ Introduction of legislation
- ⇒ Bill reported out of Committee and progressing through the legislative process
- ⇒ Letters of support from educational associations, parents and the business community

#### 4. SED Advocacy

- Involved Regents are:
  - State Aid Advocacy Task Force
  - Subcommittee on State Aid
  - Committee on Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education
  - All Regents
- Involved staff:
  - Commissioner Mills, Richard Cate, James Kadamus, Charles Szuberla, Burt Porter and Deborah Cunningham. Advice is sought from Alan Ray, Claudia Alexander and Dan Kinley. SED's State Aid Work Group and the Legislative Coordinating Team provide periodic advice.

#### 5. Advocacy Information

- Regents proposal with technical supplement
- Pamphlet
- Briefing on Governor's budget recommendations
- Talking points
- Frequently asked questions and suggested answers
- A map of high need school districts
- Articles (education association journals)
- Timetable: The State Aid Work Group will prepare all by end of January for budget hearing; end of February for articles.

#### 6. Anticipated sources of support and how they will be engaged

- Support
  - School superintendents, principals and business officials, including the Midstate School Finance Consortium
  - Presidents of boards of education
  - Student advocacy groups such as the Educational Priorities Panel and the Emergency Coalition for Universal Pre-K
  - Conference of Large City Boards of Education
  - Parents interested in extra time and help opportunities for their children
  - Directors of special education
- Engagement
  - Regents advocacy with local legislators and statewide leaders
  - Public forum with Regents
  - The State Education Department's Educational Finance Advisory Group
  - Widespread use of a pamphlet and articles with highlights of the proposal

- Participation in meetings held by associations and advocacy groups
- Correspondence

7. Key Legislators

1. Senate

- (a) Temporary President and Majority Leader
- (b) Minority Leader
- (c) Chair, Senate Education Committee, selected Education Committee members
- (d) Ranking Minority Member, Senate Education Committee
- (e) Chair, Senate Finance Committee
- (f) Chair of Senate Select Commission on Disabilities

2. Assembly

- (a) Speaker
- (b) Majority Leader
- (c) Minority Leader
- (d) Chair, Assembly Education Committee, selected Education Committee members
- (e) Ranking Minority Member, Assembly Education Committee
- (f) Chair, Assembly Ways and Means Committee
- (g) Chair of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities
- (h) Chair and Co-chair, Black, Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Caucus
- (i) Chair, Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

8. Governor's and Other Executive Offices