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# CNY School Districts Try to Make an "Educated Guess" About Aid Package in State Budget

By [SCOTT WILLIS \(/PEOPLE/SCOTT-WILLIS\)](#) & ELANA SUKERT • 21 HOURS AGO

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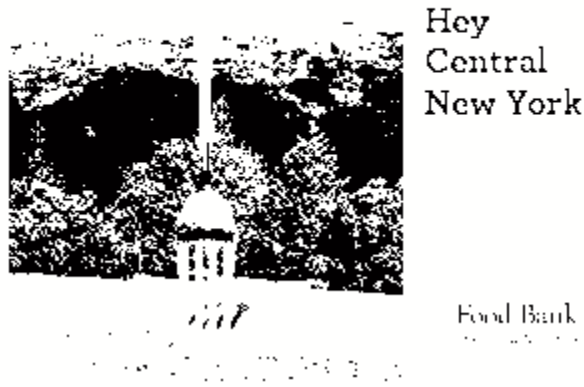
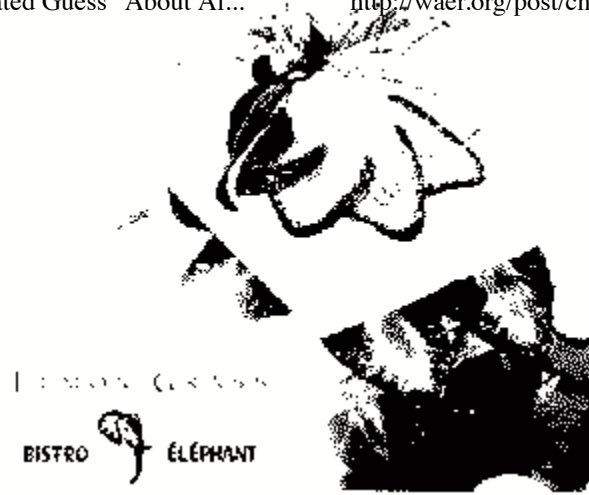
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*A Teacher lecturing at Fayetteville-Manlius Central School*

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School districts in Central New York and across the state are wondering just what state aid they'll receive now that the assembly and senate have rolled out their one-house education budget proposals. Doctor Rick Timbs says districts are hedging their bets. He is executive director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium (<http://www.statewideonline.org/wordpress/>) based in the Syracuse area.

*"We are trying to look at what's the best case scenario vs. the worst case scenario," Timbs said. "I have advised the districts in their budgeting to come up with two or three scenarios, so that when these budget numbers are finally released that they can make as many adjustments as quickly as possible."*

He says he's encouraged by the senate and assembly's proposals to increase education aid in their own way. The total increase in the senate is \$1.65 billion, while it's \$2.13 billion in the assembly. The governor proposed \$961 million. Timbs says while the raw numbers might look good, districts just don't know what they'll get.

*"These state aid packages have an amount that they are suggesting," said Timbs. "We have no clue on how that amount is distributed. If past is prologue, it can be distributed in any way that they see fit. What we find out is that we are we are always mystified and we are always puzzled as we look at it afterwards 'how do they come up with these numbers?' because it is always artificially created."*

Timbs says the formula is also overly complicated and cumbersome. State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli even came out with a report calling on lawmakers to find a simpler, more equitable way to fund education.

Timbs says districts need more predictability to meet growing needs.

"We've seen a lot of schools have increase special education students and the need for increased programs," said Timbs. "Certainly we have seen throughout the entire state region an increase in the number of non-English speaking students. We have seen these new standards, whether we end up with common core or common core 2.0, increased staff development needs to gear up for that.

Lawmakers are aiming for an on-time budget April 1.



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Dr. Timbs highlights parts of the senate and assembly education budget proposals that would be beneficial for school districts.

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Dr. Richard Timbs is the director of the statewide school financial consortium

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