

Cuomo's \$2.1 billion education proposal: highlights and reactions



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks about his 2016-17 state budget proposals at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool in this January 6, 2016 file photo. (Michael Greenlar | mgreenlar@syracuse.com)



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ALBANY, N.Y. -- Gov. Andrew Cuomo Wednesday laid out his plans for education spending in New York state, including increasing school aid by \$2.1 billion over the next two years.

Cuomo has often been a controversial figure in education, as the governor who oversaw the roll-out of Common Core standards, which was met by scores of parents opting their children out of state tests.

Cuomo distanced himself from the Common Core in his State of the State address, during which he announced a \$145 billion budget for 2016-2017.

"We saw that parents were losing faith in the system," he said. "Simply put, the education system fails without parental trust. Period." Cuomo said he would urge the State Education

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Department to correct its implementation mistakes and to "do it right this time."

Related: Recap of Cuomo's State of the State address [http://www.syracuse.com/state/index.ssf/2016/01/highlights_of_cuomos_state_of_the_state_speech_state_budget.html#incart_std]

Here are more highlights from Cuomo's proposals for education spending, along with reactions from the public:

Largest education budget in the history of the state

Cuomo proposed increasing school aid by \$2.1 billion over the next two years. About \$1 billion would be available this year.

That increase would make the state's education budget the largest it's ever been. It still falls short of the \$2.4 billion requested by the State Education Department and critics said it didn't go far enough.

Transform failing schools to community schools

The governor twice spoke of a push toward "community schools."

He proposed \$100 million to "transform every failing school into a comprehensive, holistic, full-service community school." He said that could change the "basic education system of this state."

Many state-designated "failing" schools, including 18 in Syracuse, are already in the receivership process, which incentivizes superintendents to transform the schools into, among other options, community schools. Community schools offer services to families and surrounding neighborhoods, including health clinics and food programs.

It's not yet clear what Cuomo's proposal will mean for schools in receivership.

Eliminate the gap

Cuomo said his budget proposal would eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment, a measure undertaken during the economic recession, which directed education funds toward other areas of need in the state.

The Senate voted Monday to restore this funding.

Read more about the GEA. [http://www.syracuse.com/state/index.ssf/2016/01/what_syracuse_area_schools_get_hurt_the_most_by_cut_senate_votes_to_end.html]

Support charters

Cuomo vowed to continue his support of charter schools as "education laboratories." He said on average, they cost less than traditional public schools.

Cuomo said he viewed charters as an important part of the system and he would encourage their development in this budget.

Reimbursements for teachers

Cuomo proposed a \$200 tax credit for teachers who spend money out of pocket on school supplies and food for poor students.

He praised teachers for that kind of dedication to their students, but said the burden should not fall on them.

3 NY state budget proposals by Cuomo headed for trouble [http://www.syracuse.com/state/index.ssf/2016/01/5_ny_state_budget_proposals_by]

Transcript of Gov. Cuomo's 2016 State of the State speech [http://www.syracuse.com/state/index.ssf/2016/01/transcript_of_gov_cuomos_2016_]

NY legislator escorted from State of the State after shouting match with Cuomo (video) [http://www.syracuse.com/state/index.ssf/2016/01/ny_assemblyman_escorted_from]

Mayor Miner, County Exec Mahoney react to Cuomo's 2016 State of the State speech [http://www.syracuse.com/state/index.ssf/2016/01/central_ny_leaders_react_to_cuon]

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He said he hoped the credit would attract good teachers to New York schools.

Expansion of Pre-K

Cuomo's proposal also includes \$800 million to expand pre-kindergarten across the state.

The importance of pre-K was mentioned twice in a video shown before the speech, but Cuomo didn't elaborate in his remarks.

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