

School-aid formula changes recommended

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Joseph Spector (<http://www.lohud.com/staff/10046458/joseph-spector/>), Albany Bureau Chief 1:25 p.m. EDT September 12, 2016



The Board of Regents meets at the State Education Building on Tuesday, May 17, 2016, in Albany, N.Y. (Photo: Mike Groll, AP)

ALBANY – The state Board of Regents on Monday recommended a series of changes to the antiquated aid formula that distributes a nation-high \$24 billion a year to New York schools.

The board, which sets education policies in New York, was set to discuss the recommendations Monday afternoon for the state Legislature to consider next year.

The changes center largely on how the state calculates a school district's poverty level, and the Board of Regents urged to update the data used to determine a district's wealth.

The recommendations come just weeks after the [USA Today Network's Albany Bureau detailed a number of problems](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/08/25/new-york-state-education-school-districts-funding-formula/89306728/) with New York's school-aid formula.

For example, the formula, first put in place in 2007, relies on poverty data from the 2000 Census, as well as other information that is years old, the bureau's review found.

► [Why NY's school-aid formula is flunking](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2016/08/25/new-york-state-education-school-districts-funding-formula/89306728/)

► [Database: State aid for school districts](http://rochester.nydatabases.com/database/state-aid-school-districts)

[Coming soon: More NY tax rebate checks](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/blogs/vote-up/2016/09/09/coming-soon-more-ny-tax-rebate-checks/90127708/)

The Board of Regents recommended using more up-to-date statistics, as well as changing how students who receive free lunch are calculated to determine a district's poverty rate.

The board posted the recommendations on Friday, then quietly removed them on Monday, saying they would re-posted later in the day to explain that they were merely recommendations and not actual changes that would need legislative approval.

How the school-aid formula is determined is critical: The aid is sent out based on a community's economy, ability to tax and need.

But lawmakers fight over aid their local schools, whether they are rich or poor, which skews the formula, the bureau's report found.

School groups praised the Board of Regents for proposing changes.

"Achieving state aid funding that is both equitable and adequate is of immediate and critical need for public schools in all parts of the state," said Rick Timbs, executive director of the Statewide School Finance Consortium.

Timbs said the school-aid formula is in desperate need of updating.

The state Legislature returns to the Capitol in January, and the 2017-18 state budget is due by April 1.

"Clearly the Foundation Aid formula is in significant need of revision and must have reliable and valid metrics to work appropriately," Timbs said.

School aid formula recommendations (https://www.scribd.com/document/323751065/School-aid-formula-recommendations#from_embed) by jspector (https://www.scribd.com/user/3262579/jspector#from_embed) on Scribd



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

TO: State Aid Subcommittee

FROM: Elizabeth R. Berlin *Elizabeth R. Berlin*

SUBJECT: Chapter 54 Report to the Legislature and Governor Recommending Changes to Measures of Poverty in the Foundation Aid Formula

DATE: September 7, 2016

AUTHORIZATION(S): *Margaret E. Eisen*

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The Board of Regents will be provided an overview of the recommendations of the Commissioner to comply with Chapter 54 of the Laws of 2016 in recommending changing the measures of student poverty in the Foundation Aid formula.

Proposed Handling

The proposed recommendations will be presented to the State Aid subcommittee.

Background Information

Chapter 54 of the Laws of 2016 (commonly known as the Education, Labor, Housing, and Family Assistance Article VII Budget Bill) required the Commissioner of Education to examine the process for determining the number of eligible students in the federal and state Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) Program and other reliable measures of poverty that are used to calculate aid under Section 3602 of the Education Law, namely Foundation Aid. A report of such recommendations is required to be submitted to the Legislature and Governor by October 1, 2016.

The below highlights the analysis and recommendations that will be included in the submitted report:

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