



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

As Budget Deadline Nears, Larkin Wants Fair Distribution Of Education Aid

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) March 25, 2007

As the April 1st deadline for the state budget nears, Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) said the Governor's proposed school aid should be distributed fairly throughout the state.

"The Governor's school aid plan pits school districts against each other and will drive up property taxes in many districts," said Senator Larkin. "His proposed budget significantly changes how school aid is distributed by taking money away from one region of the state and giving it to another. About half the districts in the state - over 300 - would not receive an aid increase of more than 3 percent. That means that some districts, where some homeowners pay the highest property taxes in the nation, will receive minimal state school aid increases and may have to pay even higher property taxes to make up the difference. We need equity and regional balance in school aid."

The Senate's state budget plan for education adds \$358 million in school aid, which generates over \$514 million on a school year basis, to the Governor's school aid package to ensure a fair distribution of school aid to districts throughout the State. The budget represents the largest school aid increase in the history of New York.

In addition, the Senate education budget provides greater direct relief for property taxpayers by providing \$2.6 billion to triple the size of direct property tax rebate checks.

Specifically, the Senate education budget --

Adds \$90 million to fully fund the Public Excess Cost aid formula, ensuring that all schools will receive the reimbursement promised for the 2007-08 school year;

1 Provides for current year state aid payments for High Cost special education children beginning in the 2008-09 school year;

Adds \$25 million for a new version of the traditional growth aid formula to recognize those school districts that are experiencing pupil growth. The Governor proposed to collapse this aid category into his Foundation Aid proposal;

The Senate reestablishes the Tax Limitation Aid formula which was proposed to be consolidated by the Governor and provides \$45 million for those school districts with strong per pupil spending efforts relative to the State and those school districts with substantial tax effort compared to their districts' income;

The Senate accepts the Executive's proposal on transportation aid, BOCES, private excess cost aid, and special services aid;

The Senate concurs with the Executive's proposal to provide per pupil increases for Textbook Aid (95 cents per student) and Library Materials Aid (25 cents per student) as well as provide an additional tier worth \$6.2 million in hardware technology aid for nonpublic schools.

The Senate rejects the Executive's Contract for Excellence proposal and substitutes the Senate's Leading Educational Achievement for Results Now (LEARN). The LEARN program

creates the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) to promote educational achievement across the State.

Specifically the LEARN plan includes the following: each school or district deemed to be "poorly performing" by the OEA would be assigned a "Master Administrator" to help develop a three-year School Improvement Plan. If after three years the school or district continues to perform poorly, the school or district can be closed by the OEA and reopened under new leadership. If after six years it continues to perform poorly, an "Executive Administrator" would be assigned by the OEA to provide direct management to the school;

The Senate concurs with the Executive's proposal to increase the cap on charter schools from 100 to 250 with the Chancellor, SUNY and the State Board of Regents each given the authorization to approve 50 new charter schools. The Senate also provides a total of \$22 million in additional funds, \$7 million more than proposed by the Governor, to expand the school districts which are eligible for charter school transition aid; and

The Senate would add \$5 million for libraries bringing total library aid to \$102.2 million.