



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Legislature Declares its Support for Increased State Aid to Education

SUZI OPPENHEIMER March 14, 2012

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Senate and Assembly Budget Proposals Would Reallocate Funds from Competitive Education Grants

The New York State Senate voted earlier this week to approve its 2012-13 Senate Budget Resolution, which will form the basis for further negotiations with the Assembly and the Executive Branch on the final FY 2012-23 budget.

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck), the Ranking Member of the Senate Education Committee, fought for several changes in the proposed Education budget that were included in the Senate Resolution. Chief among them was the proposal to reallocate \$200 million from the Governor's competitive performance grant program to increase State Aid to education.

"Reallocating these funds to the general education aid budget will benefit all school districts, not just a select few, and will be especially important to lower income districts that have struggled to maintain educational programs and services in this tough economy," said Oppenheimer. Because the Senate proposal shifts funds from one educational program to another, it does not increase overall government spending from that proposed in Governor Cuomo's fiscally prudent Executive budget.

Senator Oppenheimer also advocated for a 4 percent increase in state library aid funding, arguing that public libraries should be on parity with other educational institutions in New York. The Governor has included an overall 4 percent increase in state aid to education in his proposed FY 2012-13 Executive Budget. "I'm grateful that my colleagues in the Senate recognize the enormous public benefit of our local libraries, which are not only vital educational resources in the community, but also job search and retraining centers for the unemployed and underemployed."

While the Senate Budget Resolution would increase state library funding by \$3.1 million, state support for public libraries is still 23 percent less than it was in 2007. "I would have supported a larger increase," said Oppenheimer, "but given the significant fiscal challenges facing New York, this modest funding increase is reasonable and much needed."

The final budget is still subject to negotiations between the Senate, the Assembly -- which passed its own Budget Resolution this week -- and the Governor. Senator Oppenheimer vowed to "continue to fight to ensure that school age children throughout New York receive a fair and equitable share of our limited state dollars."