

Budget...

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State Senator Frank Padavan (R-C-Bellerose), said: "The budget agreed upon by the legislature this week is good for New York and great for New York City. This year we were fortunate enough to be working

with a surplus and as a legislature we've put together a budget that lowers taxes and increases state aid. This is unprecedented and I don't think it could have worked out any better for the residents of this great city or the state of New York.

"The agreement reached by the state senate and Assembly would send more than \$1.3 billion to New York schools and half of that amount is going to New York City under the legislature's plan. This is a record increase for the city of New York, an increase that should help put our parents and children at ease. This is the funding that our schools need now and it also sets up continued additional support in the years to come." Padavan added.

Out of \$2.6 billion in new school construction funds, \$1.8 billion would go directly to city school districts. In addition to the \$1.8 billion, the city has also been authorized to bond an additional \$4.7 billion which will complete the state's commitment to the city's 5-year plan. Padavan noted, "This is historic for New York City, people around the state are finally begin-

ning to realize that our schools have been neglected and now those key players are willing to allocate funding to schools in a manner that is fair and allows all of New York's children equal access to an education that will properly prepare them for their future."

This budget also includes \$375 million in aid for high needs districts throughout the state, with at least 60 percent going to New York City. Funds will be increased for necessary programs such as universal Pre-K, high tax aid, teacher support aid, teacher resource and computer centers and the Teacher Mentor Intern program.

Padavan, elated at the timeliness and thoroughness of this budget agreement, said, "This budget is a win for our children. Too often, politics gets in the way of what is really important, but this time we came up with a plan that protects our taxpayers and allows our children to receive all the educational services they require and need. I think money spent on our children and their education is the safest and most reliable form of investment."



State Senator Serphin (R-C-Middle Village):

"The budget agreed on by the legislature represents a tremendous victory for the schools, students, teachers and families of New York City. The budget agreement includes significant increases in funding to improve New York City schools and ensure that our students receive a sound

basic education in state-of-the-art schools "I appreciate the leadership of Senator Bruno to ensure that the budget authorizes \$11.2 billion over five years for new school construction, exceeding the amounts proposed in related court decisions. The state will provide \$6.5 billion, while the city will contribute the remaining \$4.7 billion.

"New funding this year in the amount of \$1.8 billion will pay for the first year of Mayor [Michael] Bloomberg's multi-year school construction plan which includes the 21 school projects currently on hold. Mayor Bloomberg and my New York City Senate Majority colleagues, Senator [John] Marchi, Senator Padavan and Senator [Martin] Golden, share my commitment to students and teachers in New York City, and I thank them for their strong advocacy throughout this budget process.

"In addition, we have secured an agreement to include a state commitment to pay the debt service on the \$1.8 billion, protecting our New York City taxpayers.

"The school construction funding that we have assisted in securing meets a critical portion of the state's obligation arising from the Campaign for Fiscal Equity [CFE] lawsuit, and when coupled with the additional increases in operating aid, will help ensure that every child in New York City has the opportunity to achieve a world class education from excellent teachers in safe, modern schools."



State Senator John Sabini (D-Jackson Heights): "There's not enough operating dollars in the budget for our schools. We're still nowhere near where we need to be. Also, we're taking on an extensive amount of debt. It will fall on the shoulders of young New Yorkers in the future [to pay it off]."



Councilmember John Liu (D-Flushing), a member of the Education Committee, stated in response to questions regarding the recent agreement by state officials to authorize \$11.2 billion in capital funds for New York

school construction, declared: "This agreement helps our school kids and we thank our state leaders for doing the right thing. Students in my district and around the city are packed like sardines. With the \$1.8 billion available for this year as well as the billions more slated for future years, we will finally be able to build the capacity we need.

"This funding agreement will put back on track the building of P.S. 244 in Flushing. It remains a top priority to ensure the completion of this much-needed school. Furthermore, more schools in the Flushing area will be needed to be put on the drawing board. With the funding now available, the quick identification and acquisition of sites will be critical."

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