

Superintendent's Dashboard

February 10, 2017

- Plans for the new high school heating plant are in process. We expect the plans to be completed and sent to SED for approval in late February or early March.
- Bob and I have presented to many community groups during the past month and have held 3 informational meetings at each of our buildings. For the most part attendees have seemed supportive and many great questions have been asked. We will be finishing up our community tour this week at the Wolcott Fire Department. Thank you for attending the meetings that you were able to attend and a special thanks to Cinda and Linda for attending almost every meeting we held.

We have mailed 4 mailings to the public to this point. An additional two publications to include a "Q and A" and a compilation of all of the mailings will be distributed during the next several weeks. With a little over two weeks until the vote, I believe we have addressed all of the areas of concerns the Board had when we started the process. Although there are no guarantees as it relates to project votes, I feel we have done a thorough job of communicating and respectfully and accurately sharing both the Board's vision for our facilities and the work to be performed.

- Next week the 3020A proceedings will take place for our teacher out on administrative leave. I will keep the Board posted on the outcome but that could take upward of several months.
- Negotiations with the NRWTA have reached an impasse (mutually declared). The union is unwilling to give up any planning time in order for us to increase instructional time. A mediator will be assigned during the next phase with the goal being narrowing the differences in order to come to an agreement.
- For the first time in our history our Vice President had to cast the deciding vote during the confirmation vote for our new Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos. She is a billionaire who has no experience in education whatsoever and is a strong supporter of charter schools as is the President.
- I will be meeting with our legislative representatives twice during the next month to make our case for an increase in school aid. Senator Helming and Assemblyman Oaks have agreed to meetings in which I will present data that they could use in their respective groups. The fact that Senator Helming is in her first budget cycle and Assemblyman Oaks is in the minority in the Assembly does not help our cause. In addition, this is not an election year and thus the

Governor usually dictates funding levels. In spite of these factors we must still make the case for our students and taxpayers. I have attached a summary of the NYS Executive budget proposal for your review.

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- The Strategic Action Plan update will be presented at our meeting on Tuesday by Melanie Stevenson and the teaching staff. I will be presenting the instructional portion of the budget during the meeting as Bob will be unable to attend.
- We will be having a budget workshop on February 28, the same evening as the capital project vote, in the high school small cafeteria.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Cinda or me. Also, if you email Cinda or me a questions or request for information, please copy the entire Board as other members may have the same question.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

2-14-17 BOE Meeting, 6:00 PM, HS
2-20-24-17 Winter Break
2-28-17 BOE Workshop, 6:00 PM HS Cafeteria
2-28-17 Capital Project Vote, 12:00-9:00 HS Fourier

FOUR BIG EQUITY ISSUES IN THIS YEAR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Following the release of Governor Cuomo's 2017-18 Executive Budget, The Education Trust–New York has identified four of the educational equity issues that policymakers should address in order to ensure a high-quality education for all New York students—especially low-income students and students of color—from early childhood through college completion.

1 FOUNDATION AID

What the budget does:

The Executive Budget increases School Aid by \$961 million, including \$428 million for Foundation Aid. The State Education Department estimates that the total remaining “phase in” of Foundation Aid would cost \$4.3 billion. However, the Executive Budget eliminates use of the Foundation Aid formula for increased funding in future years.

Our take:

The Executive Budget takes two steps backward for one step forward—with improvements to target poverty this year outweighed by the loss of predictability and transparency in future years and by not doing enough to ensure that schools serving low-income students and students of color receive the resources they need to increase achievement and opportunity.

Equity points:

- Schools should have an annual funding formula that provides a “predictable revenue stream to enhance long-term financial planning.” Those are

the words the Executive Chamber used in last year's budget proposal when it announced a “two-year plan to eliminate the [Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) that] allows school districts a *predictable revenue stream to enhance long-term financial planning and support responsible budget practices.*”

- New York's school funding system is the second most inequitable in the nation. The state should adopt the Executive Budget's formula improvements that better address poverty and district need, while also taking steps to ensure that students receive additional resources—especially in schools that serve low-income students and students of color.

2 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

What the budget does:

The Executive Budget includes a \$5 million increase to expand pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds, with a focus on high-need school districts. The budget also begins a consolidation of the state's multiple pre-k programs. The Executive Budget includes no new resources to expand the state's under-funded early childhood quality initiative, QUALITYstarsNY.

FOUR BIG EQUITY ISSUES IN THIS YEAR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET

Our take:

With fewer than two-thirds of 4-year-olds enrolled in quality early learning programs and even fewer 3-year-olds having access, this new investment is a step in the right direction and should be accompanied by a multi-year funding strategy to reach truly universal and high-quality early childhood education for the students with the greatest needs. Starting to consolidate programs and strengthen standards are smart moves, and there are other critical steps that New York should take now to further streamline its pre-k programs and enhance quality across the board.

Equity points:

- Per-pupil funding levels should be adequate across all programs and settings—both school districts and community based organizations—in order to support high-quality pre-k for 3- and 4-year-olds, and the state should establish a timeline for ensuring adequate resources while expanding access to all eligible children, particularly in high-need communities.
- The state should further streamline the various pre-k programs and guarantee ongoing funding for providers who are meeting quality program standards that are independently validated.
- As part of its initial consolidation of pre-kindergarten programs, the Executive Budget would require schools districts to “agree to adopt approved quality indicators within two years.” There should not be a 2-year delay on quality, and the standards for all pre-k programs should be at least as rigorous as the evidence-based quality standards in the newer Statewide Universal Full-Day Prekindergarten Program enacted in 2014.

- The state should ensure that parents have access to information about the quality of every pre-kindergarten program, such as through full implementation of QUALITYstarsNY.

3 TEACHER EQUITY AND SUPPORT

What the budget does:

The Executive Budget expands the Governor's Master Teachers Program and Empire State Excellence in Teaching Awards. It also makes “high quality professional development” eligible for state aid if offset by savings in instructional materials through adoption of free online curriculum resources.

Our take:

All New York State students—especially those who are starting furthest behind—need to be taught to high academic standards by strong educators. This remains a major under-addressed area of the state budget discussion.

Equity points:

- The state should ensure that all students—and especially the groups of students that have been disproportionately assigned to the least effective teachers—have access to strong and diverse educators.
- The state should support the adoption of high academic standards by developing quality aligned instructional materials to help teachers deliver rigorous and engaging instruction and by providing professional development at scale focused on the implementation and use of these materials and on actual student work.

FOUR BIG EQUITY ISSUES IN THIS YEAR'S EXECUTIVE BUDGET

4 TUITION-FREE COLLEGE AT SUNY AND CUNY INSTITUTIONS

What the budget does:

The Executive Budget provides \$163 million to fund a higher education affordability initiative to cover unmet tuition costs at SUNY and CUNY for full-time students with household income up to \$125,000, once the program is fully in place.

Our take:

As the budget process unfolds, we will evaluate the plan based on how low-income students, students of color and non-traditional students would benefit, and especially how it ensures that these groups of students will receive the financial, academic and other support they need for success in college and beyond.

Equity points:

- Low-income students—who may already be eligible for federal Pell grants and state TAP grants—should be able to benefit from the program, such as through resources to cover costs including fees, transportation, child care and books that too often make college out of reach.
- The state should also support the college dreams of non-traditional students—including those who attend college part-time because they cannot afford to give up their job.
- The state should hold institutions accountable for improving student success as measured by on-time graduation rates, particularly for the groups of students who are furthest behind.
- The state should encourage high-performing colleges to improve access by enrolling more low-income students, and it should ensure equitable per-student support for the institutions that serve students with the greatest needs. ■

Other Investments and Actions that Advance Equity in the Executive Budget:

- Additional funding to launch Early College High Schools, such as the proven P-TECH program
- Support for high school students to take Advanced Placement tests to earn college credit
- Enactment of the DREAM Act to support college affordability for undocumented students
- Continued oversight and aid for the East Ramapo School District
- 3-year extension of mayoral control in New York City, ensuring accountability and oversight