

January 2006

# Education

From the NYS Assembly • Sheldon  
Silver, Speaker  
Catherine T. Nolan, Chair,  
Education Committee

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## Governor's going-away present to our children? An alarming lack of education funding.

Governor Pataki's final budget proposal makes it a perfect dozen – 12 consecutive budgets that shortchange our schools.

**“Back-loaded tax cuts for the wealthy may play well in Iowa and New Hampshire, but middle-class New Yorkers want lower property taxes and a stronger state investment in their public schools. New York has an ever-widening achievement gap, and the governor's budget would drive that gap even wider.”**  
- **Richard C. Iannuzzi, president of New York State United Teachers**

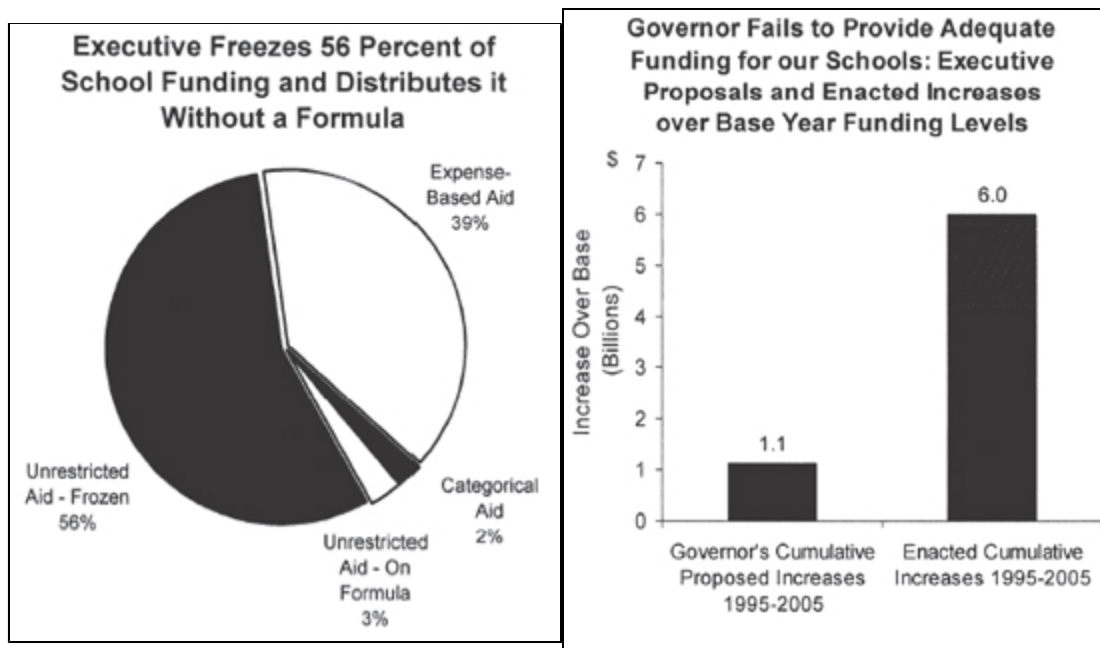
He once again gets an “F” when it comes to preparing our children for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future, with a comment on his report card reading *“fails to show effort.”* Again, he fails to comply with a court order requiring the state to meet its constitutional and moral obligation to provide a sound, basic education to all of our children. Incredibly, the governor has spent tens of millions of our tax dollars fighting this court order by arguing that an eighth-grade education is all our children need to succeed in today's global economy.

**“...(Governor Pataki's) budget is salted throughout with spending designed to support public school alternatives or to drive wedges between public schools and their communities.”**  
- **Timothy G. Kremer, executive director, New York State School Boards Association**

special education, BOCES and building aid – that school districts have already incurred. Local taxpayers will now be forced to pick up the slack. The funds the governor does include in his budget – \$375 million in something he calls “Sound Basic Education Aid” – does not specify how much funding each school district will receive and it would be doled out at his sole discretion. The governor is essentially saying “trust me” to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

The governor claims his budget increases aid, but there is no increase in operating aid and it hides an estimated \$278 million in cuts primarily to reimbursable expenses.

These are expenses – including



## How the governor is gambling with our children's education

Governor Pataki's budget would place the financial fate of our schools on a

risky bet – funding them through Video Lottery Terminals. His budget proposal also diverts critical aid from public schools by expanding charter schools. In fact, the governor's budget would expand the number of charter schools from the current limit of 100 to 250 and fund their construction with state bonds.

**“The Class of 2019 enters kindergarten this year on this governor's watch. His legacy for them is overcrowded classes, not enough qualified teachers and no Universal Pre-K. Clearly the governor missed the class on fractions, because he is providing less than one-twelfth of what schoolchildren actually need.”**

**- Billy Easton, director of the Alliance for Quality Education**

provide desperately needed funding for state comptroller audits even as local taxpayers continue to be rocked by financial scandals in school districts across the state. Only through better auditing can we help ensure openness, accountability and the wise use of limited resources.

**The Assembly has fought - and will continue to fight - to**

**“For years, the governor has claimed there was no more money for education. Now, when there is a \$2 billion surplus that could be used to make a real difference with proven programs and accountable**

## Money (not) well spent

Research has shown that smaller class sizes and universal pre-K are integral to children's educational development. However, the governor has failed to fund these critical initiatives.

The governor's budget also fails to

## ensure our children get a quality education

**investments, he is turning his back on the needs of our public school children.”**  
**- Randi Weingarten, president of the United Federation of Teachers**

The governor likes to take credit for the school aid increases that occurred on his watch. The truth is that the Legislature fought for – and won over the governor’s objections – these crucial increases in state education aid. For 11 years now, the Legislature has repeatedly rejected the governor’s shortsighted education cuts and, as a result, our schools have received \$4.85 billion more than they would have under the governor’s budgets.

**“The State Constitution promises all children the chance for a sound basic education. With a \$2 billion budget surplus, state leaders’ first duty should be to keep that promise, as the Court of Appeals told them almost three years ago. It’s long past time for the state’s leaders to give our neediest children what they’ve been promised.”**

**- Thomas Rogers, executive director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents**

The Assembly is committed to working together with the Senate and governor to craft a better, bipartisan budget that ensures our children receive a quality education without placing the burden on local taxpayers.

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