



2026-27

REGENTS BUDGET PROPOSAL

For more than a century, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has served as the steward of one of the most ambitious and inclusive public education systems in the nation. Established in 1904 under the leadership of the Board of Regents, NYSED was founded on a simple but powerful belief: that education is the cornerstone of democracy and the surest pathway to opportunity. From its earliest days, the Department has stood as a steward of public trust: ensuring that every child and adult learner, in every community, has access to a high-quality education and the chance to succeed.

Today, NYSED's work reaches far beyond the classroom. The Department establishes academic standards, administers assessments, and oversees school accountability, while also providing support to districts and educators through guidance, professional development, and technical assistance. It licenses and regulates more than 50 professions, safeguards New York's cultural institutions through the State Library, Museum, and Archives, and protects the integrity of our shared history and democratic values. It also works to ensure that adult learners and individuals with disabilities are actively engaged in the workforce. At every level, NYSED works in partnership with local schools, BOCES, higher education institutions, libraries, and communities to meet the diverse needs of New Yorkers across the state.

As the world changes, so too must education. NYSED's role is not only to preserve what has worked, but to lead thoughtfully toward what comes next, ensuring that students and adult learners are prepared for college, careers, and civic life in a rapidly evolving economy and democracy. Whether expanding pathways to graduation, strengthening career-connected learning, closing opportunity gaps, or supporting the institutions that anchor our communities, NYSED remains guided by a simple principle: all means all.

1.42 billion

Budget and Legislative

Priorities: \$68.8M

P-12 Education: \$32.5M

SE-ACCES: \$2.0M

Higher Education: \$15.5M

Cultural Education: \$18.8M

School Aid Increase: \$1.1B

Foundation Aid: \$996.8M

Formula Enhancements: \$30.1M

Reimbursement Based Aids: \$96.9M

Capital Needs: \$227.3M

Albany Buildings: \$16.3M

Schools for the Blind and Deaf: \$34.0M

Three Nation Schools: \$177.0M

School Aid

FUNDING NEED:

Foundation Aid

- + \$996.8M increase
- + \$283.3M over current law
 - Update the ELL weight to 0.60
 - New inclusion of students experiencing homelessness at 0.12 weight
 - Minimum means tested increases

Universal Pre-K Expansion

- + \$20M for districts serving high-needs students

Career & Technical Education

- + \$10.1 M to maintain parity for non-BOCES districts

Reimbursement Based Aids at Current Law Levels

- + \$96.9M

Students with Disabilities

Extended aid eligibility through age 22

\$1.1 billion



State School Aid is the backbone of public education in New York, ensuring that every child - regardless of ZIP code - has access to a high-quality education. Distributed through a combination of Foundation Aid and categorical programs, State School Aid supports core classroom instruction, special education, English Language Learners, transportation, early childhood education, and Career and Technical Education in every school district across the state. The funding formula is designed to account for student need and local capacity, recognizing that districts serving higher-need populations require greater resources to deliver equitable opportunities.

The Regents State Aid proposal calls for a **\$1.1 billion** increase in State Aid for the 2026 - 27 school year. The budget request includes:

- **\$996.8 million** increase in Foundation Aid, a \$283.3 million increase over current law projections of \$713.5 million. This would enhance funding for districts serving English Language Learners and provide new funding to support essential services for students experiencing homelessness, as well as a minimum increase to maintain existing levels of educational services.
- **\$30.1 million** increase for formula enhancements that would allow nearly 1,500 new students in high-need districts to enroll in prekindergarten and enhance funding for CTE.
- **\$96.9 million** increase in reimbursement-based Aid under current law projections.

Grad Measures

New York State's graduation requirements have remained largely unchanged, even as the world our students are entering has transformed. While society, technology, and workforce demands continue to evolve, our expectations for what it means to earn a high school diploma have not kept pace. To address this, the Department convened a Blue-Ribbon Commission, bringing together educators, students, families, and community leaders from across the state. After years of research, dialogue, and listening to all the above, the Commission reached a clear conclusion: the current diploma requirements do not focus on the skills that drive success in college, career, and civic life: problem solving, communication, creative thinking, collaboration and citizenship.

Transforming NYS graduation requirements is not something the Department can or should do alone. It will require partnership and shared commitment. Districts, BOCES, principals, teachers, parents, stakeholders, school communities, and most importantly, our students will help to transform NYS education into a system that supports and empowers all students.



FUNDING NEED:

Standards and Technical Assistance: \$2.6M

Aligning new graduation measures and instructional requirements, like financial literacy and climate education, through expert staffing and six regional support centers.

Professional Development for Educators: \$2.5M

Investing in professional learning that helps teachers and leaders challenge students more holistically - and evaluate learning through innovative, real-world measures - is a critical step in this process.

\$5.1 million

Cultural Education Revenue Stabilization

FUNDING NEED:

Create a reliable base State general fund appropriation of \$12M to allow the Office of Cultural Education (OCE) to thrive and for our State Library to continue to provide the technical supports and services to Regional Library Systems and local libraries across New York State.

\$12 million

The Cultural Education Fund (CEF) - the primary operating support for the State Library, Museum, and Archives - has faced two decades of decline and volatility that now threatens the core mission of the Office of Cultural Education (OCE).

General Fund dollars used to support OCE but in 2002 the Legislature and Executive created the CEF which is funded by a \$15 Real Estate Deed Transfer Fee. CEF revenues initially rose steadily before the 2008 housing collapse caused them to plummet. At the same time, the State swept \$40 million from the fund over two years to cover unrelated shortfalls, eliminating reserves that could have sustained operations. The CEF has never recovered since these sweeps.

As a result of this - combined with the volatility of the housing market, and a lack of any increase over 20 years while costs for employees and services have increased significantly - OCE has operated under a deficit in 15 of the past 17 years. This has greatly impacted the level of OCE staffing; the preservation of important historical artifacts and vast State collections; and has led to reduction in the quality of services and programming that can be provided by our State Library, Museum, and Archives.



Capital Requests

Capital Investments Needed to Protect Safety, Preserve Assets, and Reduce Long-Term Costs: \$227.3M

New York State must complete critical, time-sensitive capital projects to protect students and staff, preserve historic and educational assets, and avoid significantly higher future costs. State-owned schools - including the Schools for the Blind and Deaf and Tribal Nation Schools - face urgent infrastructure challenges, from failing HVAC systems and water infiltration to environmental hazards and overcrowded instructional space. These investments are essential to ensuring safe, compliant learning environments and honoring the State's responsibility to the students it directly serves.

Education Building and Annex – \$14.1M (Remaining Funding)

Last year, the Department received a \$20 million installment toward an estimated \$34.1 million capital project at the Education Building. The original scope includes critical repairs to exterior walls and columns, the roof and skylights, and replacement of a key elevator required to maintain HVAC systems. Completing this work as a single, coordinated project is more cost-effective and less disruptive than piecemeal construction. The Department therefore recommends that the Governor and Legislature provide the remaining \$14.1 million to complete all exterior work in a single comprehensive project, including the replacement of the critical maintenance elevator.

State-Owned School Buildings – \$211M

These investments address urgent health, safety, and infrastructure needs at state-operated and state-supported schools serving some of New York's most vulnerable students.

- **New York State School for the Blind at Batavia – \$25.5 million**
 - The campus faces severe infrastructure failures including roof leaks causing water infiltration, a nonfunctional cooling system requiring costly temporary replacement, and soil contamination from leaking toxic materials near former student activity areas. These conditions have also prevented replacement of failing sewer lines that cause flooding. One building has deteriorated so extensively that it requires personal protective equipment for entry and is slated for demolition.
- **New York State School for the Deaf at Rome – \$8.5 million**
 - While less severe, this campus requires investment in an outdated heating system, lack of air conditioning in classrooms despite new temperature requirements, and other essential maintenance needs including windows and walkways.
- **St. Regis Mohawk Nation School at Akwesasne – \$115.1 million**
 - The existing school requires significant upgrades but is located in a flood zone. The Nation has acquired land outside the flood zone to develop a new, child-centered campus with a school and early learning center. This request reflects the net amount needed after accounting for remaining funds from prior appropriations.
- **Tuscarora Nation School – \$10.7 million**
 - A Building Condition Survey identified numerous deferred maintenance needs. While progress has been made, additional funding is required to fully address these findings and ensure safe, functional learning environments.
- **Onondaga Nation School – \$51.2 million**
 - This request supports HVAC upgrades, continued window replacement, interior window shades for lockdown safety, a new public address system, and an expansion to provide adequate space for related services such as speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and a larger gymnasium.

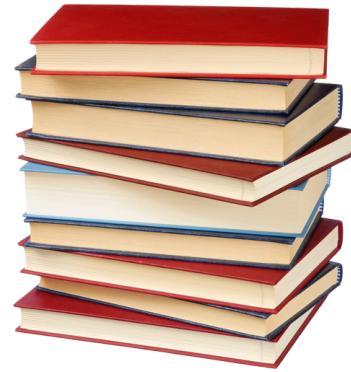
Why This Matters Now

Deferred maintenance, aging infrastructure, and unresolved safety hazards across state-owned education facilities have reached a critical point. Delaying coordinated investment will only increase long-term costs, accelerate structural deterioration, and put students, staff, and irreplaceable public assets at risk. Strategic, timely funding now allows the State to address urgent health and safety concerns, protect historic and educational facilities, and ensure that specialized schools serving some of New York's most vulnerable students can operate safely, efficiently, and with dignity.



Cultural Education Revenue Stabilization

INVESTMENT IN LIBRARIES IS AN INVESTMENT IN DEMOCRACY



Investing \$12 million in the State Cultural Education Fund (CEF) will enable the State Library and libraries throughout New York State to:

Support for Your Regional Library Systems and Local Libraries

The New York State Library (NYSL) provides critical technical assistance and support in ensuring Library Construction Grant applications to DASNY are approvable. Without their support, it is estimated that up to 75% of applications would fail.

Support for New Americans

The New York State Library (NYSL) is committed to safeguarding the rights of individuals, both citizens and noncitizens. For example, NYSL partners with the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) to offer webinars providing legal frameworks, family preparedness resources, and parental designation forms for library workers.

Digital Equity and Affordable Broadband Act Support

NYSL is committed to supporting digital equity through training, funding, and a partnership with the ConnectALL office.

Social Work in Libraries and Serving Vulnerable Communities

Public libraries encounter individuals in crisis every day. NYSL responds to community needs by providing resources and access to addressing community challenges. To support library staff, NYSL's Excelsior Service Fellow and social worker host monthly webinars.

Food Insecurity / Food Justice

NYSL partners with Hunger Solutions NY so public libraries can provide summer lunch programs.

Accessibility

To ensure all New Yorkers can participate in civic life, the New York State Library partners with the Office of People With Developmental Disabilities, NYS Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Office, and the Talking Book and Braille Library.

Cultural Education Fund

History of Budget Sweeps and Underinvestment

Created in 2002 and funded through the Real Estate Deed Transfer Fee, CEF revenues initially rose steadily before the 2008 housing collapse caused them to plummet. At the same time, the State swept \$40 million from the fund over two years to cover unrelated shortfalls, eliminating reserves that could have sustained operations. As shown in the accompanying chart, the State Library and OCE have operated under a deficit in 15 of the past 17 years.

Cultural Education Fund History Since Inception

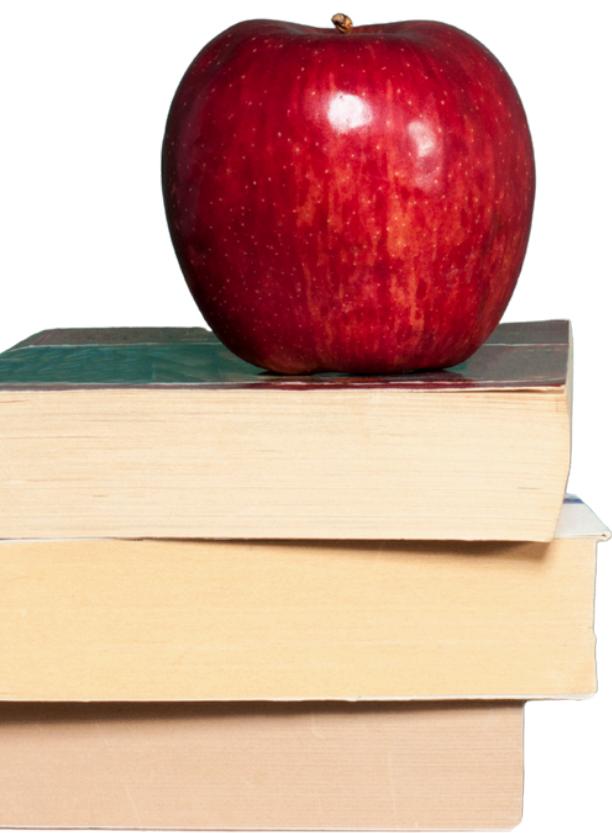
State Fiscal Year	April 1st Beginning Balance	CE Fee Revenue	OCE Operating Budget	March 31st Ending Balance
2002-03	\$0	\$24,351,562	\$24,001,686	\$349,876
2003-04	\$349,876	\$46,805,115	\$25,704,696	\$21,450,295
2004-05	\$21,450,295	\$47,616,540	\$28,757,610	\$40,309,225
2005-06	\$40,309,225	\$43,395,578	\$35,080,391	\$48,624,412
2006-07	\$48,624,412	\$41,724,547	\$37,780,898	\$52,568,061
2007-08	\$52,568,061	\$38,010,423	\$58,973,109	\$31,605,375
2008-09	\$31,605,375	\$28,947,325	\$58,160,948	\$2,391,752
2009-10	\$2,391,752	\$28,720,817	\$39,229,787	(\$8,117,218)
2010-11	(\$8,117,218)	\$28,214,437	\$34,550,201	(\$14,452,982)
2011-12	(\$14,452,982)	\$28,349,480	\$25,815,131	(\$11,918,633)
2012-13	(\$11,918,633)	\$30,166,268	\$25,544,587	(\$7,296,952)
2013-14	(\$7,296,952)	\$30,812,165	\$27,369,436	(\$3,854,223)
2014-15	(\$3,854,223)	\$25,372,591	\$25,953,280	(\$4,434,912)
2015-16	(\$4,434,912)	\$26,958,812	\$26,182,152	(\$3,658,252)
2016-17	(\$3,658,252)	\$27,714,331	\$26,808,944	(\$2,752,865)
2017-18	(\$2,752,865)	\$27,315,128	\$27,121,364	(\$2,559,101)
2018-19	(\$2,559,101)	\$26,478,876	\$28,091,319	(\$4,171,544)
2019-20	(\$4,171,544)	\$25,830,445	\$25,832,400	(\$4,173,499)
2020-21	(\$4,173,499)	\$26,386,146	\$25,145,955	(\$2,933,308)
2021-22	(\$2,933,308)	\$32,275,916	\$26,936,536	\$2,406,072
2022-23	\$2,406,072	\$25,726,475	\$25,743,474	\$2,389,073
2023-24	\$2,389,073	\$22,010,159	\$26,149,762	(\$1,750,530)
2024-25	(\$1,750,530)	\$22,473,798	\$26,892,374	(\$6,169,106)
2025-26*	(\$6,169,106)	\$22,241,979	\$28,275,000	(\$12,202,128)

*Projected

*\$40M Total
Funding
Sweep

Education in Juvenile Justice Settings

Justice system-involved youth are entitled by law to receive appropriate educational opportunities. The state's current system is disjointed, does not provide sufficiently transferable credits, does not facilitate reentry to the home school, and creates challenges to meeting service mandates. New York should invest in a new model school district - informed by best practices in other states - that provides in-person and hybrid coursework, transferable credits, and career preparation. Research shows that strong educational planning and programming help prevent recidivism and prepare youth for a successful transition back into their communities. Alongside partner state agencies, the Board of Regents requests planning funds and initial staff support for the proposed school district. By creating a single, equitable system, we will improve educational outcomes for New York's justice system-involved youth.



FUNDING NEED:

Plan and provide initial staffing: \$1.5M

These start-up funds will serve as design funds to build a staff and curriculum that supports youth placed in juvenile justice facilities.

\$1.5 million