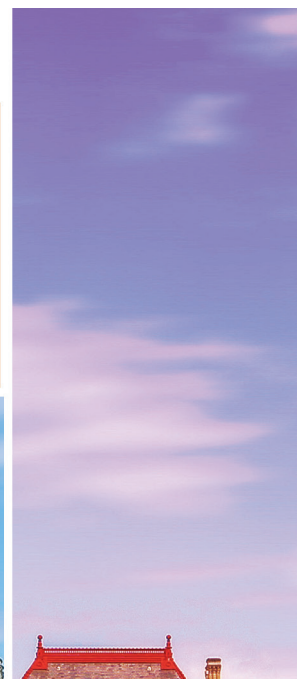
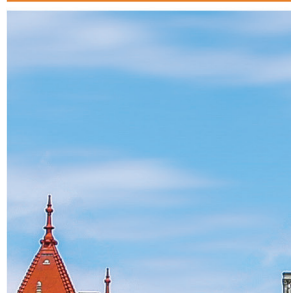
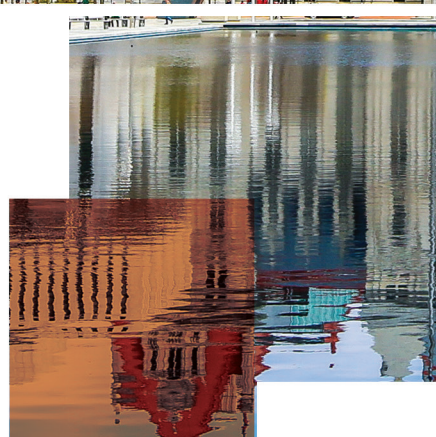
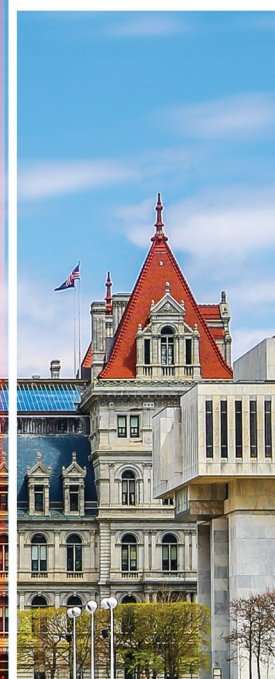


The New York State Assembly
Annual Report

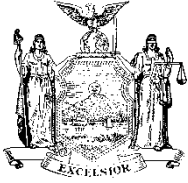


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**Committee on
Education**

Speaker Carl E. Heastie
Michael R. Benedetto, CHAIR



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

COMMITTEES
Rules
Labor
Ways & Means

MICHAEL BENEDETTO
82nd Assembly District
Bronx County

December 15, 2025

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie, Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

I am pleased to submit to you the annual report for the Assembly Standing Committee on Education. Thanks to your leadership, the Committee has continued to invest in the success of students, teachers, and schools across New York State.

The 2025-26 enacted state budget saw significant improvements in funding for our public schools. The enacted budget increased General Support for Public Schools (GSPS) by \$1.7 billion for a total of \$37.6 billion in the 2025-26 school year. The budget also bolstered Foundation Aid by \$1.6 billion over the 2024-25 enacted budget, for a total of \$26.4 billion. Budgetary changes continued to improve our state's per pupil formula, increasing the English Language Learner (ELL) Factor in the Pupil Needs Index to 0.53.

In the 2025 legislative session, the Committee championed important educational measures focused on protecting physical and mental well-being for students and faculty, creating resources for special education students, and supporting school board meetings and voting. Furthermore, among these measures is a new law mandating that all district and building-wide school safety plans develop emergency response plans relating to sudden cardiac arrest.

As we move forward into the 2026 legislative session, the Committee will continue to ensure the best for all of our students, teachers and staff in the many city, suburban, and rural school districts across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michael R. Benedetto". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being the most prominent.

Michael Benedetto
Chair
Committee on Education

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Michael Benedetto, Chair

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New York State Constitution states that, “[t]he Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated” (Article 11, Section 1). This constitutional provision establishes the foundation for the areas of responsibility of the Assembly’s Standing Committee on Education.

The Committee is responsible for overseeing educational policies and programs affecting prekindergarten, elementary, and secondary education for approximately 2.8 million children attending both public and nonpublic schools. Within New York State, there are more than 700 school districts, including the nation’s largest, the New York City School District, which enrolls over 1 million students. In addition, 37 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provide occupational education, shared services, special education, and academic programs on a regional basis. The Committee also participates in the process for selecting persons to serve on the New York State Board of Regents.

The Committee works diligently to ensure that the public schools of this large and diverse state provide the range of opportunities that all students need to fulfill their potential. The Committee supports equitable funding and strengthening the quality of public education in the state.

During the 2025 Session, 566 bills were referred to the Education Committee. The Education Committee has broad authority over all aspects of public education in New York State. This report provides a detailed examination of the Committee’s budgetary and legislative achievements in 2025.

II. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A. STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Legislature provided \$37.6 billion in total State funding for school aid, an increase of \$204 million over the Executive proposal and \$1.7 billion over State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024-25.

The following summary provides a brief description of the State Budget:

Foundation Aid

The Foundation Aid formula was established in the 2007-08 school year and acts as a mechanism to ensure that educational resources are distributed to school districts in a comprehensive and equitable manner pursuant to the New York State Court of Appeal's Campaign for Fiscal Equity decision. The formula is based on the average cost of educating students in successful schools, and is adjusted for regional cost differences, poverty levels, pupils with limited English proficiency, and special education needs. In addition, the formula is based on enrollment rather than attendance.

The Legislature increased Foundation Aid by \$1.4 billion over the 2024-25 school year, for a total of \$26.4 billion.

The Legislature accepted the Executive's proposal to modify the state sharing ratio.

The Legislature replaced the Free and Reduced-Price Lunch data with Economically Disadvantaged Student data.

The Legislature replaced the Census Poverty Data with Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) data.

The Legislature increased the English Language Learner (ELL) Factor in the Pupil Needs Index (PNI) from 0.5 to 0.53.

The Legislature increased the Westchester County Regional Cost Index (RCI) from 1.314 to 1.351.

Early Childhood Education

The Legislature provided \$1.2 billion for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK).

Postsecondary Programs

The Legislature accepted \$61.5 million for the College in High School Opportunity Fund, which includes \$9.1 million to provide new ongoing, pre-credit funding for College in High School programs.

The Legislature restored \$2.1 million and allotted an additional \$714,000 for the Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP), for a total of \$49.8 million.

The Legislature restored \$954,000 and allotted an additional \$318,000 for the Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), for a total of \$22.1 million.

The Legislature restored \$723,000 and allotted an additional \$241,000 for the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), for a total of \$16.8 million.

The Legislature restored \$1.1 million and allotted an additional \$369,000 for the Liberty Partnerships Program, for a total of \$25.7 million.

The Legislature allotted \$2.5 million for St. Bonaventure to operate a Higher Education Opportunity Program.

The Legislature restored \$750,000 for the Dental Grant Program.

The Legislature restored \$350,000 for the Latino U College Access Program.

The Legislature restored \$200,000 for the On Point for College Program.

Teacher Programs

The Legislature restored \$21.4 million for Teacher Resource and Computer Training Centers for the 2025-26 School Year.

The Legislature restored \$1.5 million for the Consortium for Worker Education (CWE), for a total of \$13 million.

The Legislature provided \$1 million for the Executive Leadership Institute.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for the Teacher Diversity Pipeline Pilot Program.

The Legislature restored \$385,000 for Bilingual or Multilingual Training Programs for Teachers.

The Legislature provided \$234,000 in new funding for staff in support of the Path Forward Literacy Initiative, which will help review registered educator preparation programs.

Special Education

The Legislature provided an additional \$1.5 million in funding for Schools for the Blind and Deaf (4201 schools), for a total of \$114.9 million.

The Legislature restored and added funding for the following schools: the Henry Viscardi School for the deaf (\$1 million, a \$98,500 increase), the New York School for the Deaf (\$903,000), the

Lexington School for the Deaf (\$903,000), the Cleary School for the Deaf (\$500,000), the Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf (\$500,000), the Rochester School for the Deaf (\$300,000), the Saint Francis de Sales School for the Deaf (\$150,000), and the St. Mary's School for the Deaf (\$150,000).

The Legislature provided \$250,000 in new funding for staff to support the needs of students with dyslexia and dysgraphia.

English as a Second Language

The Legislature restored \$4 million for the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test.

BOCES Aid

The Legislature provided \$1.3 billion in funding for BOCES Aid.

The Legislature enacted changes to increase the salary cap aid for BOCES instructors from \$30,000 to \$60,000 over three years, starting in the 2026-27 School Year.

Special Services Aid

The Legislature provided \$304.9 million in funding for Special Services Aid, which includes an additional \$59 million to expand Academic Improvement and Career Education Services Aid to include 9th graders, and provide a per pupil increase for Career Education, from \$3,900 to \$4,100.

Building Aid

The Legislature provided funding for Building Aid at its present law level of \$3.4 billion.

Transportation Aid

The Legislature provided \$2.7 billion in funding for Transportation Aid, including \$5 million for Summer Transportation Aid.

The Legislature provided full funding for Summer Transportation Aid at its present law level of \$5 million.

The Legislature modified the funding cap for Transportation After 4 pm to allow annual growth at 2.5 times the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

High Tax Aid

The Legislature provided funding for High Tax Aid at \$223.3 million.

Nonpublic School Aid

The Legislature provided an additional \$1.9 million for Nonpublic School Aid, for a total of \$230.3 million.

The Legislature provided \$26 million to create a new Charter School Transitional Aid Tier, providing additional aid for independent school districts that have charter enrollment greater than 20 percent of the total enrollment.

The Legislature restored \$500,000 for Academic Intervention Services for Nonpublic Schools, for a total of \$1.4 million.

The Legislature included \$1 million for the State Sponsored School Immunization Program.

Miscellaneous Aid

The Legislature accepted an expansion to a Universal School Lunch or Breakfast Program by continuing the \$340 million provided.

The Legislature provided a \$1.7 million increase in funding for Library Aid over the Executive, for a total of \$106.3 million.

The Legislature provided an additional \$10 million for Library Capital, restoring the prior year's total of \$44 million.

The Legislature provided \$12 million for the Yonkers City School District.

The Legislature restored \$362,000 and allotted an additional \$121,000 for the Foster Youth Initiative, for a total of \$8.4 billion.

The Legislature restored \$500,000 for Adult Literacy Education, for a total of \$9.8 million.

The Legislature restored \$2 million for Students with Disabilities, for a total of \$4 million.

The Legislature restored \$1.2 million for the Summer School of the Arts, for a total of \$2.7 million.

The Legislature provided \$2 million for the Amityville Union Free School District.

The Legislature provided an additional \$1.6 million of spending authority available to staff in the New York State Office of Professions.

The Legislature restored \$1.2 million for the Buffalo City School District Health Services Grant.

The Legislature restored \$1.2 million for the Rochester City School District Health Services Grants.

The Legislature provided \$1.7 million for the Mind Builders Creative Arts Center.

The Legislature provided \$1.1 million for implicit bias training.

The Legislature provided \$1 million for the Universal Hip Hop Museum.

The Legislature restored \$125,000 for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, for a total of \$500,000.

The Legislature provided \$750,000 for the Long Island Pre-K Tech Assistance.

The Legislature provided \$650,000 for NYC Kids RISE.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for the Center for Educational Innovation.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for Autism Research at SUNY Albany.

The Legislature restored \$500,000 for the Magellan Foundation.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for United Community Schools, Inc.

The Legislature provided \$500,000 for Education Through Music, Inc.

The Legislature provided \$461,000 for the Bard Early College High School-Queens Program.

The Legislature provided \$400,000 for the Biobus.

The Legislature provided \$300,000 for the Fund for the City of New York-Promise Project.

The Legislature added \$110,000 for the Langston Hughes Community Library, for a total of \$222,500.

The Legislature provided \$270,000 for the Multicultural High School JROTC program.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for CWE Credentialling.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for the Queens College Townsend Harris High School.

The Legislature provided \$250,000 for New York Medical College Disaster Training.

The Legislature restored \$225,000 for the East Ramapo Central School District Monitor.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the Rochester City School District Monitor.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the Hempstead Union Free School District Monitor.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the Wyandanch Union Free School District Monitor.

The Legislature provided \$175,000 for the new Mount Vernon City School District Monitor.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for BRIC Arts Media.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for the DIA Arts Foundation.

The Legislature provided \$150,000 for the Underground Railroad Cultural Education Center.

The Legislature restored \$150,000 for Rochester Fiscal Consultant.

The Legislature provided \$120,000 for the Bronx Bethany Community Corporation.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for Professional Performing Arts School NYC.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Hillside Children's Center.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the African American Cultural Museum.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Center for Jewish History.

The Legislature provided \$100,000 for the Brooklyn Public Library Center for Brooklyn History.

The Legislature provided \$75,000 for the Storm King Arts Center.

The Legislature provided \$50,000 for Long Island Latino Teachers Association.

The Legislature provided \$50,000 for the Organizacion Latino Americana of Eastern Long Island (OLA).

The Legislature provided \$50,000 for Literary Inc.

The Legislature provided \$50,000 for the Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation.

Miscellaneous Article VIIIs

The Legislature accepted the Executive proposal to direct the State Education Department to require schools that participate in the national school lunch or breakfast program to serve food at no cost to students beginning July 2025.

The Legislature accepted the Executive proposal to require the Commissioner of Education to submit and annually update a report to the Governor and Legislature regarding data on the operations of the New York State Museum.

The Legislature modified language to require school districts, charter schools, and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) to adopt a policy prohibiting the use of internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds. The policy must be adopted by August 1, 2025. Certain exceptions to the prohibition are allowed, and the districts, charter schools, and BOCES are required to consult with local stakeholders, including students, parents, and employee organizations during the development of the policy.

The Legislature extended the authorization for the Hempstead, East Ramapo, Rochester, and Wyandanch School District monitors for another 2 years and established a monitor for the Mt. Vernon City School District. Additionally, the Legislature provided for a school aid payment spin up for the Mt. Vernon City School District.

The Legislature modified the Executive proposal to direct the State Education Department to establish a statewide policy for schools to participate in dual enrollment programs.

The Legislature agreed to authorize the Commissioner of Education to provide up to two extensions of up to 24 months each to school districts who demonstrate they are unable to meet the 2027 mandate to purchase only zero-emission buses. Additionally, the Legislature agreed to authorize the Commissioner of Education to require any entity selling zero-emission buses to districts or contractors providing transportation services in New York to share independent range estimates for such buses prior to their sale.

The Legislature codified pathways for nonpublic schools to achieve substantial equivalency in their instruction.

B. BUDGET AND OPERATIONS

A.129-B, Zaccaro; Referred to Rules: This bill would require the Commissioner of Education to promulgate regulations that change the name of the general education development (GED) diploma to the “Excelsior diploma.”

A.756-B, Solages; Referred to Rules: This bill would require construction contracts for Long Island school buildings with a cost of at least \$1 million to be undertaken pursuant to a project labor agreement (PLA).

A.2318, McDonald; Chapter 545 of the Laws of 2025: This law amends debt-reporting procedures and allow school districts in a city with one hundred twenty-five thousand inhabitants or fewer to exclude building aid from their debt calculations.

A.2687, Carroll R; Chapter 615 of the Laws of 2025: This law establishes the Center for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia at the New York State Education Department.

A.3595-A, Bichotte Hermelyn; Ordered to Third Reading: This bill would direct the Commissioner of Education to conduct a study on the number of children who are caregivers and examine how this role impacts the child’s education.

A.5301, Woerner; Chapter 541 of the Laws of 2025: This law amends the school district election process by clarifying requirements for absentee ballot applications, requiring voters to provide their full name, date of birth, and mailing address. Furthermore, this law creates pathways for three categories of voters to receive absentee ballots: voters absent from their county of residence for a duration of more than one election, voters confined in jail, and voters who care for hospitalized people.

A.5302, Woerner; Chapter 547 of the Laws of 2025: This law allows the Commissioner of Education to, upon request from a school district or the Commissioner’s own determination, provide an additional day of voting for a school district’s annual meeting or election if they determine that less than eight percent of qualified voters voted as a direct consequence of a disaster.

A.7212, Otis; Chapter 165 of the Laws of 2025: This law extends for three years provisions that allow political subdivisions to donate surplus computer equipment to public schools, libraries, and not-for-profit organizations.

A.7777, Simone; Veto Memo 136: This bill would require the Commissioner of Education to enact policies that empower school libraries and library staff to curate collections that provide students with the widest range of available materials that are developmentally appropriate.

A.8606, Bronson; Chapter 567 of the Laws of 2025: This law allows the City of Rochester and Rochester City School District to refinance their Phase III bond obligations with respect to outstanding bonds from the Rochester reconstruction program and specifies the refinancing process.

A.8727-A, Jackson; Veto Memo 163: This bill would direct the Commissioner of Education to conduct a survey of recess held in elementary public and charter schools serving students from kindergarten to 6th grade.

C. TRANSPORTATION

A.5314, Pfeffer Amato; Veto Memo 85: This bill would expand the Transportation After 4 PM program to include remedial services, homework, and childcare as eligible reasons to provide or reimburse the transportation of children.

D. GOVERNANCE

A.4683, Paulin; Chapter 515 of the Laws of 2025: This law creates more flexibility in school board meeting dates held in July, removing the requirement that annual meetings take place within the first week of the month.

A.7385-A, Bronson; Chapter 527 of the Laws of 2025: This law allows the Commissioner of Education to, upon request from a school district or the Commissioner's own determination, provide an additional day of voting for a school district's annual meeting or election if they determine that less than eight percent of qualified voters voted as a direct consequence of a disaster.

E. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A.752, Eachus; Chapter 25 of the Laws of 2025: This law amends Chapter 596 of the Laws of 2024, which required all public school districts to develop a policy for ensuring the health and safety of students, faculty, and other employees on extreme heat condition days. This law removes the prohibition for students and staff to occupy certain rooms if the temperature reaches eight-eight degrees Fahrenheit and instead requires the required safety policy to include a plan to remove students and teachers in these situations where practicable. This law removes the requirement that districts include their procedures for extreme heat days in building-level emergency response plans.

A.785-A, Solages; Chapter 189 of the Laws of 2025: This law requires district and building-wide school safety plans to develop and implement emergency response plans relating to sudden cardiac arrest.

A.3515-C, Bichotte Hermelyn; Chapter 419 of the Laws of 2025: This law requires school districts to provide information on water safety and drowning protection to parents or guardians upon student enrollment.

A.5403-A, Solages; Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2025: This law requires nonpublic and secondary schools to adopt written anti-bullying and harassment policies and publish them on

school websites to be shared with all employees, parents, and students. Additionally, this law sets a reporting practice for employees who witness bullying or harassment.

A.6486, Otis; Chapter 422 of the Laws of 2025: This law requires all nonpublic schools to provide and maintain automated external defibrillators on school grounds.

A.8612, Magnarelli; Chapter 366 of the Laws of 2025: This law allows students who participated in high school sports during their 7th or 8th grade years outside of the Syracuse City School District to maintain interscholastic athletic eligibility for four consecutive seasons upon transferring to the Syracuse Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) high school.

F. TEACHER EVALUATION

A.8463-E, Lee; Chapter 639 of the Laws of 2025: This law directs the Commissioner of Education to conduct a statewide survey of school districts to determine the extent of instruction related to Asian American, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander (AANPHI) history, including curriculum content, grade levels, instructional time, and teacher training. Further, this law directs the Commissioner of Education to establish an AANPHI history advisory committee to evaluate teaching practices.

G. SPECIAL EDUCATION

A.8682, Shimsky; Chapter 179 of the Laws of 2025: This law allows the Greenburgh North Castle Union Free School District to continue operating by allowing them to contract with Rising Ground, Inc. and expand district boundaries to Rising Ground Residential Treatment Center sites.

III. OUTLOOK 2026

During the next legislative session, the Committee on Education will continue to ensure that all students are college and career ready upon graduation. The Committee will also continue to fight for fair, equitable, and adequate funding, especially in our state's most struggling schools, and strive to advocate for the necessary resources and funding to provide all students of this state with a sound, basic education.

IV. SUMMARY SHEET

2025 SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS
REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON

Education

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 6

<u>ASSEMBLY</u>	<u>SENATE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>BILLS</u>	<u>BILLS</u>	<u>BILLS</u>

BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:

Codes	0	0	0
Judiciary	0	0	0
Ways and Means	10	0	10
Rules	4	0	4
Floor	1	0	1
TOTAL	15	0	15

COMMITTEE ACTION

Held For Consideration	11	0	11
Defeated	0	0	0
Enacting Clause Stricken	4	0	4
REMAINING IN COMMITTEE	514	30	544

BILLS REFERENCE CHANGED TO:

Election Law 3

Higher Education 1

Ways and Means 7

TOTAL	11	0	11
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