

## **NY school aid could increase by \$1B**

### **Cuomo proposes \$26B for 700 districts**

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ALBANY - Gov. Andrew Cuomo is proposing an increase of \$1 billion in aid to the state's nearly 700 school districts. The aid increase, about a 4 percent hike, would bring the state's support for its school to nearly \$26 billion, the most per capita of any state in the nation. Cuomo outlined his spending priorities Tuesday to state lawmakers in private briefings at the executive mansion near the state Capitol. The proposed school spending by the Democratic governor is about half of what was sought by the state Board of Regents, which oversees education policy in New York. The board last month asked for more than \$2 billion in the coming fiscal year, including \$290 million to expand pre-kindergarten and increase aid for English-language learning programs. The state teachers union, the New York State United Teachers, said it was looking for more specifics in the governor's plan. Proposed state aid by school district was not set to be released until at least Tuesday night.

"As always, details matter, and we look forward to working with the governor and Legislature on a final state budget that invests more strongly in our public schools, colleges and health care institutions," the union said in a statement.

The state Legislature has until March 31 to approve an on-time budget for the fiscal year that starts April 1.

Lawmakers typically add more state aid for schools during budget negotiations.

Last year, for example, Cuomo proposed a \$991 million increase, but he and legislative leaders ultimately agreed to up it to \$1.5 billion — a 6.5 percent hike. The Alliance for Quality Education, a unionbacked group, said Cuomo's \$1 billion proposal for the next fiscal year would not be enough.

"It's time for the governor to stop just talking about two public education systems, one for the rich and one for the poor, and get serious about ending educational inequality that has grown to recordsetting levels due to his policies," the group's legislative director, Jasmine Gripper, said in a statement.

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