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NYS School Superintendents React to State Budget Agreement

The budget agreement announced by Governor Cuomo, Speaker Silver, and Senate Majority Leader Skelos marks a promising turning point for schools. Superintendents, school boards and local voters still face tough choices in assembling local budgets for the next school year. But the agreement provides the best state aid outcome for schools overall since 2008-09.

It is also helpful to school district leaders that the state budget will be resolved on-time. With the transition to the tax cap this year, it is more important than ever for schools to have state aid figures they can count on to factor into the budgets voters will consider in May.

Providing the increase in competitive grants over two years makes sense. Rewarding and encouraging gains in student achievement and efficiency are valid goals. But the funding change allows the state to provide more general aid for the next school year, giving school leaders better options for the budgets they are developing right now.

The budget will also include constructive reforms to the procedures for disciplining and removing tenured teachers who have proven ineffective or otherwise unfit for the classroom. The reforms should reduce the cost and time required for these proceedings.

We commend Governor Cuomo's leadership in moving the state's finances to a sustainable path. Continuing that progress will make better options possible for schools in the years ahead.

We also thank Education Committee Chairs Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan and Senator John Flanagan for their dedicated efforts on behalf of New York's schools and students.

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