

2.3% FOR SCHOOLS

■ **Cuomo includes \$64M** education aid increase for LI

■ **Hike is less** than 2017-18, but legislators can modify it

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ALBANY — Nagging economic worries are reflected in the state's school-aid proposal for Long Island that includes a modest \$64.3 million increase in operating funds for next year — a 2.3 percent boost.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's plan for the 2018-19 school year, rolled out in his annual budget message on Tuesday, would raise operating aid in Nassau and Suffolk counties to a total \$2.86 billion.

That is enough to cover about one-fourth of overall school spending in the two-county region, but experts said it is not sufficient to fully meet rising costs of teacher pensions and other big expenses.

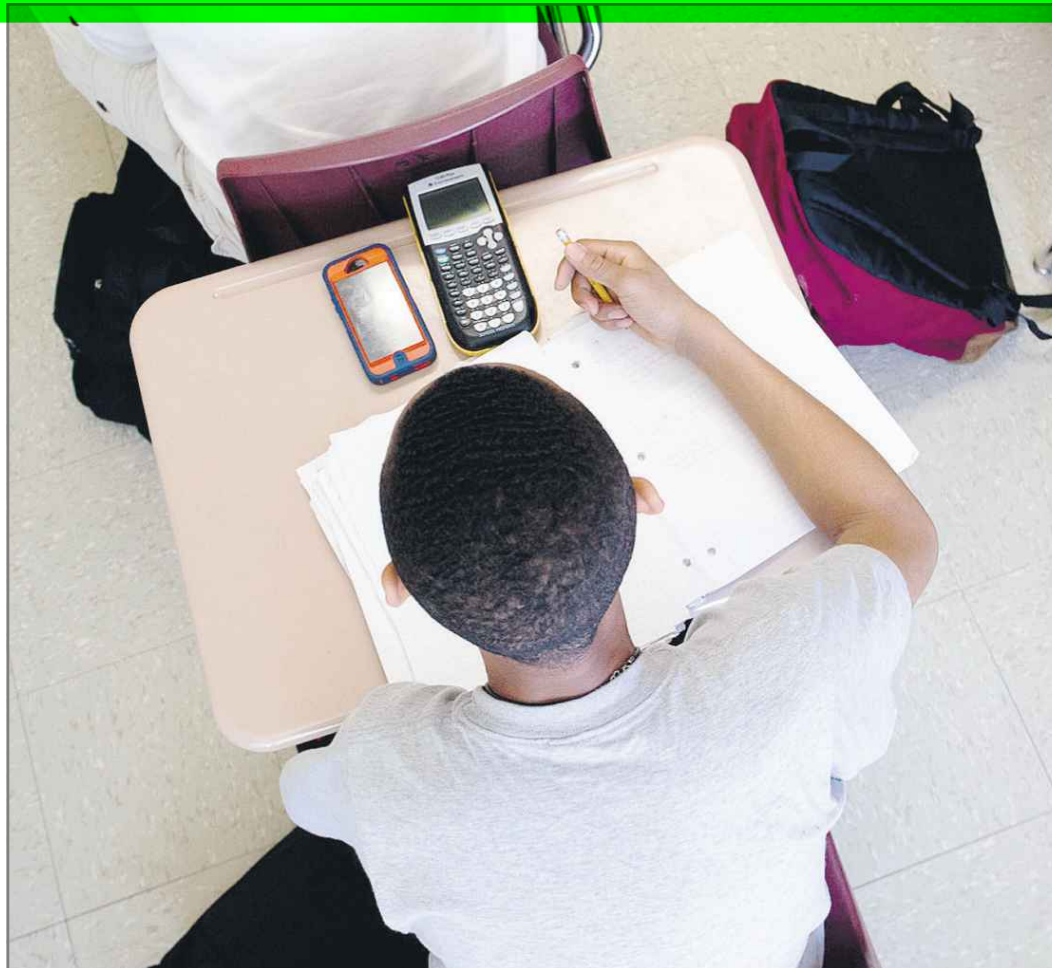
"My initial reaction is that we're pleased there's money for education," said Julie Lutz, chief operating officer of the regional Eastern Suffolk BOCES district and a leading school-finance analyst. "We're still looking at all the proposals to see where the money is being distributed."

The legislature typically tacks more money onto gubernatorial proposals before the state's budget is approved in April. Some local legislators this week vowed to do just that.

"As a teacher and a mom, I'll be standing up for Long Island families to fight for more money for our schools," said Assemb. Christine Pellegrino (D-West Islip).

Proponents of a larger aid package noted that school systems have become far more dependent upon Albany's help since the Cuomo administration first imposed tax-cap restrictions on districts' authority to raise revenues from local property taxes in 2012.

The statewide baseline cap for 2018-19, released Tuesday by the state comptroller's office, will be 2 percent. Actual increases in tax collections im-



HEATHER WALSH

A looming state budget deficit has restricted money for school aid in Cuomo's 2018-19 plan.

posed by districts may end up being more or less than 2 percent, depending on local factors such as bond issues to fund school reconstruction or repairs, which are exempt from the cap.

New York State has an election year in 2018 — traditionally a time when elected officials open the spigots and let the financial assistance flow.

However, this year's aid offer for the Island's 124 districts is down from the \$75.3 million expansion in new operating funds that the governor put forward at this time last year, and the \$105.7 million he proposed the year before.

District-by-district figures extracted by Newsday from the state data released Tuesday night show a mixed picture on the Island.

Some 20 districts lost at least small amounts of operating aid, while other systems enjoyed

gains of more than 6 percent or 7 percent.

Average increases in operating aid were 2.61 percent in Nassau County, 2.12 percent in Suffolk and 2.15 percent statewide.

Newsday's calculations focus on operating funds, because those are widely considered a more meaningful measure of what a district receives than aid for school construction and renovation, which may or may not go to a district in a given year, depending on whether the work is completed then.

Both Cuomo and state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli have predicted financial troubles ahead, citing a looming state budget deficit and changes in federal tax law and health spending that

are likely to exert more financial pressure. "In many ways, this is going to be the most challenging budget we do," the governor said Tuesday.

Some lawmakers and analysts suggested the fiscal picture may not be quite as bleak as the governor indicated.

"That's questionable," Assemb. Brian Curran (R-Lynbrook) said.

Michael Borges, executive director of the New York State Association of School Business Officials, cited reports that statewide income-tax receipts rose during the last three weeks of December. Borges called the growth "dramatic."

The governor, in his budget message, characterized his proposed \$769 million hike in statewide school aid — an increase of 3 percent — as "evidence of a strong commitment to education."

State aid to schools

Here's how funds for operating assistance to Long Island's 124 school districts stack up in Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's proposed budget for 2018-19.

Funds for building aid and money allocated to districts required to perform certain community services were not included.

Nassau County:
\$1,034,332,687
increase of 2.61 percent

Suffolk County:
\$1,828,337,006
increase of 2.12 percent

Long Island:
\$2,862,669,693
increase of 2.3 percent

Statewide:
\$22,641,598,796
increase of 2.15 percent

Supporters noted that the 3 percent raise was substantially more than most other state programs got, and also far more than the statewide rise in personal incomes.

"You know, I think it's a very good starting point," said David Flatley, superintendent of Carle Place schools and president of the Nassau County Council of School Superintendents. "I understand the state is facing economic difficulties."

The governor's statewide package included support for programs, such as expanded prekindergarten classes, that not all districts offer.

Some veteran educators, as they reviewed figures on Wednesday, recalled the adage that all politics is local. The point, they said, is that what matters with school aid is the impact on each individual district.

Joseph Dragone, assistant superintendent for business for the Roslyn schools, noted that his district would lose more than 2 percent in operating aid next year based on the governor's plan.

"A reduction in operating aid of 2 percent when we're capped on the revenue side is not going to be helpful," Dragone said. "Somehow, it doesn't add up."

With Stefanie Dazio

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Breakdown
by district
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OUR TOWNS

STATE AID

Chart shows Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's proposed state-aid figures for Long Island school operations in the 2018-19 school year and figures

adopted for 2017-18, released Tuesday night by the governor's budget office. The figures do not include building aid or money allocated to districts for schools required to provide certain community services, such as medical and dental care. The New Suffolk, Sagaponack and Wain-

scott districts are not included because they are "under 8" districts — those with fewer than eight teachers that receive state aid through a different funding formula.

— COMPILED BY MICHAEL R. EBERT

Source: NYS DIVISION OF THE BUDGET

NOW ONLINE
District-by-district
proposed
school aid data
newsday.com

District	2018-19 State aid	2017-18 State aid	Change in state aid	% change in state aid
NASSAU				
Baldwin	29,063,428	29,131,079	-6,651	-0.23%
Bellmore	4,681,825	4,696,273	-14,448	-0.31
Bellmore-Merrick	23,588,749	22,256,281	1,332,468	5.99
Bethpage	11,762,938	11,259,777	503,161	4.47
Carle Place	4,385,721	4,256,015	129,706	3.05
East Meadow	42,129,368	40,989,210	1,140,158	2.78
East Rockaway	6,138,453	5,897,684	240,769	4.08
East Williston	3,424,398	3,294,273	130,125	3.95
Elmont	25,408,994	23,750,361	1,658,633	6.98
Farmingdale	29,823,800	30,070,958	-247,158	-0.82
Floral Park-Bellerose	4,496,600	4,618,462	-121,862	-2.64
Franklin Square	7,369,602	7,281,644	87,958	1.21
Freeport	73,775,882	73,133,019	642,863	0.88
Garden City	5,664,536	5,648,636	15,900	0.28
Glen Cove	12,059,765	11,545,831	513,934	4.45
Great Neck	9,579,771	9,279,820	299,951	3.23
Hempstead	122,168,615	117,120,380	5,048,235	4.31
Herricks	10,878,943	10,657,929	221,014	2.07
Hewlett-Woodmere	9,530,105	8,716,844	813,261	9.33
Hicksville	17,490,632	17,825,744	-335,112	-1.88
Island Park	2,474,090	2,487,535	-13,445	-0.54
Island Trees	16,031,769	15,677,610	354,159	2.26
Jericho	5,086,025	5,263,905	-177,880	-3.38
Lawrence	12,539,043	11,587,760	951,283	8.21
Levittown	53,141,480	52,157,617	983,863	1.89
Locust Valley	3,885,627	3,780,569	105,058	2.78
Long Beach	21,469,893	20,778,174	691,719	3.33
Lynbrook	9,662,846	9,428,497	234,349	2.49
Malverne	10,619,614	10,448,755	170,859	1.64
Manhasset	4,529,747	4,502,117	27,630	0.61
Massapequa	26,810,028	27,300,300	-490,272	-1.80
Merrick	6,187,984	6,398,123	-210,139	-3.28
Mineola	6,748,531	6,625,381	123,150	1.86
New Hyde Park-Garden City Park	5,310,859	5,282,396	28,463	0.54
North Bellmore	13,204,351	13,067,344	137,007	1.05
North Merrick	7,021,400	6,931,319	90,081	1.30
North Shore	4,812,129	4,742,803	69,326	1.46
Oceanside	20,259,361	19,798,068	461,293	2.33
Oyster Bay-East Norwich	2,850,544	2,871,477	-20,933	-0.73
Plainedge	16,831,940	17,043,307	-211,367	-1.24
Plainview-Old Bethpage	17,813,024	17,585,214	227,810	1.30
Port Washington	8,785,686	8,388,837	396,849	4.73
Rockville Centre	10,548,203	10,317,141	231,062	2.24
Rosevelt	49,943,816	48,045,342	1,898,474	3.95
Roslyn	5,252,390	5,365,359	-112,969	-2.11
Seaford	11,487,101	11,263,833	223,268	1.98
Sewanhaka	34,670,701	34,044,645	626,056	1.84
Syosset	15,071,329	14,420,224	651,105	4.52
Uniondale	52,348,786	48,707,402	3,641,384	7.48
Valley Stream 13	11,880,267	11,310,518	569,749	5.04
Valley Stream 24	6,374,801	6,079,511	295,290	4.86
Valley Stream 30	7,194,527	7,120,256	74,271	1.04
Valley Stream Central	21,585,148	21,556,627	28,521	0.13
Wantagh	15,166,599	15,249,236	-82,637	-0.54
West Hempstead	10,246,191	9,831,214	414,977	4.22
Westbury	53,064,732	51,092,828	1,971,904	3.86
SUFFOLK				
Amagansett	366,661	351,153	15,508	4.42%
Amityville	26,540,682	25,660,862	879,820	3.43
Babylon	8,249,593	8,145,430	104,163	1.28
Bay Shore	41,374,687	40,064,247	1,310,440	3.27
Bayport-Blue Point	15,273,513	15,008,925	264,588	1.76

District	2018-19 State aid	2017-18 State aid	Change in state aid	% change in state aid
Brentwood	249,160,286	242,547,125	6,613,161	2.73%
Bridgehampton	734,220	704,258	29,962	4.25
Center Moriches	10,864,784	10,737,629	127,155	1.18
Central Islip	103,300,488	100,678,667	2,621,821	2.60
Cold Spring Harbor	3,470,194	3,416,650	53,544	1.57
Commack	34,593,171	34,757,145	-163,974	-0.47
Comsewogue	29,736,831	29,214,674	522,157	1.79
Connetquot	46,524,130	46,211,248	312,882	0.68
Copiague	55,786,462	54,129,704	1,656,758	3.06
Deer Park	28,017,623	27,048,353	969,270	3.58
East Hampton	2,717,745	2,835,306	-117,561	-4.15
East Islip	35,240,585	33,775,070	1,465,515	4.34
East Moriches	5,953,586	6,070,485	-116,899	-1.93
East Quogue	1,249,732	1,166,407	83,325	7.14
Eastport-South Manor	24,611,777	23,978,717	633,060	2.64
Elwood	12,299,233	12,046,254	252,979	2.10
Fire Island	368,978	346,897	22,081	6.37
Fishers Island	292,859	280,515	12,344	4.40
Greenport	1,454,751	1,508,477	-53,726	-3.56
Half Hollow Hills	28,172,580	28,015,014	157,566	0.56
Hampton Bays	5,685,296	5,580,772	104,524	1.87
Harborfields	13,989,432	13,680,795	308,637	2.26
Hauppauge	13,889,249	13,309,516	579,733	4.36
Huntington	17,103,668	16,768,279	335,389	2.00
Islip	19,363,542	19,142,145	221,397	1.16
Kings Park	15,670,613	15,488,238	182,375	1.18
Lindenhurst	51,764,783	51,983,638	-218,855	-0.42
Longwood	85,594,514	83,377,418	2,217,096	2.66
Mattituck-Cutchogue	2,792,035	2,806,335	-14,300	-0.51
Middle Country	86,293,607	84,280,872	2,012,735	2.39
Miller Place	19,087,859	18,863,321	224,538	1.19
Montauk	906,618	869,855	36,763	4.23
Mount Sinai	16,523,306	16,202,366	320,940	1.98
North Babylon	42,909,714	42,304,560	605,154	1.43
Northport-East Northport	14,432,814	14,044,711	388,103	2.76
Oysterponds	399,275	390,443	8,832	2.26
Patchogue-Medford	62,885,169	61,542,677	1,342,492	2.18
Port Jefferson	3,631,694	3,515,491	116,203	3.31
Quogue	335,195	325,681	9,514	2.92
Remsenburg-Speonk	657,328	583,975	73,353	12.56
Riverhead	28,476,344	27,026,814	1,449,530	5.36
Rocky Point	26,145,241	25,242,994	902,247	3.57
Sachem	114,733,276	112,534,437	2,198,839	1.95
Sag Harbor	1,698,260	1,663,930	34,330	2.06
Sayville	24,030,928	23,955,521	75,407	0.31
Shelter Island	560,824	543,166	17,658	3.25
Shoreham-Wading River	10,281,087	10,550,858	-269,771	-2.56
Smithtown	38,852,818	39,873,427	-1,020,609	-2.56
South Country	47,886,362	46,605,313	1,281,049	2.75
South Huntington	33,805,407	33,334,495	470,912	1.41
Southampton	2,423,777	2,357,579	66,198	2.81
Southold	1,908,172	1,884,639	23,533	1.25
Springs	1,680,528	1,710,241	-29,713	-1.74
Three Village	33,771,798	33,653,557	118,241	0.35
Tuckahoe	1,024,651	1,030,944	-6,293	-0.61
West Babylon	31,699,697	31,010,924	688,773	2.22
West Islip	29,919,563	29,763,400	156,163	0.52
Westhampton Beach	2,243,564	2,221,318	22,246	1.00
William Floyd	115,283,203	111,818,668	3,464,535	3.10
Wyandanch	41,640,644	39,855,101	1,785,543	4.48
Nassau	1,034,332,687	1,007,981,464	26,351,223	2.61%
Suffolk	1,828,337,006	1,790,397,626	37,939,380	2.12
Long Island	2,862,669,693	2,798,379,090	64,290,603	2.30