

## Early Care and Learning in the New York State 2013-14 Final Budget

*Winning Beginning NY* believes that as New York State sees signs of economic recovery, it is essential that we preserve, protect, and increase access to high-quality early care and learning. These programs support families' work force participation and provide an effective foundation for children's school and life success.

Below is a report of items contained within the 2013-14 New York State final budget compared with the *Winning Beginning NY* coalition's Legislative Agenda.

### EARLY LEARNING:

- **Invest \$5M for QUALITYstarsNY**, to provide professional development and program improvement supports for early learning programs.

QUALITYstarsNY is a quality rating and improvement system that incentivizes programs to work toward high quality by meeting evidenced based program standards; improved compensation; support for professional development and technical assistance. There is no funding for QUALITYstarsNY in the final budget.

- **Support the \$25M full-day Pre-K initiative**, proposed by the Governor, as a significant next step in expanding access to high-quality early education.

High-quality pre-kindergarten can improve educational outcomes, reduce disparities and save money. New York's existing Pre-K program serves just about half of all eligible children and funds only half-day programs. The lack of a full-day option has hampered expansion of Pre-K in the state. The final budget includes the Governor's new investment of \$25M into half- and full-day quality Pre-K, with a priority placed on full-day slots targeted toward high needs students. This is a significant next step in expanding access to high-quality early learning.

- **Maintain and protect the \$385M invested in Universal Pre-kindergarten.**

Funding for Universal Pre-kindergarten was maintained in the final 2013-14 budget.

- **Adequately and equitably fund K-12 education aid** to prevent districts from reducing access to Kindergarten for 5-year-olds.

The Executive Budget proposed a \$550M increase in school aid, \$203M in one-time Fiscal Stabilization Funds and \$75M in competitive grants which includes the new \$25M for pre-kindergarten mentioned above. The final budget converted the \$203M in Fiscal Stabilization Funds into ongoing funding through foundation aid and Gap Elimination Adjustment Restorations. The Legislature added another \$183M in school aid and made a reform to the foundation aid formula which will increase support to highest need school districts.

- **Restore child care funding to 2010-11 levels by adding \$92M to the Executive Budget.** This will help to ensure that low-income children will be in safe care while their parents go to work or school.

Parents' ability to work productively with the assurance that their children are doing well keeps New York businesses running and enables residents to buy homes, pay taxes and support their communities. The final budget increases child care subsidies and restores some funding for facilitated enrollment. Altogether, there is an additional \$3M in funding over last year's budget, although the final number may be higher after social services districts make their decisions about whether to transfer money from the flexible fund for family services into child care. In light of the significant reductions in access to child care subsidies for low-income families in recent years, a proposal to waive certain TANF work requirements for some parents of infants was put forward in the Assembly budget. The proposal, which would save state and county funds and free-up child care slots for other needy families, was not adopted as part of the final budget agreement. A full account of child care funding is available [here](#).

#### HOME VISITING:

- **Maintain \$23.3M for Healthy Families New York as proposed in the Executive Budget.**
- **Restore \$2.5M in funding for the Nurse-Family Partnership program.**

The final budget funds Healthy Families New York at a flat level of \$23,288,200 and restores \$2M for Nurse-Family Partnership. Funding for the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies program at the Department of Health was reduced by almost 6% to \$1,847,000. This was part of a larger set of reductions in a number of public health programs. In addition, COPS and the Children and Family Trust Fund, both of which support home visiting programs, were flat-funded.

#### EARLY INTERVENTION:

- **Address concerns with the proposal in the 2013 Executive Budget** to protect access to high-quality Early Intervention (EI) services and ensure that EI services are driven by the child's needs, not by the child's health insurance coverage.

Early Intervention provides comprehensive, coordinated services to meet the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Significant changes were proposed for the 2013-14 Budget that would require insurers to include EI service providers in their networks and require consumers to use providers in their insurance networks with limited provisions for exemptions. Those proposals were rejected in the final budget.

#### AFTERSCHOOL:

- **Increase Advantage Afterschool Program funding to \$28M to expand access to approximately 10,000 additional students** and support the priorities of the New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN).

The Budget maintains but does not increase the investment in the Advantage After School Program, funding it at \$17.75M with OCFS and TANF funding. In addition, the Budget provides \$15M for Community Schools and \$20M for Extended Learning Time.