

Breaking down Cuomo's budget plan

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A look at the major elements of the executive budget proposal:

LOCAL EFFECTS

• **Major elements:** Cuomo's plan to freeze local property taxes for two years would make homeec their local governments taking steps to consolidate services. For the first time Tuesday, Cuomo de cooperation: In the first year, governments and school districts will need to work together to find levies, rising to 2 percent in the second year and 3 percent in the third. Local governments would relief, and could face forfeiting state aid if they don't stick to their plans.

The budget maintains \$715 million in Aid and Incentives for Municipalities funding. All four of th receive the same amount of AIM funding in the next fiscal year: Albany, \$12.6 million; Schenectar Saratoga Springs, \$1.6 million.

• **Reaction:** "In three short years, Gov. Cuomo broke through Albany's decades of gridlock and is 2014. I applaud the governor's proposal," said Troy Mayor Lou Rosamilia.

SCHOOLS

• **Major elements:** Total education spending would rise to \$21.9 billion, an increase of \$807 mi million in additional formula-based school aid.

The plan offers \$100 million to begin offering universal pre-K statewide — the first installment of City Mayor Bill de Blasio would like to see universal pre-K paid for through a tax increase on the v response from Cuomo.

A new \$20 million "Teacher Excellence Fund" would provide performance bonuses of up to \$20,c "highly effective."

The amount allocated for grant funding through the State Council on the Arts remains flat at \$36

Cuomo also is proposing a \$2 billion bond act — to be considered by voters in November — that w classrooms and fund school infrastructure improvements, including facilities for universal pre-K.

The governor announced he and the Legislature would convene a panel to examine the controvers Core standards.

• **Reaction:** In a joint statement, Board of Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch and state Education commitment to pre-K funding and said the Common Core panel and its own similar body "can be strengthen ... implementation."

Progressive education advocates were less enamored: Billy Easton, executive director of the Alliance for Public Schools, said the proposal "just does not add up. ... After five years we will be lucky if it covers even 20 percent of the cost."

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- **Major elements:** Medicaid funding rises 4.6 percent or \$2.6 billion; non-Medicaid spending a \$519 million, a cut of 11.2 percent.

The proposal sets aside \$65 million to pay for the linking of the state's regional medical records databases that will allow state residents to access their own records. The state investment is expected to be a match for federal dollars.

Cuomo is proposing a new \$1.2 billion program to help fund infrastructure improvements for health care homes, hospitals and clinics.

The state Office of the Medicaid Inspector General will see its budget cut by \$6 million, a reduction of 10 percent.

- **Reaction:** Ken Raske, president of the Greater New York Hospital Association, praised the capital investment in the viability of New York's health care delivery system."

ENVIRONMENT

- **Major elements:** Cuomo proposes changes a brownfield cleanup program to reduce hundreds of acres of land the state has been paying developers to build on polluted sites. Credits will remain for cleanups, but vacant lots that have been vacant for at least a decade, are worth less than cleanup costs or are a state "priority" development. The program is extended from 2015 to 2025.

The plan would increase the Environmental Protection Fund from \$153 million to \$157 million (\$15 million for parks and recreation, \$85 million for open space programs).

- **Reaction:** Pete Iwanowicz, executive director of Environmental Advocates, praised the brownfield cleanup program. "The overall budget remains roughly half what it once was ... and should receive \$200 million in funding for environmental programs."

HIGHER EDUCATION

- **Major elements:** State support for the SUNY system remains flat at \$3.3 billion.

A new scholarship program would pay for a SUNY or CUNY education for students in the top 10 percent of the state who enter science, technology, engineering or math fields and agree to stay in New York for five years.

Cuomo sets aside \$15 million to begin development of a new SUNY College of Emergency Preparedness and Cybersecurity.

- **Reaction:** SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher called the plan "a thoughtful stewardship of state resources to address the diverse needs of nearly all New Yorkers."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/TAXES

- **Major elements:** Businesses would see a range of tax breaks, including a corporate income tax cut (costing \$24 million).

Businesses would also reap a tax benefit from the speeded-up phaseout of the 18-A assessment on state \$200 million.

- **Reaction:** "I'm pleased to see the governor is looking to reduce the corporate tax rate to help me," said Mark Eagan, president and CEO of the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce. "We're No. 1 on the list of states in which to do business. Last year, START-UP NY was geared to attract new business to the state. They want to see some relief."

Progressive advocates object to what Michael Kink of the Strong Economy for All Coalition call "unaddressed income inequality worse."

ETHICS

- **Major elements:** Cuomo proposed creating a system that would use public funds to match small contributions to political candidates who opt in, but he didn't assign a cost to it. The system, which is opposed by some legislators in 2016 and all candidates for state office in 2018.

Cuomo sets aside \$5.3 million to hire additional enforcement staff for the Board of Elections, and the Division of Election Law Enforcement within the board — but overseen by a chief enforcement officer.

While not a budgetary concern, the plan would limit contributions to party "housekeeping" accounts by wealthy donors to multiply their giving.

Similarly, the budget includes a host of changes to laws covering the prosecution of bribery and of disclosure requirements for lawmakers who work for firms that have clients with business before the legislature.

- **Reaction:** The League of Women Voters said the proposal "demonstrates a vital commitment to transparency that has plagued the Capitol for too many years."

State Sen. Kathy Marchione, R-Halfmoon, said she remains opposed to "spending millions on well-funded political campaigns."

PUBLIC SAFETY

- **Major elements:** Cuomo seeks to use \$15 million in federal funds for Superstorm Sandy recovery weather detection system that would increase the number of monitoring stations from 27 to 40. The state also plans to have such networks in place.

It also includes another \$75 million to help counties create communication networks to allow dispatchers to talk to each other.

Cuomo proposes investing \$10 million in the New York State Protection Cloud — technology that would allow agencies more quickly share crime-fighting information.

The governor also proposes \$15.2 million for Gun-Involved Violence Elimination, a program targeting gun violence that already receiving funding through Operation IMPACT.

As in past years, the budget proposes \$24 million in capital funding for economic development grants to offset planned prison closures.

— *Compiled by Casey Seiler, Brian Nearing, Eric Anderson and Jordan Carleo-Evangelist*