



NJDOE News

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Department of Education Certifies FY 2003 State Aid Figures *Protects schools by refusing to cut aid*

(TRENTON) – Staying true to the Administration's commitment to education, the Department of Education today officially certified State Aid figures for all of New Jersey's school districts which hold districts' aid flat, and do not subject our schools to the deep cuts which most other state programs are facing in FY 2003.

"As the State faces a \$5.3 Billion deficit for the next year, we all had to make difficult decisions, but protecting our schools was paramount and we refused to cut funding for the districts," said Commissioner William L. Librera. "We recognize that flat state aid causes many districts to face a difficult task as they cope with enrollment increases and other issues, but we hope they will recognize that we have provided them with as much funding as possible given the current fiscal crisis. We hope that all districts will work to develop budgets that provide the 'thorough and efficient education' mandated by the State, while living within their means."

The Commissioner certified the State Aid figures in [a letter sent to all School Administrators and Superintendents](#), released following Governor James E. McGreevey's Fiscal 2003 Budget Address. A copy of the letter is attached.

The Governor's Budget for FY 2003 reflected the Administration's strong commitment to ensuring every New Jersey child receives an education that prepares them for a successful future.

The budget allows for dollars to begin a Reading Coach program, designed to ensure that students in under-performing elementary schools are reading at or above grade level by the end of the third grade. It provides significant funding for expanded preschool programs which is a fundamental step to ensure that children are prepared for learning when they enter elementary school.

The budget also supports the Administration's commitment to New Jersey's working families by including additional funding for School Choice and Charter School Aid to shield local taxpayers from added expenses related to growing enrollment in those schools, and by providing payments on behalf of local districts for teacher's retirement benefits to ensure teachers are receiving what they deserve for their years of service, without property taxpayers having to shoulder those costs.

Additionally, the budget reflects the Administration's educational commitment to coordinating innovative practices from around the state, to developing an assessment system which provides a meaningful look at the progress of every student, and to working together to enhance teacher performance across the state.

Within the budget, State Aid for local school districts is the single largest purpose to which State funds are devoted. This year the fiscal 2003 Budget provides \$6.6 billion in direct school aid, including Core Curriculum Standards Aid, Teacher Quality Mentoring aid and funds to provide for preschool expansion in the Abbott districts.

State Aid summaries can be accessed at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/stateaid>.