

EdTrust-New York Executive Budget Request October 2024

EdTrust-New York's 2025 policy agenda is premised on the belief that all children can succeed in school when provided with high-quality, culturally relevant instruction and support that is equity-driven, data-centered, and student-focused. To improve outcomes across the state, particularly for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, EdTrust-New York advocates for an equitable system of education that helps schools meet the following milestones:

1. Every child is ready for kindergarten success;
2. Every student is proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and receives evidence-based instruction from an effective, diverse educator workforce that provides the foundational math and reading skills necessary for success in high school and beyond;
3. Every high school student has access to advanced coursework, college in high school opportunities, and a meaningful diploma that signifies successful preparation for college and career;
4. Every child is part of an equitable system of funding and support that targets resources to the districts and schools that need it the most, monitors student progress, and collects data to track student outcomes from cradle to career;
5. Every high school graduate is provided with the information, support, and financial aid needed to enroll in and complete college or postsecondary training.

Budget Request

To help meet these milestones, we urge investments in the following priorities as part of the Governor's FY 2025-26 Executive Budget.

Early Childhood Education

- **Child Care:** While New York has increased eligibility for child care, it has not truly increased access, in part because there are not enough providers and educators to meet the needs of families. We propose investing **\$1.2 billion** in the creation of a permanent state child care fund to increase child care workers' compensation. The fund should be based on existing models showing the true cost of care and explore the implementation of a career lattice based on education and experience.



- **Tax Credits:** Increase the Empire State Child Credit by **\$1,500**. This increase would reduce child poverty across New York State by 23%, lifting tens of thousands of children out of poverty. The tax credit should include the lowest-income families with children and be indexed to inflation.
- **Early Intervention:**
 - Sign the reform Early Intervention (EI) bill to create a sustainable rate structure and fund the EI system without administrative and service delivery reductions.
 - Submit the State Plan Amendment to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Also retroactively implement the 5% rate increase approved as part of State Fiscal Year 2024-25 budget and provide an additional 5% rate increase for 2025-26.
 - Explore the creation of a loan forgiveness program to attract new providers into the EI system and require new providers to serve at least 30% of Medicaid/uninsured children.
- **Home Visiting:** Expand access to existing home visiting programs by increasing funding for:
 - ParentChild+ by \$300,000 for a total of **\$500,000**;
 - Nurse Family Partnership for a total of **\$4.5M**;
 - We also propose simultaneously creating a universal home visiting roadmap by convening state and local agencies, community-based organizations, parents, and other stakeholders.

Literacy

- **Professional Learning:** Many current educators were not provided with literacy training aligned with the science of reading as part of their teacher preparation program. As a result, educators across the state will require science of reading aligned professional learning to support classroom instruction and help meet the state's new literacy requirements. While last year's investment in professional learning was an important first step, additional funding is needed to ensure all K-8 educators are trained in the science of reading. We propose **\$15 million** for grants to districts to ensure all K-8 educators are provided with the opportunity to receive a micro credential in the science of reading.
- **Curricula aligned with the science of reading:** Evidence-based curricula are an essential component of the state's requirement that all districts are aligned with the science of reading by September 2025. We propose a **\$10 million** investment to provide grants to districts the New York State Education Department identifies as "high-needs" for the purchase of K-5 literacy curricula and instructional resources aligned to the science of reading, with priority for districts replacing balanced literacy programming.
- **High-Impact Tutoring:** Students in all grades continue to be impacted by pandemic-related unfinished learning as evidenced by recent state assessment data showing



that less than half of all New York students are proficient in reading. High-impact tutoring is a proven strategy to address unfinished learning and improve student outcomes and we propose a **\$10 million** investment for schools and community-based organizations to provide this critical support.

- **Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and Reach Out and Read:** The early years of a child’s life are critical for reading and brain development. These complementary programs provide access to books and support for families to boost reading skills and support Kindergarten readiness. We propose a **\$3 million** investment to expand access to Reach Out and Read and a \$5 million investment to expand access to Imagination Library across the state.

Foundation Aid

As the state considers the upcoming report by the Rockefeller Institute on the Foundation Aid formula, we urge that **the formula be fully funded**, with the previous inflation factor methodology and the additional fixes proposed in our testimony to Rockefeller Institute, including updating the Regional Cost Index to better reflect the costs of salaries and services, which have greatly increased in almost two decades since this data was first released. We also urge the following changes to the current weighting system:

- **Better target support for multilingual learners** by including the use of differentiated weights by proficiency level and type of services and programs required. This should include the costs associated with educating additional subgroups of multilingual learners, such as students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) and long-term MLLs who require additional supports to gain proficiency.
- **Better target support for students with disabilities** by providing differentiated weights based on categorical student needs and instructional setting requirements instead of a single weight.
- Provide an additional weight for **students in temporary housing and foster care.**
- Include **per-pupil Pre-K and 3k funding in the formula** and increase funding for state funded Pre-K and 3k programs by indexing state-funded UPK allocations to the K-12 Foundation Aid per-pupil amount to provide a sustainable and predictable formula that is aligned with K-12 funding levels.

Additionally, we propose the establishment and funding of a professional commission, composed of a range of experts and stakeholders, to analyze and change the “base cost” of the formula and then periodically study and recommend updates every three years to ensure the formula reflects the true cost of equitably educating students.



FAFSA

New York took a major step forward to improving FAFSA completion rates by passing a Universal FAFSA law last year. However, districts and community partners need significant support to increase outreach and meet the law’s requirements. We propose a **\$3 million** new investment that would allow for grants to community-based organizations to support outreach to students and funding to NYSED to meaningfully collect data on the law’s implementation, particularly around student waivers. Additionally, the state should assess the gap in school counselors needed to support Universal FAFSA completion and provide additional funding for districts to hire school counselors.

College in High School

Research shows that students who take college courses while in high school are more likely to attend and complete college. EdTrust-New York conducted an analysis, using our [To and Through data tool](#), of New York State students who: graduated from a New York high school; are Tuition Assistance Program recipients; attended a New York State college or university; and while in high school, were enrolled in college less than half-time. We analyzed six years of data for such students who enrolled in college in the fall of 2017, allowing us to track these students through spring 2024. We found that:

1. Students were more likely to persist in college;
2. Students were more likely to earn their degrees “on time;” and
3. Students were more likely to receive a degree.

New York should invest an additional **\$60 million** in college in high school programs to:

- **Fund an Authorization Board**, to ensure programs are aligned to a statewide definition of college in high school, and demonstrate access and successful outcomes, particularly for underrepresented groups in college. The Board should also assess the cost to fund existing and new college in high school programs to ensure underrepresented groups have access to programs statewide. This assessment should inform the FY 2026-27 Executive Budget and ensure sustainability of existing previously funded programs, while including additional funding to expand programs.
- **Replicate successful models**, particularly for programs with a proven track record of serving students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and other underrepresented groups in college.
- **Increase access for underrepresented groups** in existing programs, by providing funds to districts and Institutes of Higher Education specifically to cover the full cost of participation for students from low-income backgrounds to participate in existing programs.
- **Create new programs** in parts of the state that have few or no college in high school programs.

