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Albany has passed the budget and included in it was an unprecedented amount of education aid. The FY 2022 Enacted Budget provides \$29.5 billion in State funding to school districts for the 2021-22 school year through School Aid, the highest level of State aid ever, supporting the operational costs of school districts that educate 2.5 million students statewide. This investment represents an increase of \$3.0 billion (11.3 percent) compared to the 2020-21 school year, including a \$1.4 billion (7.6 percent) Foundation Aid increase. Approximately 75 percent of this increase is targeted to high-need school districts.

The FY 2022 Enacted Budget programs \$13 billion of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief and Governor's Emergency Education Relief funds to public schools. This funding, available for use over multiple years, will help schools safely reopen for in-person instruction, address learning loss, and respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs due to the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Budget allocates \$629 million of these funds to school districts as targeted grants to support efforts to address learning loss through activities such as summer enrichment and comprehensive after-school programs. In addition, the Budget uses \$105 million of federal funds to expand access to full-day prekindergarten programs for four-year-old children in school districts statewide in the 2021-22 school year.

Under the FY 2022 Enacted Budget, school districts will be reimbursed for the cost of delivering school meals and instructional materials during pandemic-related school closures in spring 2020 and for the costs of keeping transportation employees and contractors on standby during the initial short-term closures prior to the announcement in May 2020 that school buildings would be closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

This link includes numerous other budget highlights: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/fy-2022-new-york-state-budget/fy-2022-enacted-budget-highlights>

New Yorkers can now possess and use up to 3 ounces of cannabis under a legalization bill signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, while sales of recreational-use marijuana won't become legal for an estimated 18 months until the state draws up regulations. New York will start automatically expunging the criminal records of individuals with certain past marijuana-related convictions, and law enforcement in the state won't be able to arrest or prosecute individuals for possession of marijuana up to 3 ounces.

The law also immediately allows using cannabis in public spaces, though New Yorkers can't smoke or vape marijuana in locations prohibited by state law, including workplaces, colleges and universities, hospitals and within 100 feet of a school.

Tax revenues from marijuana would first cover the state's cost of regulating and enforcing the marijuana legalization law, with the remainder divided among schools, drug treatment and prevention programs and a fund for investing in job skills, adult education, mental health and other services in communities that bore the brunt of the national and state drug war.

New York will set a 9 percent sales tax on cannabis plus an additional 4% county and local tax and another tax based on the level of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. The state will provide loans, grants and incubator programs to encourage participation in the cannabis industry by people from minority communities, as well as small farmers, women and disabled veterans.

The new law allows cities, towns and villages to opt out of allowing adult-use cannabis retail dispensaries or on-site consumption licenses by passing a local law by Dec. 31, 2021, or nine months after the effective date of the legislation. They cannot opt out of legalization.