



New York State  
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# LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS...

November 2009

## Mid-Year Budget Reductions Proposed – Again!

As expected, long-term damage to New York's economy is having a crushing effect on the state budget. Governor Paterson has proposed mid-year cuts to close the state's current year budget deficit, now estimated at \$3-\$4 billion. This is the first installment of a two-year \$5 billion Deficit Reduction Plan (DRP). The plan would cut School Aid by a total of \$686 million for the 2009-10 school year, or 3 percent. The cut would amount to 4.5 percent of undisbursed aid payments.

How school districts will manage such cuts is unclear – especially since the school year is already underway and local tax rates have been set based on annual spending plans that have been approved by voters. Reductions in staff and programs could become necessary.

Additionally, the DRP includes Governor Paterson's proposed cap on State spending to help address New York's long-term structural deficit. This initiative would limit State operating funds spending increases to the average inflation rate over the previous three years.

The Governor's deficit reduction plan must be approved by the State Legislature. The Senate and Assembly are holding hearings on the proposals and a special legislative session to consider approval of the budget cuts is expected.

School districts have few reserves to cover budget shortfalls, but the education of our children must continue to be a priority for the state. We will be monitoring legislative reactions to the governor's plan and recommendations. PTA members should be watching for information and be ready to *Take Action!*

For further information go to:

[http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/press\\_1015091.html](http://www.state.ny.us/governor/press/press_1015091.html)

## PTA Urges Congress to Reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) is up for reauthorization. The JJDPA, which has been in force for 35 years, provides the major

source of federal funding to improve states' juvenile justice systems. It also sets federal standards for the protection and rehabilitation of youths involved in the juvenile justice system.

On March 24, 2009, legislation to reauthorize JJDP (S.678) was introduced, but with a national focus on other legislative matters, such as health care reform, JJDP is awaiting action in the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee.

Take action now to increase momentum for JJDP's reauthorization. Visit PTA's Take Action Center and send an alert to your members of Congress:

<http://capwiz.com/npta2/issues/alert/?alertid=14068986&PROCESS=Take+Action>

## **NYC Schools to Get Emergency Alert System**

The Public Schools Emergency Alert Act, which was signed into law this year, requires the New York City School District to implement an emergency alert notification system. The system will convey timely information concerning emergency situations that pose a threat to students, faculty and staff.

Multiple methods of communication - including automated text messages, phone calls and electronic mail – will be incorporated into the system to notify and advise parents, faculty, staff and elected representatives in an emergency situation.

For further information go to:

<http://open.nysenate.gov/openleg/api/html/bill/S2121>