

## Kids to suffer in \$2.5B cut plan

Education groups say state proposal hurts majority of schools

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ALBANY — Education groups issued a report Wednesday showing that 64 percent of school districts would face cuts of more than \$15,000 per classroom under Gov. David Paterson's proposed 2009-10 budget.

Paterson proposes spending \$20.7 billion on public schools next year, \$2.5 billion less than had been scheduled under a multi-year plan to improve elementary and secondary education in the state.

The study, compiled by the Alliance for Quality Education and the Fiscal Policy Institute, found that 60 districts would face cuts of more than \$30,000 per classroom. The consequences across the state would be larger class sizes, thousands of teacher layoffs, less money for books, libraries and technology, and cutbacks in tutoring, arts, after-school and other programs, education advocates said.

The education organizations, including the alliance, the institute, Citizen Action, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity and Education Voters, are pushing for the state to increase taxes on New Yorkers who

earn more than 250,000 a year.

"It is absolutely unreasonable to ... ask school children to give \$2.5 billion towards deficit reduction and those who earn over a quarter million dollars a year are not being asked to give a penny," Easton said. Billy Easton, executive director of the Alliance for Quality Education.

The state faces a budget deficit of about \$14 billion in the 2009-10 budget year, which begins April 1.

A group of Senate Democrats has introduced a bill to increase taxes on wealthy New Yorkers, and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, D-Manhattan, said Wednesday he favors increasing some taxes on people with high incomes. Paterson said he is opposed to the idea.

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