

Governor: K-12 To Get 1% Annual Funding Increase In Upcoming Budget Plan

Primary and secondary education programs will see an annual 1% state funding increase in the administration's biennial budget, [Gov. John Kasich](#) announced Tuesday.

Despite the relatively modest increase, the governor said it's a sign that K-12 education is a priority in an otherwise "restrained" budget as the state faces revenue declines.

"We don't have any more money...but we have had a consistent increase in education over the last six years and we're going to have a second biennium and what we call a mid-biennium review and, if we get more revenue, then education will obviously be one of our priorities," he told reporters during a Statehouse event.

Education interests are likely to push for more funding given inflationary and contract-driven cost increases at the local level. And given the governor's continuing penchant for "tax reform" in budget bills, the proposed allotment will spur considerable debate - especially if the package includes an overall tax cut.

Second only to Medicaid funding, allocations to the Department of Education's line item totaled about \$15.5 billion over two years in the current state budget plan. His next and last biennial budget package is set for unveiling early next week.

Gov. Kasich's comments came during an event honoring schools that have undertaken innovative practices, with a focus on workforce integration and college and career preparation.

The governor told the school leaders he wished he could give them money to recognize their accomplishments, but joked that they'd have to settle for plaques while the budget is tight.

The schools that received those plaques include Bio-Med Science Academy, Cristo Rey Network, Dayton Early College Academy, Ginn Academy, Marietta City Schools, Marysville Local School District, and Toledo School for the Arts.

The governor spent nearly three hours viewing presentations from the schools and asking questions about how their programs work.

In his time in office, Mr. Kasich said he's learned that there are very few school policies that are scalable throughout the state, so it's important for school leaders to dedicate themselves to determining what works best for the students in their region.

What's also become evident, however is that "too much of what we're doing isn't working," he said.

Gov. Kasich has said often recently that a priority for the next two years and his final budget will be encouraging schools to connect with businesses to get high school students first-hand experience in careers they're interested in pursuing. In turn, more students can be prepared to meet the job needs of their regions, he said.

He alluded to a budget proposal that would clarify how schools can use flex credits with the goal of encouraging the creation of programs that place students in work environments outside the classroom where they can earn school credits.

"We don't want to let education get in the way of learning," Gov. Kasich said, borrowing a phrase used often by a principal in the Westerville Local School District where his daughters are enrolled.

He touted the Cristo Rey Network model as one he'd like to see implemented more. The schools in Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus have partnerships with 400 businesses where students work in chosen fields during a portion of the school day and earn money that is used to pay school tuition.

Gov. Kasich said he'd be willing to reach out to businesses and ask for their support of the network. He also offered the state up as a partner for the schools, suggesting students could work at state agencies while in high school.

Research has shown the today's graduating students will hold as many as 10 jobs over their lifetimes, he said, so it's necessary for students to become skilled in navigating workplaces.

"I have to ask: are our schools preparing our kids in a real way? Are we getting them excited about education? Are we building resilience? Are we teaching them about the workplace? I'll let you think about that," he told the audience in the Statehouse Cabinet Room.

A common thread among all the schools being awarded was the importance of mentors that guided students throughout their high school careers.

The governor said his Community Connectors program, which has provided \$10 million in 3-to-1 matching grants to programs that provide role models to students, will get continued funding under his budget proposal.

K-12 SCHOOLS - Kasich: New budget has little to give education Columbus Dispatch – January 25, 2017

Gov. **John Kasich** said he wishes he had more to hand out as he presented innovation awards to Ohio educators and students Tuesday afternoon.

"I'd like to give you money, but all I can give you are plaques," Kasich joshed seconds after mentioning a bare-bones bottom line for K-12 schools in his upcoming state budget.

Kasich said his state budget recommendations for the next two years -- expected to be unveiled Monday -- will include annual funding increases of but 1 percent for elementary and secondary **education**.

"It's a very tough budget," the governor said. "We don't have any more money."

Kasich will recommend a funding increase of about \$200 million over two years for public schools, a spokesman said, after an overall K-12 funding increase of \$1.5 billion during Kasich's six years in office.

The second-term Republican also revealed that state public universities and colleges will be recommended for increases in "the same area" as K-12 when he unveils his final budget.

Since 2011, fellow Republicans in the General Assembly have never met a Kasich K-12 budget that they've liked.

The pattern has involved Kasich suggesting funding formulas that leave some school districts as losers, with lawmakers rewriting the budget to make all districts whole and boost overall spending.

In the current state budget, schools and the Department of **Education** received increases, including property tax subsidies and Lottery funds, of 3.8 percent in 2015-16 and 4.4 percent this school year, reaching a total of \$10.6 billion, according to the Legislative Service Commission.

The governor has signaled for months that his last spending proposal will be financially hamstrung by depressed tax collections coming in under estimates and even has spoken of a possible recession.

Kasich spent more than two hours on Tuesday celebrating the innovation of seven schools and districts across Ohio, including the Cristo Rey Network (and its 330-student high school in Columbus) and Marysville City Schools in Union County.

Cristo Rey, which also has Catholic schools in Cleveland and Cincinnati, was honored for partnering with local business to give students work-study experience five days a month, setting the stage for students to attend college.

Marysville schools were honored for a comprehensive effort to battle drug use among students, including programs in which high-school students and community members mentor at-risk elementary pupils. The effort involves parents discussing the dangers of heroin and other drugs with their children.

Kasich long has lobbied for community involvement in battling opiate addiction and overdose deaths.

"I can't drive it from up here," he said. "This is how we're going to kill the drug problem ... from the bottom up."