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20% cut to schools would be 'devastating' says CNY superintendent

By [TOM MAGNARELLI \(/PEOPLE/TOM-MAGNARELLI\)](/PEOPLE/TOM-MAGNARELLI) • 21 HOURS AGO

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http://www.wrvo.org/sites/wrvo/files/styles/x_large/public/202004/ESM_Schools.jpg

Faculty at Minoa Elementary display a message; "We are all in this together."

ESM CENTRAL SCHOOLS TWITTER

A 20% cut to schools in New York State, proposed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to offset the loss of revenue from the coronavirus, would have a devastating impact on the educational system, according to one local superintendent. Schools districts are also trying to plan around other uncertainties.



Listen

2:12

Cuomo has been asking the federal government for more direct aid to pay for its response to COVID-19 and help close a budget gap. Donna DeSiato, the superintendent of the East Syracuse Minoa Central School District, said they are relying on their federal representatives and President Trump, to recognize that New York State needs resources, now.

“There are times in our country when we have needed the federal support at the state level, and that’s what we’re hoping for,” DeSiato said. “As we go through this, we have to all be willing to understand there are resources that will have been impacted. But first and foremost, we’re hoping that the federal government will look at education as being a vital resource in this country.”

ESM is delaying the adoption of their budget until May. Other school districts in central New York are facing tough decisions as state foundation aid is flat.

Cuomo extended a stay-at-home order last week to keep schools closed through May 15 and he’s said reopening schools would be very difficult. Superintendent DeSiato said they’re planning for a return to school on May 18, but she knows the governor will reassess that time period. If schools do remain closed, teachers will have to assess if students meet state and Regents standards to graduate or move on to the next grade.

“We’ll be looking at what’s essential in this time period, how can we best deliver it in engaging our students and what tools or measures can we use to best assess meeting those standards,” DeSiato said.

While distance learning has been an ongoing process with a learning curve, DeSiato said it’s going very well.

“When the teacher is actually able to be connecting with the students in real time, that’s probably the highest degree of both engagement and most effective for distance learning,” DeSiato said.

Students who needed them got to bring home Google Chromebooks. And families without internet were given accounts to service providers like Spectrum, which is providing free internet for 60 days.




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