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# LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

September 2009

## **Public-Private Partnership Offers Funds to Help Low-Income Families Prepare for the School Year**

Governor Paterson forged a historic collaboration with George Soros and the Open Society Institute (OSI) to provide grants to low-income families to help purchase school supplies as they prepare to return to class in September. More than 800,000 children throughout New York are expected to receive assistance through this initiative.

Families who receive public assistance or food stamps are eligible for this one-time Back-To-School Supplement of \$200 per school-aged child (ages 3 through 17).

OSI committed \$35 million from its Foundation to Promote Open Society to the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), which oversees programs for low-income families. That commitment triggered the availability of an additional \$140 million in federal funding through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) emergency contingency fund that was established under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) earlier this year.

Families can use the money to buy their children books, pencils, pens, notebooks, calculators, backpacks, shoes, tutoring, school uniforms and other clothing and essential school items. The \$175 million Back-To-School Supplement program is also expected to provide an economic boost to communities throughout the State as families purchase supplies, bolstering back-to-school retail sales.

For further information, go to:

[http://www.ny.gov/governor/press/press\\_0811091.html](http://www.ny.gov/governor/press/press_0811091.html)

## **Child Support Order No Longer Necessary for Child Care Subsidies**

A new state law eliminates the requirement that a parent must seek a court order for child support in order to receive child care subsidies. The child support requirement has prevented many deserving parents from accessing needed child care subsidies.

There are many reasons a parent might not pursue a support order — including safety. Children should not lose access to safe, quality care because of this.

For further information, go to:

<http://www.assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?bn=a3657>

## **Governor Paterson Signs Law Protecting Schools from Penalties for Lost Days Due to Swine Flu**

Legislation to disregard deficiencies in the number of days of session for schools with closures related to swine flu occurrences was signed into law by Governor Paterson.

Many schools experienced unanticipated closures due to outbreaks of the H1N1 virus. Given the timing of these outbreaks, the schools had little flexibility to make up lost instructional days. State law requires schools to operate a minimum of 180 days to maintain eligibility for state financial aid.

The new law prevents the loss of state school aid for districts that closed schools as a result of the epidemic.

For further information, go to:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/senate-passes-legislation-allowing-school-closure-due-h1n1-virus>