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134M boost for city schools

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

New York City's schools will get an additional $134 million in federal funding under a broad education reform bill passed yesterday by the House of Representatives.

Approved by a vote of 381 to 41, the bill was a top priority of President Bush's and one of the few domestic initiatives that was not eclipsed by the Sept. 11 attacks on America.

The legislation, known as the "No Child Left Behind" bill, also has bipartisan support in the Senate, which plans to vote on it next Tuesday.



Hillary Clinton

The biggest overhaul of U.S. education since the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it authorizes $26.5 billion in federal spending for the 2002 fiscal year that began Oct. 1 — a $4 billion increase over 2001. Much of that money will go to low-income students in low-achieving schools.

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) said the state will receive $200 million, including the $134 million for city schools. The bill sets up a comprehensive testing system to identify failing schools and needy students. The schools will receive resources to get them back on track, and the students could get the option of transferring to another public school or get tutoring or other supplemental services.

"It's the most important piece of legislation I have ever worked on," Rep. John Boehner (R-Ohio), chairman of the House Education Committee, said. "It's my proudest accomplishment."

Many House Republicans in recent years had wanted to dismantle the Education Department and leave education in local hands. But Bush demanded greater federal involvement to assure accountability and a renewed drive to close the achievement gap between poor students and more affluent ones.

"The President is pleased that the House has acted quickly on these monumental reforms to provide every child with a first-rate education," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said after the vote.

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