

# Putting Students First



## Education Action Plan

New NY Education Reform Commission  
Preliminary Recommendations

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Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of my fellow members, I am pleased to present the *New NY Education Reform Commission's* recommendations for an initial Action Plan to improve student achievement in the Empire State.

The Commission's first priority was to collect data in order to provide you with evidence-based recommendations that will improve student performance and outcomes. In other words, it was imperative to address these complex issues based on facts, not ideology or conjecture. To achieve this goal, we set out on an extensive listening tour across the State, visiting each of New York's diverse regions. We had the opportunity to hear from parents, students, teachers, experts, and other stakeholders. As you requested, the Commission asked for solution-oriented testimony so that we could replicate successful models from New York and beyond to better meet the

educational needs of our students, enhance our shared economic future, and improve accountability to New York State's taxpayers.

One of the things we found – and it was no surprise to us – is that there are many, many things right with public schools in New York. Everywhere we found examples of excellent schools, teachers, and student performance. But, this is hardly a uniform condition throughout the State, particularly in New York's communities of greatest need. The problem New York confronts, we concluded, is how to replicate these examples of excellence in every school district in New York; how do we create a statewide system of public education that ensures that every child will have the opportunity to get an education that will enable them to achieve their true potential?

As was underscored by the many hours of testimony we heard, this is a complex challenge and one that cannot be met through a single, grand, master stroke. Addressing this challenge will require significant and difficult changes to current policies and practices, renewed dedication on the part of administrators, teachers and students, and the active buy-in and support of a broad set of other stakeholders, including parents and community leaders. But it can be done!

The Commission took the information we gathered and developed a coherent, comprehensive set of recommendations that we believe will drive a unified State-level system and improve results for New York's students. In this first of two Action Plans, the Commission is making a set of recommendations that will put New York on a path toward a more excellent and equitable approach to meeting the educational needs of all of our children. In making these recommendations, we acknowledge that this is just the beginning. There is much more work to be done. However, we believe the recommendations contained in this preliminary Action Plan, if implemented, will have a profound impact on our State's education system and will set us firmly on the road to ultimate success.

The Commission aims to propose recommendations that are built upon system coherence at all levels and incorporate three major themes: alignment, access, and quality. First, New York's education system should be viewed as one aligned system, a seamless pipeline that supports a student from the earliest days of pre-kindergarten through college and then career. Our recommendations are aimed at making transitions between different parts of the system uninterrupted and making the whole system more efficient. Second, the system must improve access to critical educational experiences for students, such as effective teachers and leaders, innovative technology, and quality early learning. Third, the Commission focused on ensuring a high bar for quality, guaranteeing that investments made in the education system are evidence-based and premised on an expectation for results.

The Commission shares your sense of urgency in reforming the State's education system to ensure that our students receive the best education possible in order to enable them to enjoy successful and productive lives. As you have directed, we will continue our work on this all-important issue and will report back to you with our final Action Plan in September 2013. In the interim, we stand ready and able to help with respect to implementation of the recommendations contained in our preliminary Action Plan. We look forward with enthusiasm to our continued partnership to improve the quality of education across the State.

Sincerely,  
Richard D. Parsons  
Chairman of the *New NY Education Reform Commission*





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## Background on the *New NY Education Reform Commission's Process*



High quality education, focused on the needs of students, is the key to both strengthening New York's communities and expanding our State's economy. A quality education will provide our most disadvantaged students with a pathway out of poverty and into a productive life by providing them with the skills they need to meet the challenges of the 21st century global economy.

In April 2012, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo convened the *New NY Education Reform Commission*. Through the Commission, the Governor brought together leaders from across the state and from diverse perspectives. They focused on a shared objective:

**developing an actionable course of reforms – based on proven models of success from within New York as well as other states and nations – that will provide the level of educational excellence that all New York's school children deserve, that our State's future economy demands, and that our taxpayers can afford.**

The Commission was tasked with performing a comprehensive review of the structure, operation, and processes of New York State's education system. The Commission sought to develop long-term efficiencies that will bring about both improved student achievement and greater cost-effectiveness in our education system. Comprising 25 expert members, the Commission held 11 public hearings throughout every region of New York, and received and reviewed thousands of pages of testimony. Members heard from over 300 students, parents, educators, community and faith-based leaders, business and labor leaders, and experts from across the country about what is working and what needs to be improved to increase student achievement and lead to success both in school and in the workforce.

In its listening tour across New York, the Commission heard about successful initiatives taking place in our classrooms and school districts, as well as challenges faced by our educators as they work to improve their students' chances for success. Our educators and leaders are committed to preparing our students for college and career. It is clear that the challenges facing our public education system are not the result of bad actors at the individual level. Rather, the Commission has seen that New York educators and stakeholders have shown remarkable flexibility, creativity, and drive as they work to help our students develop the skills they need to successfully transition to adulthood and careers.



## Executive Summary

The first section of this report reflects the Commission's analysis of the facts of New York's public education system. In order to provide evidence-based recommendations, the Commission embarked on a comprehensive review of the education system to determine the state of public education today. The second section of the report comprises the Commission's first set of actionable reforms. Following its analysis of the State's public education system, the Commission deliberated about what works and what needs to be fixed, and proposed a set of evidence-based, actionable reforms that, when implemented, will improve student achievement. Finally, the third section of the report addresses the more complex areas that the Commission will continue to explore over the next several months for its second Action Plan due in the fall of 2013.

The Commission found that New York lacks an effective "system" of education: there are many programs and individual components within the system that are working well, but, more often than not, these components lack collaboration and alignment, which stifles progress toward the State's overarching goal – to prepare all students for college and career. The problem our State faces in preparing every student for college and career is not isolated to education, it persists in our communities: it is a cross-government, cross-sector challenge, and the bottom line is that each part of the system has to work together in fundamentally different ways to overcome the predictable barriers to college and career readiness for our students, particularly those in high poverty communities.

Research shows that a child's most formative years are during early childhood, at the very beginning stages of their formal education, and even prior. The education and guidance children receive during these years have a profound effect on their academic success at every subsequent stage.

Unpreparedness in kindergarten permeates through the education pipeline, as these students are often the same ones who cannot read or do math at grade level, who drop out of high school, or who need remediation in college, if they even pursue a college degree. Today's high school students need more innovative delivery models, such as early college or high tech career and technical schools. They are likely the same students who, in early grades, require extended learning hours to achieve literacy. In later years, these students can benefit from experiential college opportunities such as cooperative education or internships in order to transition to successful careers.



Early interventions show great promise to set children on a more successful path, but only when they are made in coordination with subsequent interventions all along the education continuum. Further, it is critical that interventions at every stage are supported by evidence-based benchmarks in order to promote a shared accountability among providers of education and social services to ensure that students are ready for each stage of their education, making them less likely to fall through the cracks in our education pipeline.

To begin implementing such interventions and developing the necessary framework, the Commission recommends building upon what works and simultaneously bringing together everyone who has a stake in a child's education in a commitment to the collective delivery of an effective education, from cradle to college and career. Now that we have seen what works, and identified obstacles, we must begin to bring our most successful programs and initiatives to scale. New York has a critical role to play in supporting success across the educational spectrum.

As the Commission considers the best way to make success universal, especially among our most at-risk students, we should note that one of the most troubling issues the Commission has found is that our current framework



acts largely as disparate systems that too often lack connection to or communication with one another. This has made it difficult to develop long-term interventions that address student needs and maximize educational outcomes. Without strong linkages between systems, the effects of excellent programs, such as high quality early education, may diminish over time. Stated simply, the system is only as strong as its weakest link.

Building on the example of high quality early education: the research shows that early intervention in a child's life does make a profound difference in every other subsequent educational intervention. However, we also know that the effects of that intervention are diminished if we do not sustain support through the fourth and eighth grades, high school, and college. Improving and connecting the entire system is critical if our students are to succeed.

**This first report provides the roadmap for an education that will support a student from cradle to college and career – beginning in pre-kindergarten.**

It is important to state that the Commission has more work to do. The problems we confront are complex and interrelated. These systemic issues demand extensive and thoughtful consideration and analysis. There are many opportunities to examine and scale-up the best programs and practices in New York's schools, but there are also looming problems that persist, especially in our lowest wealth communities. We have not ignored these problems, but we must do more to examine their causes and identify workable solutions to overcome them. We will continue to look within our State for examples of excellence and replicate them. The Commission will continue to explore:

- Attracting the best qualified, most highly motivated people into the education field, and providing them with appropriate training and preparation, as well as continued support once they are in schools;
- Examining the effectiveness of professional development, especially in preparing our teachers and leaders for the Common Core and Annual Professional Performance Reviews;
- Fairly and adequately distributing public education funding;
- Addressing the biggest cost drivers in education and areas where spending exceeds the rate of inflation, including special education, transportation, pension and benefits;
- Engaging parents and families meaningfully;
- Addressing the needs of school districts with high needs but low wealth; and
- Aligning the structure of New York's education system to best meet the needs of our students and the concerns of our taxpayers.

To do this will require an extensive process of building consensus around shared goals and developing plans that work in the field. The Commission is committed to providing recommendations that prioritize student success and support teachers and leaders at every point along the education continuum. These recommendations are guided by evidence-based benchmarks, ensuring that students are supported through key educational transitions and that they progress successfully through each phase of their education to college and career.

## **The New NY Education Reform Commission's Action Plan**

Although the Commission has only recently started its work, we have addressed the public education system in its entirety, from cradle to college and career. Over the coming year, the Commission will address the complex legal, financial, and structural issues that impede our system, our educators, and our students from achieving their full potential. While these issues are complex, the Commission recognizes that our schools and students cannot wait for us to work through every one of these issues. The first set of actionable recommendations will substantively and fundamentally address the entire system, from pre-kindergarten to high school to college and career. This Action Plan is designed to take the first steps to implement the Commission's vision for New York's future, because there is no time to waste. Although we will continue our work over the next year, the issues we address in this first report are urgent and require immediate action. This Action Plan also provides guidance for the system to ensure that we invest in high quality programs and are constantly assessing their impact and providing tools to empower the local community to support our students from cradle to college and career.

## Part 1. Strengthen the Academic Pipeline from Pre-kindergarten through College



The education pipeline begins for a student at birth. We must ensure that each student is supported as they learn and grow, in order to prepare them for success in college and career. The Commission recommends the following strategic investments in order to strengthen the education pipeline.

**Recommendation 1. Increase access to early educational opportunities by providing high quality full-day pre-kindergarten for students in highest needs school districts.**

The Commission recommends that New York provide high quality targeted full-day pre-kindergarten for highest needs students in order to close the school readiness gap.

The Commission received overwhelming support through testimony for high quality, full-day pre-kindergarten for highest needs school districts and decades of research shows that such an investment in quality early education and meaningful parent engagement has a positive long-term impact on children's life outcomes. It helps narrow the achievement gap between poor and affluent youngsters, with additional benefits in significantly reduced expenses for remedial education, social services, health, and criminal justice. These benefits have been shown to substantially outweigh the costs of early education programs. The Commission stresses the importance of ensuring that the State only invest in high quality programs.

The positive effects of quality early education are lost if the student is not continually supported along the education pipeline. In the most disadvantaged communities, students need additional support throughout their education experience in order to ensure their success.

**Recommendation 2. Restructure schools by integrating social, health and other services through community schools to improve student performance.**

There is a lack of coordination and communication between local and state agencies that results in students receiving fewer social services and educational supports than they need, or receiving those services in a disjointed and inefficient manner that fails to bring providers together to plan interventions that maximize a child's chances for success. New York should fuse together best practices from national models like Cincinnati Community Learning Centers, Harlem Children's Zone, Say Yes to Education, and Strive in order to more effectively support at-risk students and families through collective impact. Our systems must cooperate more purposefully and effectively to align resources and services including both private and public funding, from local to state government. This new level of coordination will require continuous reexamination and improvement, through the use of research-based metrics that focus on improved outcomes and efficiency. It is vital to engage parents as a critical partner driving collective impact.

By providing the comprehensive supports that students need within the school setting at every stage, we can ensure that our students are on track to be college and career ready.

**Recommendation 3. Begin to restructure the school day and year by extending student learning time with academically enriched programming.**

Our educational structure is in many ways built upon the needs and demands of agrarian and factory traditions which is disconnected from our current reality. Many other nations and states have begun to transform the length of the school day and year to extend learning times for students. To compete in the global economy, New York must do the same or our students will be left behind. New York, like many states, continues to operate its schools in the same manner and with the same calendar that we have inherited from prior generations. The Commission recommends that New York start to extend quality learning time by replicating successful models, such as the Massachusetts Extended Learning Time Initiative, which has resulted in increased proficiency on state assessments by an average of 20 points for low-income students.

#### **Recommendation 4. Improve the education pipeline through the smart and innovative use of technology.**

The Commission recommends that the State create Innovation Zones. The State should provide an opportunity for schools to invest in transformative technology in order to increase student achievement. This should be done through a competitive grant awarded to school districts that propose innovative ways to use technology to support teachers and students. Technology has transformed virtually every aspect of American life. In our education system, technology holds the potential to improve student learning by providing teachers with the tools to personalize instruction, engage students, and create access to learning opportunities that would otherwise be impossible. Technology has the potential to make learning more accessible, expanding the educational experience beyond the traditional school day while informing and engaging parents as critical partners in the student learning process. The Commission does not advocate for technology for technology's sake. The Commission recognizes that there is a need for high quality models supported by digital learning that allows each child to benefit from a personalized learning experience in order to meet the State's college and career ready standards.

Every student needs to be successful at every phase of their education. Engaging students and providing increased access to programs and experiences through the use of technology is an important step to ensure that students move seamlessly from one phase of their education career to the next. While integrating technology is important, the State should encourage evidence-based programs that are evaluated for quality. New York has an opportunity to create a culture of high expectations for college and career by breaking down the walls between the high school system, the university system, and the expectations for career-readiness through the creative use and application of technology.

#### **Recommendation 5. Build better bridges from high school to college and careers.**

Our public education system should be a continuum from birth through career, with students being prepared for college-level work and early professional experiences along the way. As it is currently structured, however, the educational pipeline is fragmented and contains potential leaks. These leaks occur when we lose focus on the best interest of students, diminish our investment, and divorce our inputs from the needs of higher education and business. We can encourage seamless transition throughout the education pipeline by expanding programs, such as Early College High School and Career and Technical Education, which strengthen the preparation for our youth to succeed in college and career.

- **The Commission recommends that New York State build upon the success of existing Early College High School programs, by leveraging public-private sector partnerships and funding to expand programs.** High-risk students traditionally have low rates of high school graduation and college attendance; however, across the country and here in New York State, Early College High School programs have had dramatic success in bridging the gap between high school and college and helping students traditionally underrepresented in college earn transferable college credit at no cost to them or their families. Early College High School creates a college-going culture for our most at-risk students, it connects high school and college, and it also makes college more affordable by providing the opportunity for students to earn college credit in high school. For example, at P-TECH High School in Brooklyn, in coordination with IBM and CUNY, 89 percent of students passed the Regents Integrated Algebra exam and 77 percent passed the Regents English Language Arts exam. Additionally, each student has a virtual guarantee of employment upon graduation.
- **New York should leverage existing resources and public-private support to establish high tech Career and Technical Education programs in every region. These expanded and new programs should focus on 21st Century learning in advanced manufacturing, science, and technology.** The Commission heard many business owners report on the large gap in workforce preparation and on their own readiness to collaborate with the public school system to better prepare students for future careers. Expanded, high quality Career and Technical Education programs will improve graduation rates, better prepare students for successful careers, and strengthen the State's economy by supplying New York businesses with the highly-skilled workers they need for current and future job opportunities by providing students with meaningful internships and apprenticeships to develop their professional skills and interests.

Building upon success in programs like SUNY Works and CUNY Office of Workforce Partnership,<sup>1</sup> the Commission recommends New York strengthen the supply line of career-ready students by incorporating more meaningful opportunities for experiential education for high school students and college graduates.

**Recommendation 6. Promote increased access to educational opportunities by encouraging school district restructuring through consolidation and regional high schools.**

More than half of New York's nearly 700 school districts educate fewer than 2,000 students, and yet many have their own administration and back office functions, often leading to unnecessary and expensive duplication of services. However, there are obstacles that stand in the way of school district consolidation, including potentially different tax rates between communities and the desire to maintain a sense of identity in small communities. With community input, and in collaboration with neighboring districts and BOCES, regional high schools that result in increased academic opportunities could provide a pathway to consolidation, demonstrating for communities that school districts that combine academic programs and services can achieve better outcomes and provide more robust opportunities for their young people, while still maintaining their community's identity. Additionally, school districts can find efficiencies in shared services and functional consolidation. The Commission recommends the following steps to promote regionalization and shared services:

- First, the school district consolidation process should be streamlined to empower citizens, similar to the process for other local governments;
- Second, the State should review existing incentives for consolidation to potentially include school districts in other local efficiency incentive programs to better incentivize consolidation and shared services; and
- Third, the State should allow for increased regionalization of programs and services across districts and BOCES.

**Recommendation 7. Create a school performance management system that will streamline district reporting and increase transparency and accountability.**

To ensure that education resources are being used in a manner that benefits students the most, while establishing a fair and measurable baseline record that validates the impact of investments on student outcomes, we need greater fiscal transparency. This will demonstrate which interventions are working, allow us to redirect funds to the most effective interventions, and make clear to stakeholders that resources are being driven towards maximizing student performance.

It is notably difficult for stakeholders to hold school district management fairly and uniformly accountable for results in New York. Although there is a great deal of financial reporting required, it is often outdated, fails to link actual to budgeted spending, and does not test the academic outcomes associated with significant financial investments. This is a problem not only for the public, but also for school managers themselves, because they cannot compare spending and savings with similarly situated districts in order to identify efficiencies and best practices. The Commission recommends that New York create a performance management system to increase school district accountability and transparency by reforming the current district reporting process to reflect actual spending in each key area of school district operations. This transparency will enable meaningful parent and community engagement.

Additionally, the Commission found that New York can lower school operating costs through such efficiencies as energy and conservation, establishing regional healthcare consortiums, and other shared services initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> SUNY Works, a statewide best practice, is a cooperative education program that allows students to gain real-world experience directly tied to their field of study while earning pay, which both keeps their financial obligations low and gives them a competitive edge in the job market. In 2013, CUNY is opening a new Office of Workforce Partnerships to further expand industry/college partnerships that better prepare students for the workplace. The Office will deal with all aspects of creating better connections between employers and colleges/academic programs, including brokering relationships between employers and academic departments to get industry input on curricula, updates to degree programs, developing internships, and other workplace experience programs.



## Part 2. Great Educators Enable Great Students

### Ensure the Education Pipeline has the Best Teachers and Principals to Increase Student Performance.



There is no such thing as a great school without great teachers and school leaders. Teaching and school leadership are among the most important and most challenging jobs in our society. Research shows that teachers account for one-third of a school's total impact on student achievement, and principal leadership accounts for another 25 percent of that impact.<sup>2</sup> Educators have a significant effect on student achievement and are critical partners to any successful reform effort.

New York must recruit the highest caliber people into teaching and school leadership. We must ensure that they have the training needed to become excellent educators and the continuous development and support to grow in their profession.<sup>3</sup> Despite the

need for an aligned teacher and principal preparation process, there is a lack of coherence in the way New York recruits, trains, and develops our teachers and school leaders. An opportunity exists to strengthen the pipeline, maximizing student performance and achievement.

New York's schools have many high quality teachers and school leaders. We must find ways to leverage their skills to improve the work of the entire educator workforce. To retain excellent teachers, we must ensure that each school is led by a highly effective principal with the skills to support teachers' development and create a culture of collaboration and high expectations. Career ladders that recognize effective teachers should be developed, providing educators with opportunities to grow over the course of their careers.

*Calls for teacher preparation reform are not new. What must be different this time around is how we respond.*

Unfortunately, coherence, collaboration and professional leadership do not systematically characterize American educator preparation programs today - particularly given the fragmented nature of the larger system and stakeholders involved.

There are a few strategic steps that the Commission believes the State should take immediately in order to move forward in improving the human capital pipeline to our schools.

<sup>2</sup> Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation. Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

<sup>3</sup> AFT's Teacher Preparation Task Force identified three important characteristics of successful teacher preparation that the Commission supports: 1) that the program content is coherent (moving in a predictable, pre-determined way to achieve shared goals); 2) that the teacher preparation process is collaborative in nature (between schools and the teacher preparation programs); and 3) that the entire effort strengthens the teaching profession, the respect in which it is held, and the lateral accountability of its members, whether higher education faculty, classroom teachers, or those serving in hybrid roles in clinical supervision, induction, and mentoring.

### **Recommendation 1. Establish model admissions requirements for teacher and principal preparation programs to raise the bar for new educators.**

While the world's best performing school systems often recruit their teachers and principals from among their top high school and college students, only about 30 percent of US teachers come from the top third of their college graduating class. In countries with successful education systems, teacher candidates come from the top 10 percent of their high school or college graduating class. In New York, we should set a high bar for entry into the education field. However, prospective teachers face no test of academic proficiency as a criterion for admission to teacher preparation programs, nor is there a statewide minimum standard for entrance. Beginning with SUNY and CUNY, the Commission recommends that admissions requirements for teacher and principal preparation be raised by using an entry assessment, such as the GRE, to verify that candidates are academically competitive with all of their peers, regardless of their intended profession. In addition, the Commission recommends that New York raise the minimum admissions requirement for its teacher and principal preparation programs to at least a 3.0 GPA.<sup>4</sup>



### **Recommendation 2. Recruit non-traditional candidates into teaching and leading by expanding alternative certification programs.**

It is imperative that New York recruit the best and the brightest educators. There is an opportunity to recruit mid-career professionals, especially in areas of great need, such as STEM, into teaching by expanding alternative pathways into the education profession. While New York has limited experience with alternative pathways to teaching, the Board of Regents has approved a framework for alternative routes into teaching. This framework has been described by officials as “designed to attract highly competent people who possess a bachelor’s degree with a major in the subject they plan to teach, but initially lack courses in teaching.” Compared to graduates of traditional teacher preparation programs, alternate route teachers typically have higher individual academic performance and are typically placed in schools with more students of poverty, where the challenges of attracting and retaining teachers are increasingly pronounced.<sup>5</sup>

The Commission recommends the State actively pursue expanding high quality alternative certification programs. Alternative certification programs should adhere to the same high standard for admissions, as well as expand on best practices that we know work, including strong project based and clinical experience to best prepare teachers for the classroom prior to their actual entry as teachers. After recruiting the best and brightest into the field, it is critical to ensure that educators are prepared for the challenges of the classroom on the very first day of the job.

### **Recommendation 3. Enhance the education training curriculum to better prepare teachers and principals to be highly effective upon entering the classroom.**

In too many cases, teacher and principal preparation program coursework is disjointed; a stubborn divide exists between practice and theory, and there is a gap between mastery of content and school-based experience. Teacher and principal preparation curricula should be structured around a conceptual framework that explicitly describes what high quality teachers and leaders need to know in both content areas and pedagogy. It should lay out the necessary knowledge base, ethics, dispositions and skills, leadership, and competencies. Such a framework would connect academic content and clinical practice, interwoven with lessons learned in the field, in order to train the most effective educators for today’s schools, which, in many cases, it is not.

<sup>4</sup> Each of CUNY’s six Graduate Schools of Education requires at least a 3.0 GPA for admission.

<sup>5</sup> Research has shown that alternatively prepared educators achieve higher academic scores, more prestigious credentials, and higher performance on general knowledge and content tests. Boyd, D. J., Grossman, P. L., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2009). Teacher preparation and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 416-440. Kane, T. J., Rockoff, J., & Staiger, D. (2008). What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness? *Evidence from New York City*. *Economics of Education Review*, 27(6), 615-31.

When clinical preparation is properly integrated into traditional coursework, teacher and principal candidates spend time in the classroom throughout their academic training, such as the practice at SUNY Fredonia and in CUNY's residency programs. Educators are also taught through field-based courses, use microteaching techniques, participate in videoconference learning with in-service teachers, and work closely with Professional Development Schools to continuously improve the profession.

Specifically, the Commission recommends that:

- The State Education Department set standards and provide guidance for teacher and principal preparation programs to align the expectations of today's classrooms with those of educator preparation programs;
- The State Education Department set new standards for teacher and principal preparation programs including stronger clinical practice, similar to the preparation models for doctors and other professionals, in order to develop concrete skills needed for success in the classroom; and
- The State train and prepare the most effective principal leaders in the country by creating a leadership academy at SUNY and CUNY. These academies would build on the success of New York's Leadership Academy and New Leaders programs.



#### **Recommendation 4. New York must raise the bar for entry into the profession.**

The Commission recommends that New York establish a “bar”- like exam for entry into the teaching and principal profession for all traditional and alternative preparation programs, as proposed by The American Federation of Teachers (AFT). The “bar” like exam will raise the standards of entry into the teacher and principal profession, similar to the bar process in law or the boards process in medicine. Establishing a core set of standards and a common set of professionally rigorous assessments to ensure the best prepared teachers are entering the classroom will only happen if, like the American Bar Association or the American Medical Association, these standards are consistently monitored and evaluated to encourage continuous refinement.

The State Education Department is currently revising standards for teacher and principal certification exams so that New York's next generation of teachers and principals will be ready to teach to the new, higher college and career readiness standards for students, the Common Core State Standards. The Commission recommends that the State Education Department continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new teacher and principal certification exams, compared to rigorous national standards, to ensure that the bar is sufficiently high to measure a teacher or principal's ability before they enter the school environment and predict their eventual success in improving student outcomes.

**Recommendation 5. Strengthen educator preparation and in-service supports by establishing best practices to assure quality.**

- **Use data to improve teacher and principal preparation programs.**

Beginning in Fall 2013, the State Education Department will provide higher education outcome information to school districts through reports containing information on their graduates' employment, retention, and educator effectiveness. These reports will incorporate basic data from over 4,000 institutions of higher education from the National Student Clearinghouse, as well as more detailed information from SUNY and CUNY. They will be designed to integrate the best practices and lessons learned from similar reports elsewhere. While these profiles will contain critical information, it is unclear how they will be used to hold teacher and principal preparation programs accountable for preparing their candidates to be highly effective educators. The Commission recommends that the State Education Department monitor and analyze this information in order to provide critical and specific feedback to strengthen teacher and principal preparation programs.

- **The State should encourage partnerships between school districts and universities in jointly training teachers and professors on Common Core Standards and Annual Professional Performance Review.**



Rather than have P-12 and higher education each fund, administer, and evaluate separate professional development in the Common Core Standards and the requirements of Annual Professional Performance Review, a combined effort would strengthen the relationship between higher education and lower education. Combined efforts will also result in significant cost savings. Additionally, the collaboration between those in the classroom and those preparing the next generation of teachers would likely lead to new models of teaching and learning as mutual understanding is fostered.

Educator preparation schools must also focus on developing clinical faculty with an understanding of the demands of today's classrooms. The relationship between university faculty and the in-service teacher will support the development of both professionals. Higher education and school districts both understand what the demands are; professional development dollars on both sides can, and should, go towards the same

goal. The Commission encourages school districts to collaborate with SUNY, CUNY and other higher education institutions to provide ongoing professional development for Common Core implementation.

- **Create professional development schools for teachers and principals.**

In order to provide quality training to teachers and principals, partnerships must be created between school districts and university and college programs. The creation of a professional development school would allow for deep collaboration between school districts and teacher and principal preparation faculty. Through this effort, we will address the needs of our teacher and principal candidates and prepare high quality educators; there should be a focus on those willing to serve in our low-performing, high-need districts.

The Commission recommends that both SUNY and CUNY expand their professional development schools for all candidates. The model should feature a partnership between districts and universities wherein the two partners focus on collaborative educator preparation practices and professional development. This model will result in high quality preparation of teacher and principal candidates, provide professional development to practicing teachers and school leaders, and provide greater focus on the best research-based practices in order to maximize student achievement.



- **Improve teacher performance by incentivizing districts to replicate successful career ladder programs.**

While implementation of the new process of evaluating teachers and principals is still in the early stages, the Commission recognizes the potential of this program to allow school districts to incentivize and reward highly effective teachers and principals and to improve performance for all educators. In addition to identifying educators who show outstanding results, APPR is also intended to allow school districts to utilize their career development resources more effectively. School districts are currently directed to formulate and implement an individually tailored improvement plan for teachers and principals identified as needing improvement in a particular area.<sup>6</sup> School districts should consider tapping into career ladder programs as part of a global professional development plan to improve performance and results across the board.

Ongoing professional development and opportunity growth is a proven method to recruit, retain and develop a high quality teaching force. International leaders, such as Finland and Singapore, implement career ladders in each school as a way to continuously develop their teachers and create a culture of teachers working together to solve problems. The recent TNTF report, *The Irreplaceables*, also identified career advancement pathways as an incentive to retain effective teachers. The report found that many high performing teachers complained of a lack of opportunities for them to serve as teacher leaders, because such positions were not offered or did not exist.<sup>7</sup> Many teachers felt that the only way to progress up the career ladder is to become an administrator - which comes with a higher salary, but fewer opportunities to teach and directly engage with students.<sup>8</sup> Many high performing teachers that decided to leave the field cited dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities. The Commission recommends that the Governor's competitive education grants encourage school districts to develop career ladders by awarding bonus points to applicant districts that already have or will develop career ladders.

<sup>6</sup> N.Y. Educ. Law § 3012-c(4).

<sup>7</sup> Jacob, A., Vidyarthi, E., & Carroll, K. (2012). *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*. Brooklyn, NY: TNTF.

<sup>8</sup> The Commission recommends the State explore rigorous professional development and merit pay opportunities similar to the Math for America Master Teacher Fellowship in New York City. MfA NY Master Teacher Fellowship in Mathematics and Science is a four-year program that rewards outstanding experienced public secondary school mathematics and science teachers. The program includes stipends of up to \$60,000 over four years, and provides opportunities to design and lead high quality professional workshops, mentor early career teachers, and share innovations and best practices with like-minded colleagues.



## The Commission's Review and Analysis of New York's Education System



New York's is a vast and complex public education system – one that serves over 2.7 million students.<sup>9</sup> These students, and the schools that serve them, are located in an extraordinary variety of diverse environments. Ranging from the nation's largest city and largest school system, where students speak over 100 different languages, to farming towns; from once-thriving manufacturing cities trying to make their way in a new economy, to school districts set in the timeless beauty of State forest preserve lands. New York's school districts range in geographic size from an average of approximately 11 square miles on Long Island, to an average of over 175 square miles in the North

Country. And they vary in student need, with eligibility for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch program ranging from 0 percent in some suburban districts to concentrations of nearly 100 percent in others.

Achieving educational excellence across this wide diversity of circumstances is among the greatest challenges facing New York State's education system – and it is central to defining the character of this great state for present-day New Yorkers and future generations to come.

The fact is that there are serious issues facing our system of public education. New York State has high academic standards and spends more money per student than any other state in the nation. However, we are not seeing enough return on investment, especially for the large number of students from a background of poverty. New York lags far behind most states in graduation rates;<sup>10</sup> only 74 percent of New York's students graduate from high school and only 35 percent are college ready.<sup>11</sup> In stark contrast, New York State is also home to some of the nation's best public schools as evidenced by our students' successes:

- With approximately 6 percent of the nation's public school students, New York is responsible for about a third of the nationwide semifinalists in the Intel Science Talent Search virtually every year.
- Twenty of the top 100 high schools nationally in recent U.S. News and World Report rankings are located in New York.

We can and must do more to build on our success and address our weaknesses to improve the system.

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<sup>9</sup> The diversity of education in New York also includes approximately 402,000 students enrolled in nonpublic schools, including religiously affiliated and independent private schools. Of these, 237,000 (59 percent) reside in New York City, 14,000 (4 percent) reside in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, or Yonkers, and 150,278 (37 percent) reside in other school districts.

<sup>10</sup> According to the National Center for Education Statistics, New York ranks 39th for high school graduation rates. Recently, The U.S. Department of Education released data on states' four-year high school completion rates in 2010-11, with a new, common metric. The new, uniform rate calculation is not comparable in absolute terms to previously reported rates. Therefore, while 26 states reported lower graduation rates and 24 states reported unchanged or increased rates under the new metric, these changes should not be viewed as measures of progress but rather as a more accurate snapshot. Using this new data, New York is tied for 29th with MN and RI. By contrast, comparable and neighboring states are well ahead of New York, including CT, MA, MD, NJ, PA, TX, IL, VA, and OH.

<sup>11</sup> New York State Education Department, Information and Reporting Services. English Language Arts and Mathematics Aspirational Performance Measure. June 2012.

## A. New York's School District Structure

The 2.7 million enrolled k-12 students in New York State are spread among 694 public school districts. These include 676 major public school districts, 10 special act school districts, 6 school districts with less than eight teachers, and 2 school districts that are non-operating.

Student enrollment is not spread evenly among these districts, however. Far from it. Among the major school districts in New York are the "Big Five" City school districts serving New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers. Collectively, the Big Five city school districts account for 1.1 million, or 42 percent, of the State's public school students. New York City alone enrolls approximately 1.0 million, or 38 percent; the other four large cities enroll an additional 116,000, or 4 percent.

**Table 1. Big Five Cities**

	Number of Students	Percent of Students
New York City	1,017,330	38%
Buffalo	38,148	1%
Rochester	32,685	1%
Syracuse	20,903	1%
Yonkers	24,494	1%
<b>Subtotal - Big Five Cities</b>	<b>1,133,560</b>	<b>42%</b>

Outside the Big Five Cities, the average enrollment across school districts is 2,283 students. However, there is wide variation between the largest of these (such as Albany, Newburgh, Brentwood and New Rochelle, which enroll over 10,000 students each) and the 105 school districts, predominantly in rural areas, that have fewer than 500 students each.

**Table 2. Enrollment Size - All Other Districts**

	Number of Districts	Number of Students <sup>12</sup>	Percent of Students	Percent of Districts
Over 10,000 Students	10	117,766	4%	1%
7,000 - 10,000 Students	24	200,642	8%	4%
3,000 - 7,000 Students	141	634,389	24%	21%
2,000 - 3,000 Students	70	172,438	6%	10%
1,000 - 2,000 Students	185	270,115	10%	27%
500 - 1,000 Students	136	104,298	4%	20%
250 - 500 Students	75	28,110	1%	11%
Less than 250 Students	30	4,359	1%	4%
<b>Subtotal - All Other School Districts</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>1,532,117</b>	<b>58%</b>	
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>2,665,677</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>12</sup> Number of students represents the estimated 2011-12 school year public school enrollment, including charter schools, reported by the State Education Department as of May 2012. Charter school students are counted within the enrollment of the school district in which the charter school they attend is located.



The majority of school districts in New York independently levy taxes and hold annual votes on their school budgets. However, unlike the other 671 school districts, the Big Five are dependent on their respective city governments to allocate local funding for the support of the school system.

Typically, the State's school districts have independently elected school boards whose members set policy and have responsibility to appoint and oversee performance of the superintendent. Governance varies among the Big Five City school districts. Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse have independently elected school boards which are responsible for appointing their district's superintendent. Yonkers has a school board appointed by the mayor. New York City is the only school district whose leader – the chancellor – and the majority of school board members are appointed by the New York City Mayor (pursuant to legislation set to expire in 2015, unless extended).<sup>13</sup>

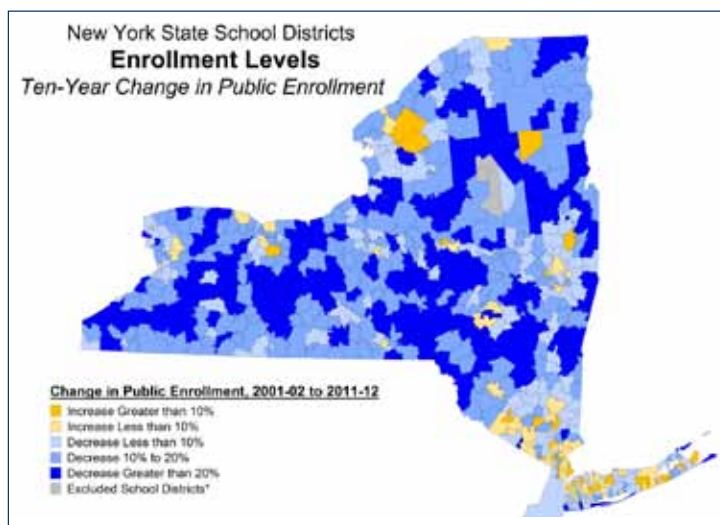
## Other Local Educational Agencies

Even this number and array of school districts does not reflect the full variety of educational entities in New York. There are 221 other entities in New York that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), but are not classified as school districts. For the 2011-12 school year, these included 184 charter schools and 37 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

New York's charter schools enroll approximately 64,000 students. An additional 27 charter schools were approved to open in the 2012-13 school year. While the charter schools are governed and operated independently of the school district where they are located, they are considered part of that school district for purposes of counting student enrollment.

BOCES are comprised of member school districts, available to all but the Big Five City school districts. Member ("component") districts can purchase administrative services and shared educational programs from the BOCES. Each BOCES is governed by a Board of Education, whose members are elected by component school board members. Each BOCES board appoints a district superintendent, contingent upon approval by the Commissioner of Education.

Public support for education in New York begins even earlier than kindergarten for the approximately 105,000 students and their families participating in the Universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) program. This program primarily supports pre-kindergarten programs for students who are four years old. In addition, State and county governments support preschool special education services to approximately 90,000 pre-kindergarten special education students, aged three through five.



\*Map does not include data for the three Central High School Districts, the six school districts with less than eight teachers, or the two Non-Operating School Districts. Source: BEDS Enrollment file produced by the State Education Department.

<sup>13</sup> Chapter 345 of the Laws of 2009, amending Chapters 52 and 52-A of the Education Law.

Many of the State’s young children receive publicly subsidized early childhood education through the Office of Children and Family Services childcare grants or the Head Start program. In addition, there are a number of privately operated/funded early childhood education programs, including preschools and child care programs.

## B. Levels of Enrollment and Need

Enrollment declined from 2001-2002 to 2011-2012 for most, though not all, school districts in New York. Enrollment increased by more than 10 percent for 36, or about 5 percent, of school districts in New York, while another 82, or about 12 percent, of districts saw their enrollments increase by less than 10 percent. By contrast, some 558, or 83 percent, of districts saw a decline in their enrollment over the last decade. One-third experienced a decline of between 10 and 20 percent, and another quarter of districts had an enrollment decline of greater than 20 percent.

There is great diversity in local fiscal capacity among school districts across New York. The State uses a measure known as the Combined Wealth Ratio (CWR) to determine a school district’s relative fiscal capacity. The CWR represents a school district’s combined resident income and property values per pupil. This measure is used in State aid formulas to guide funding toward school districts that may need more support for their educational programs. Table 3 summarizes the range of local fiscal capacity among school districts; a school district at the statewide average would have a CWR of 1.0.

New York’s overall status as the top-spending state masks significant variations in spending among school districts – the Commission is committed to examining and recommending how to better address such variations. Governor Cuomo’s administration has already taken steps to focus State Aid on those school

**Table 3. Combined Wealth Ratio<sup>14</sup>**

	<b>Number of Districts</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percent of Students</b>
Less than 0.2 (lowest fiscal capacity)	1	1,466	0%
0.2 to 0.4	38	162,948	6%
0.4 to 0.6	202	307,854	12%
0.6 to 0.8	123	299,415	11%
0.8 to 1.0	90	326,568	12%
1.0 to 1.2	58	182,410	7%
1.2 to 1.4	37	121,747	5%
1.4 to 1.6	23	62,174	2%
1.6 to 1.8	18	47,341	2%
1.8 to 2.0	13	28,202	1%
2.0 to 3.0	32	59,974	2%
Over 3.0 (greatest fiscal capacity)	40	48,248	2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>1,648,347</b>	<b>62%</b>

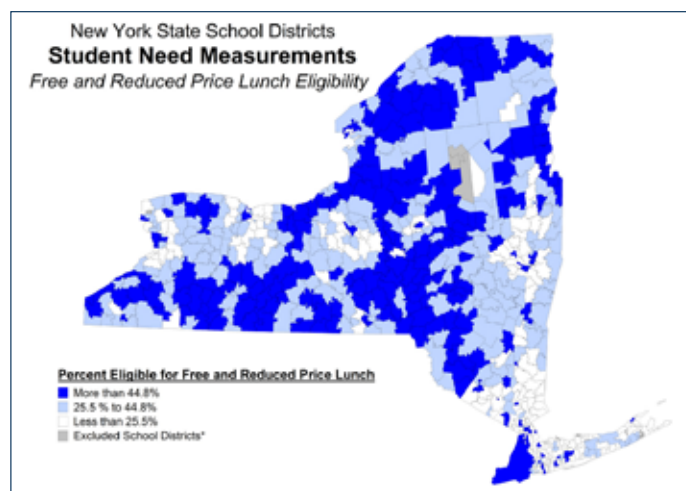
<sup>14</sup> The Combined Wealth Ratio is reported in the State Aid Run No. SA121-3 produced by the State Education Department in support of the 2012-13 Enacted Budget. This table does not include NYC.

districts that have the least fiscal capacity and the greatest student needs. In his 2012-13 Executive Budget, Governor Cuomo proposed that over 76 percent of additional formula-based School Aid be directed toward high-need school districts.

Because students with certain background characteristics may require additional educational support to succeed, the State collects data on various measures of student need for use in determining the distribution of State Aid. These include:

- **Free and Reduced Price Lunch:** Eligibility for the Federal, means-tested, Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program is used nationally as a proxy for students from low-income families.
- **School-Age Children Living in Households below the Federal Poverty Line:** The U.S. Census Bureau publishes the number and percentage of children ages 5 – 17 who are living in households with incomes below the Federal poverty line. This represents a broader measure of community and school district need.
- **Students with Limited English Proficiency:** Some communities have a high concentration of immigrants and non-native English speakers, and students with limited English proficiency may require additional support.

School districts show wide variation in enrollment of students with these characteristics. As shown in Table 4, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch ranges from fewer than one in ten students in low need districts to nearly eight in ten students in New York City and other high need urban districts. Likewise, the proportion of students in high need districts with limited proficiency in English is three to four times higher, and the proportion in poverty more than eight times higher, than those in low need districts.



\* Map does not include data for the three Central High School Districts, the six school districts with less than eight teachers, or the two Non-Operating School Districts. Source: State Aid Run No. 121-3 produced by the State Education Department in support of the 2012-13 Enacted Budget.

**Table 4. Student Need**

District/Group of Districts	FRPL Eligible Percent	Census Poverty Percent	Limited English Proficient Percent
New York City	78%	34%	12%
High Need Large Cities	81%	38%	9%
High Need Urban/Suburban	65%	22%	11%
High Need Rural	52%	18%	1%
Average Need	29%	8%	3%
Low Need	8%	4%	2%
Statewide Maximum	100%	46%	88%
Statewide Minimum	0%	0%	0

The New York State Education Department classifies school districts into three broad categories of need (high, average and low) based on an index that reflects measures of local fiscal capacity and student need. High need districts are assigned to subcategories (large cities, urban/suburban or rural) depending on their population density.

Below is a summary of the most recent classification of school districts among the need resource categories.

**Table 5. Need/Resource Capacity**

	<b>Number of Districts</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percent of Students</b>	<b>Percent of Districts</b>
New York City	1	1,017,330	38%	0%
High Need - Large Cities	4	116,230	4%	1%
High Need - Urban/Suburban	46	216,896	8%	7%
High Need - Rural	156	150,834	6%	23%
<b>All High Need School Districts</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>1,501,290</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>31%</b>
Average Need	336	779,532	30%	50%
Low Need	133	384,855	14%	19%
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>2,665,677</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* NRC data is from 2012-13 Enacted Budget database.

\* Enrollment data from May 2012 State Education Department enrollment trends.

As shown in Table 5, less than one-third of the State's districts are categorized as high-need, yet these districts account for nearly sixty percent of students in New York. By contrast, low need and average need districts comprise an appreciably larger share of districts than students in New York.

### C. Financing Education

New York spends approximately \$58 billion annually in education.<sup>15</sup> Education is financed by three main sources: federal, state and local. New York receives about \$3.27 billion in total Federal aid. State spending accounts for approximately 39.3 percent of the total funding which is primarily distributed through the foundation formula.<sup>16</sup> The remaining portion of education spending comes from local revenues, largely from property taxes.<sup>17</sup>

Public schools in New York spend \$18,618 per pupil, more than any other state.<sup>18</sup> However, per pupil spending varies significantly due to differences in local funding and concentrations of high need students. New York's public schools spend \$12,984 per pupil on instructional expenses, which is more than twice the national average and 33 percent more than the next highest state. New York's public schools spend \$5,256 per pupil on non-instructional expenses, 41 percent above the national average.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, State Aid is slated to increase each year by a percentage determined by the growth in personal income in recent years. The 2012-13 Enacted Budget included a School Aid increase of \$805 million, or 4.1 percent.

<sup>16</sup> Foundation formulas are the most common method of school funding, employed in 37 states – including New York and the District of Columbia. This approach guarantees a minimum amount of funding for each school district and requires districts to raise a local portion of this amount through a state-mandated tax rate. New York does not require a state-mandated tax rate, but assumes a local share. The difference between the foundation amount and the district's contribution determines the amount of state aid. New York is also among 22 states that use equalization methods that take into account the property wealth, taxation effort, and relative need of a local school district to determine funding levels in order to address the ability of districts to raise necessary revenue.

<sup>17</sup> In June 2011, a property tax cap was enacted that applies to all school districts and municipalities outside of New York City. Absent an override vote encompassing a supermajority of 60 percent of the voters, the cap allows for the total levy to increase each year by the lesser of 2 percent or the rate of inflation. The cap may be adjusted to reflect rising pension contribution costs, court judgments, growing tax bases, and school district capital projects. A local government may levy a tax in excess of the cap if 60 percent of the governing body approves it.

<sup>18</sup> On average, New York has a cost of living above the national average, and like many other states, high concentrations of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and children in poverty.

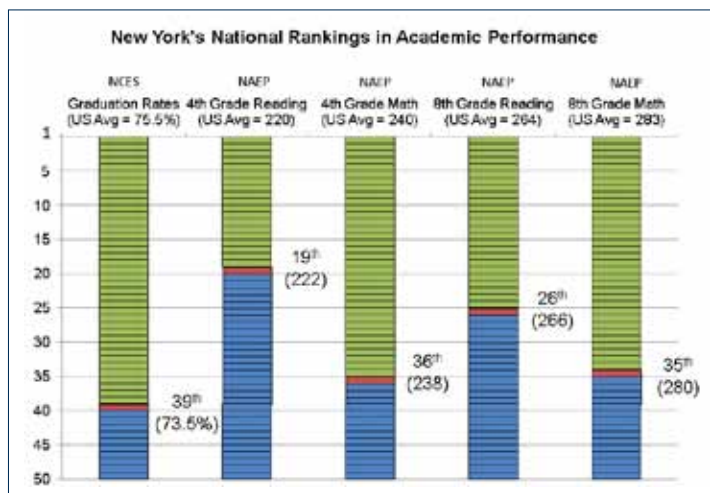
<sup>19</sup> On average, more than 40 percent of school district spending supports non-instructional expenses and employee benefits. From 1995-96 to 2009-10, spending for non-instructional spending increased by 114 percent and employee benefit expenses increased by 177 percent. Meanwhile, the Consumer Price Index only increased by 48 percent during this period, and enrollment decreased by 2 percent.

## D. Academic Performance

New York's school districts vary enormously in geographic size, demographic composition, resource levels and needs. There is a similar range across school districts in academic performance. Some New York school districts are recognized as being among the most successful in the nation, producing excellent outcomes for practically all their students. Others have poor results.

Take for example New York's ranking on high school graduation rates and 4th and 8th grade Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) exams. New York State is far from the top for many of these measures and on several, falls below other states with similar student body composition.

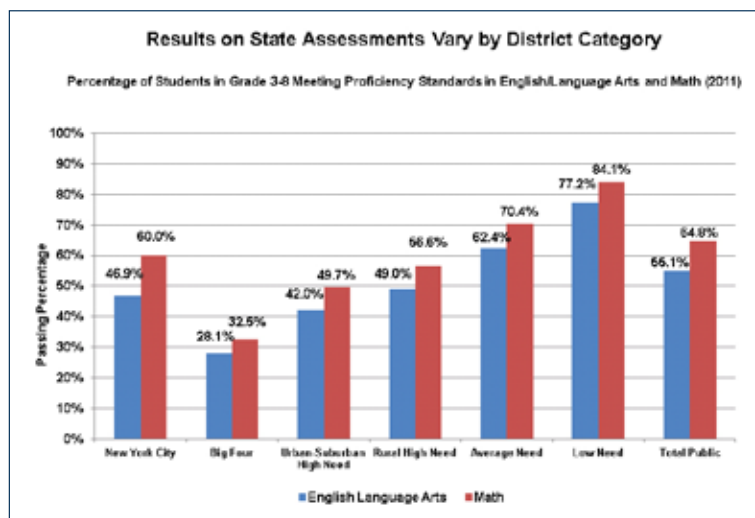
Known as the "Nation's Report Card," the National Assessment of Educational Progress is the largest nationally representative assessment and the results serve as a common metric for all states. New York State's results on the 4th and 8th grade NAEP assessments have tended to be above the national average in recent years, trending upward along with the national trends. However, New York's Mathematics results dipped slightly below the national average in 2011.



Note: NAEP scores are on a scale of 0 to 500; Red bar denotes New York State rank. Source: New York State Education Department; Information and Reporting Services.

Performance on State ELA and Mathematics assessments had been trending up until the passing scores were recalibrated in 2010 to reflect a higher standard of college readiness. At that time, passing rates on the state assessments declined considerably, while average scale scores remained about the same. There is substantial variation in the percentage of students passing the State's grade 3-8 assessments according to school district need resource category.

For both the State's schools as a whole and for all the categories of districts, trends in high school graduation rates have been positive in recent years. In particular, New York City's rapidly improving high school graduation rates, which have received national attention, have driven up the statewide average.

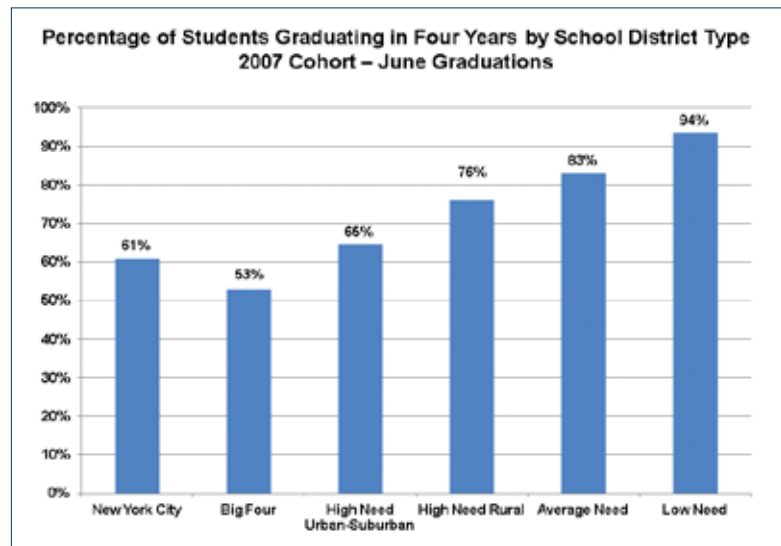


Source: New York State Education Department; Information and Reporting Services.

At the same time, although graduation rates have improved at the statewide level and overall for the Big Five districts, the overall trend masks declines in Buffalo and Syracuse, which together serve a combined 60,000 students. Second, it should be noted that while there have been improvements in statewide results for three out of five of our largest cities, significant gaps remain between groups of districts and groups of students; for

instance, between students enrolled in career and technical education programs and the general student body. Average annual dropout rates go from 0.5 percent in the low needs school districts to 5.3 percent in the Big Five Cities. Since this is an annual dropout rate, the impact of these differences on a given cohort (class of students progressing from k-12) would be substantial.

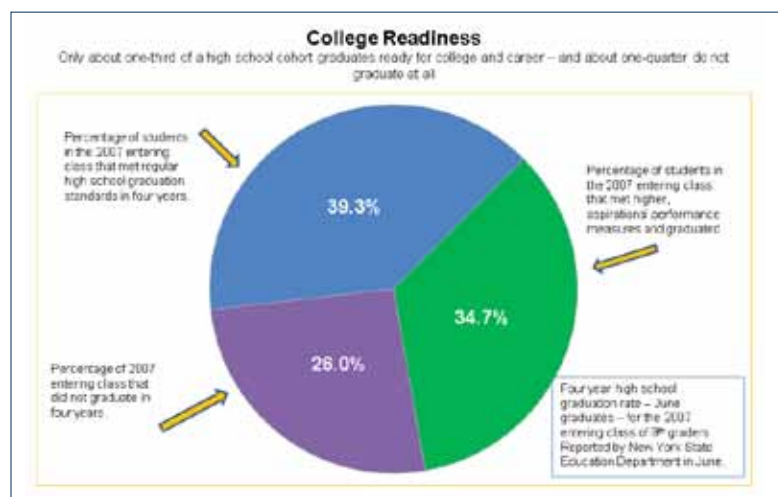
One of the more important things to know in measuring performance is the extent and regularity of student contact with their school; circumstances in the school may be challenging, but progress is more difficult if students are persistently absent. Data has been tracked and reported concerning average daily attendance rates by school district category. However, recent education research has suggested that the gaps between districts in the rates of chronic absenteeism may be a more relevant measure – and that this measure might show wider variation between school district types. That data is not currently collected by the State, but may become accessible as new student level data systems are brought on-line.



Source: New York State Education Department, Information and Reporting Services.

### E. A Clearer Focus on Quality: Common Core Standards and Readiness for College and Career

Graduation from high school is a necessary but not sufficient indicator of preparedness for college and career. A recent report from the New York State Education Department is illuminating on this point. Tracking the cohort of students entering 9th grade in 2007, State Education Report reported that 26 percent had not graduated in four years. Of those graduating, the preponderant share – 39 percent of the students entering in 2007 – met only the requirements to receive a Regents high school diploma. Only 35 percent of the students entering in 2007 earned a Regents score of 75 or greater on English or 80 or greater on Mathematics – thereby demonstrating the level of achievement deemed as “College or Career Ready” by the Department and the State Board of Regents.



ELA/Math Aspirational Performance Measures: This is the percentage of students in the cohort who graduated with a Local, Regents, or Regents with Advanced Designation diploma and earned a 75 or greater on their English Regents examination and earned a 80 or greater on a math Regents examination. This is the State's current standard for college and career readiness.

Source: New York State Education Department, Information and Reporting Services.

From research and testimony heard, *the Commission underscores the crucial importance of clarifying New York's defined standard for quality education, and for having that standard of college and career readiness serve as the linchpin for reform.*

In April 2009, New York joined 45 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia by committing to develop Common Core State Standards to ensure college success and career readiness for all in ELA and Mathematics for grades k–12. Developed through a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association, the Council of Chief State School Officers and other educational associations, the Common Core State Standards are based on national and international benchmarks that have been used to determine what students should know and be able to do in ELA and Mathematics by the time of high school graduation in order to be successful in college and career ready.

The Common Core State Standards for ELA and Mathematics will bring large changes in what is expected from a teacher's instructional approach. In ELA, these shifts will be characterized by an intense focus on complex, grade-appropriate non-fiction and fiction texts that require the application of academic vocabulary and other key college- and career-readiness skills. In Mathematics courses, the Common Core State Standards demand that teachers focus their instruction on fewer, more central standards, thereby providing room to build core understandings and linkages between mathematical concepts and skills.

The New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for ELA and Mathematics include all of the national Common Core State Standards, accompanied by New York-recommended additions approved by the Board of Regents on January 10, 2011. New York also added pre-kindergarten standards, and developments in corresponding standards for science instruction are underway.

Accordingly, beginning in the 2012-13 school year, the content of the exams in 3rd through 8th grade will be aligned to the Common Core. Similarly, some Regents Exams will be aligned to the Common Core beginning in the 2013-14 school year, and the rest will follow suit in the 2014-15 school year. New York State is a Governing State in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is scheduled to have computer-based assessments that measure the Common Core State Standards in ELA and Mathematics in grades three through eleven beginning in 2014-15.

*The Commission finds that implementing the use of Common Core Standards as the yardstick for achievement of college and career readiness is, quite literally, the fulcrum for leveraging necessary improvements in New York's education system.* It is the predicate for defining student achievement, and for measuring value added by New York's educators. The New York State Education Department reports that it has been engaging teachers, administrators, and education experts in the creation of curriculum resources, professional development materials, test specifications, and other test-related instructional materials that will help with the transition to the Common Core. It is nothing short of crucial for these efforts to succeed and to be done on or ahead of schedule.

New York State's Race to the Top initiative included an important expansion of longitudinal data systems that will provide an essential source of feedback to the school system on the readiness of graduates for the rigors of college. Beginning with the 2012-13 school year, State Education Department will begin to collect student enrollment and performance in key courses from SUNY and CUNY, including teacher preparation coursework, "gatekeeper" courses (e.g., freshman English and math), and enrollment in courses designed to support the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners. This data will allow the State Education Department to evaluate college and career ready metrics (e.g., students who graduate from high school with a 75 or greater on the English Language Arts Regents and a 80 or greater on a Math Regents) as a predictor of whether a student is required to enroll in a college remediation program across both CUNY and SUNY campuses. At the conclusion of the 2012-13 school year, State Education Department will also be able to evaluate college and career ready standards as a predictor of grades earned in key college courses (e.g., freshman English) across both CUNY and SUNY campuses.

## F. Great Teachers and Leaders



New York has embarked on a series of significant reforms in how the performance of educators is measured and reported – reforms that position the State as a national leader in improving the rigor and usefulness of assessments.

In early 2012, Governor Cuomo and the State legislature revised and strengthened New York’s teacher and principal evaluation law.<sup>20</sup> The new evaluation system provides clear standards and significant guidance to local school districts for implementation of teacher evaluations based on multiple measures of performance including student achievement and

rigorous classroom observations, with a timetable requiring plans for Annual Professional Performance Review to be approved by the State Education Department and in place by January 17, 2013.

The new evaluation system requires 60 percent of a teacher’s evaluation to be based on rigorous and nationally recognized measures of teacher performance; a majority of this coming from classroom observations by an administrator or principal, and defined standards including observations by independent trained evaluators, peer classroom observations, student and parent feedback from evaluators, and evidence of performance through student portfolios. The other 40 percent of a teacher’s evaluation must be based on student academic achievement, with 20 percent from state testing and 20 percent from a list of three testing options including state tests, state-approved third party assessments, and locally developed tests subject to State review and approval. Instead of simply rating teachers as “effective” or “ineffective,” the new system of review allows for more meaningful distinctions between Highly Effective, Effective, Developing and Ineffective; rigor is added to the process by giving authority to the Commissioner of Education to approve local evaluation plans and ensure compliance with the law.

As the Commission has heard from local educational leaders all across the State, implementation of the new process of Annual Professional Performance Review is requiring extensive changes to be made in administrative practices, data systems, training and supports; a range of activities that cannot yet be gauged in this initial period. The Commission’s report in September 2013 will provide an opportunity to review and recommend refinements based on the Commission’s analysis of the available data and the additional experience of implementation by that time.

The topic of teacher tenure has also been raised, and is frequently misunderstood. Sometimes confused as a job guarantee, teacher tenure is really a due process protection against termination of employment in cases where there are no grounds for termination or where the teacher has no fair opportunity to present a defense. To gain tenure, teachers must generally complete a specified period of probationary employment, usually three years. The tenured teacher is assured notice, a statement of causes or reasons for termination, and a hearing before the school board, arbitrator or specified person/group, decisions by which may be appealed.

In New York, tenure is governed by section 3012 of the New York Education Law and subject to rules of the Board of Regents. Generally under these provisions, teachers, certain teaching personnel, principals and supervisory personnel may be appointed by the board of education, or the trustees of common school districts, upon the recommendation of the superintendent of schools, for a probationary period of three years. At the expiration of the probationary term, the superintendent of schools shall make a written report to the board of education

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<sup>20</sup> N.Y. Educ. Law § 3012-c.





or the trustees of a common school district recommending for appointment on tenure “those persons who have been found competent, efficient and satisfactory,” consistent with any applicable rules of the Board of Regents. Tenured individuals shall “hold their respective positions during good behavior and efficient and competent service, and shall not be removed except for any of the following causes, after a hearing...: (a) insubordination, immoral character or conduct unbecoming a teacher; (b) inefficiency, incompetency, physical or mental disability, or neglect of duty; (c) failure to maintain certification as required.”

From testimony and research, the Commission is considering a growing perspective that the awarding of tenure ought to be more of a leverage point for identifying and selecting effective teachers with a focus on continuous improvement – rather than part of a process that has sometimes become too focused on bureaucratic compliance. Around the country, a growing number of school districts are creating new systems in this regard, including Baltimore, MD; Pittsburgh, PA; Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Toledo, OH; Cranston and Warwick, RI; and perhaps most well-known, New Haven, CT.

In New Haven, all 1,457 teachers, including those who are brand new and those who have years of experience, are evaluated through a jointly agreed upon process that takes into account both teacher practice and student learning. Those who are struggling must be notified by November 1 of each year, and offered assistance to improve. In the 2011-2012 school year, 58 teachers were flagged in November as low-performing. By the end of the school year, 30 had improved enough for the district to urge their continuance; 28 had not. All 28 opted to voluntarily leave service despite having the opportunity for a formal hearing, which is indicative of the inherent fairness and credibility of the process.

Following passage of legislation creating new requirements for teacher evaluation in 2010, Baltimore Public Schools began a pilot with 300 teachers in 2011-12. This year, the pilot has expanded to cover all 6,000 educators in the system. The criteria for evaluation include observation of teacher practice, assessment of performance of non-instructional responsibilities, feedback from students and evidence of student academic growth. The new evaluation system is being integrated into the compensation component of Baltimore's career ladder, which creates new pathways and rewards for teachers who demonstrate effectiveness, complete appropriate professional development or take on other roles that assist in raising student achievement.



## The New NY Education Reform Commission's Action Plan

### Part 1. Strengthen the Academic Pipeline from Pre-kindergarten through College

In testimony to the Commission as well as a review of data on the educational performance of New York's school children, it is clear that there is a significant achievement gap between rich and poor and between white students and non-white students. This gap in performance is particularly pronounced where there are concentrations of at-risk students and high rates of poverty. At the same time, New York's statewide average scores for math and reading proficiency lag those in other states:

- 36 percent of New York's 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in reading compared to 40 percent nationally; and
- 35 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 30 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in math, compared to 40 percent nationally.<sup>21</sup>



There are a number of states – particularly Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey and Connecticut – that are consistently out-performing New York across the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) metrics. These neighboring states provide evidence that there is more that we can do.

Decades of research provide evidence about those investments that have the greatest impact on increasing student achievement. The structure and funding of New York's education system should be designed around the goal that all schools and students have access to these supports. To reach

this objective, New York needs to replicate effective initiatives and direct concentrated supports to meeting the needs of at-risk students and schools with high concentrations of students in poverty.

Successful implementation of the Common Core academic standards will ensure that New York students have the knowledge and skills to compete in the global economy with students from other states and from around the world. Transition to these standards provides a rare opportunity we must not miss to re-examine our education system. These standards will reinforce the importance of achieving the greatest possible return on our public investment.

New York spends more than any other state on education, but still lags far behind in student achievement and graduation rates. From public hearings throughout the state, the Commission has heard about many successful programs that target students and provide tailored instruction in order to raise achievement.

To find best practices to address the diverse needs of New York's students, the Commission recommends the following strategic reforms that target resources to improve student achievement.

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<sup>21</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2011 (NCES 2012–458). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.



**Recommendation 1. Increase access to early educational opportunities by providing high quality full-day pre-kindergarten for students in highest needs school districts.**

More than one-quarter – some 26 percent – of New York high school students fail to graduate in four years, a share that rises to between 40 and 50 percent of students in several of the Big 5 school districts.<sup>22</sup> Even worse, nearly 75 percent of black and Latino males drop out in Buffalo, a level that is surpassed by the even worse 91 percent dropout rate for black and Latino males in Rochester, according to the recent Schott Foundation report, *The Urgency of Now: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males*.<sup>23</sup> This dropout crisis undermines New York’s economy, public safety, and sense of common purpose. Dropouts earn lower wages, pay fewer taxes and are more likely to collect welfare and turn to a life of crime. *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids* found that if New York could raise male graduation rates by 10 percent, the State would save

approximately \$913 million every year, including almost \$573 million in reduced crime costs.<sup>24</sup>

*Nearly 75 percent of black and Latino males drop out in Buffalo, a level that is surpassed by the 91 percent dropout rate in Rochester.*

Although it may, at first glance, appear counter-intuitive, research indicates that quality early learning programs are one of the surest ways to address the dropout problem. Studies show that graduates of high quality early education programs are far more likely to read at grade level and graduate from high school. Research indicates that as much as one-half the achievement gap is already established before 1st grade. An abundance of research finds that investing in high quality pre-kindergarten programs has a positive long-term impact on children’s life outcomes, helps narrow the achievement gap between poor and affluent youngsters, and provides benefits to children and the taxpaying public that outweigh its costs. Quality pre-kindergarten programs, especially those serving low-income or highest needs students, will help those students stay on track to graduate from high school and over the long-term significantly reduce costs for remedial education, social services, health, and criminal justice programs.

*“Everything we know about child development and brain science points the way. What is required is a relentless focus on the first five years of life and the strategic deployment of existing resources to nurture the intellectual, social and emotional skills of the child.” Carl Hayden, SUNY Chancellor Emeritus; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Rochester, October 22, 2012*

Law enforcement leaders in New York have been vocal advocates for strategically investing in high quality early education programs in order to reduce crime. Putnam County Sheriff Don Smith, President of the New York State Sheriff’s Association and a State leader of the law enforcement group, *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*, cited the extensive research showing that students who receive high quality pre-school do better in school and in their communities, graduate at higher rates, earn more in their jobs and, – as the sheriffs can attest from their own direct experience – commit fewer crimes.<sup>25</sup> A long-term study of Michigan’s Perry Preschool found that at-risk children who did not participate in the high quality program were five times more likely to be chronic offenders by age 27 than children who did attend.

<sup>22</sup> New York State Education Department. (2012). NYSED Graduation Rate Data - June 11, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20120611/>.

<sup>23</sup> Schott Foundation for Public Education. (2012). *The Urgency of Now: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males 2012*. Cambridge, MA: Author. Retrieved from <http://blackboysreport.org/urgency-of-now.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education. (2006). *Saving futures, saving dollars: The impact of education on crime reduction and earnings*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

<sup>25</sup> Testimony by Putnam County Sheriff Don Smith, President of the New York State Sheriff’s Association and on behalf of *Fight Crime: Invest in Kids*. Education Reform Commission hearing October 16, 2012, Bank Street College, New York City.

From parents and advocates to Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, there is broad consensus that strategic investments in high quality early education will significantly improve student achievement. At regional public hearings across the State, stakeholders testified about the importance of creating high quality pre-kindergarten programs for low-income children.

*"We know from the mounting scientific evidence that the early years in a child's life lay the foundation for all that follows. High quality early learning programs help kids succeed in school and become productive, law-abiding adults. Kids learn better at home and in school; get along better with other kids; graduate and earn more in jobs; and for those of us in law enforcement there is a fourth outcome—kids commit fewer crimes." Don Smith, Putnam County Sheriff and President New York State Sheriff's Association; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, October 16, 2012*

The Commission recommends that, for the first time, New York provide **high quality full-day pre-kindergarten for highest needs students** in order to close the achievement gap and ensure that New York's children are ready for college and careers. Early literacy should be a particular focus in such programs and the State should ensure that children at-risk have access to diagnosis, supports and all the components of proper early reading instruction so that the groundwork is established for reading on-grade.<sup>26</sup>

*"Reading by third grade is a predictor of future academic success. Students who attend pre-k are more likely to have better reading skills by third grade. And, the positive impact of pre-k is greatest for Hispanic Children, black children, English language learners and children from low-income families. An investment in high quality early learning will prepare our children for kindergarten and that will substantially increase their chances of graduating from high school and going on to college and successful careers." Kate Breslin, President/CEO Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy and Karen Scharff, Executive Director Citizen Action of New York; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Albany, July 10, 2012*

Further, the Commission recommends full-day pre-kindergarten programs encourage meaningful parent engagement, both during and beyond the school day. Parent engagement makes a difference.

The National Institute for Early Education Research found that New York could expect many short and long term benefits from offering quality full-day pre-kindergarten programs to our highest needs students,<sup>27</sup> including:

- Higher level of academic achievement including college and career ready track;
- Decrease in special education identification and grade repetition;
- Decrease in behavioral problems, delinquency, and crime;
- Decrease in social services and health care costs, including a decrease in teen pregnancy and smoking rates; and
- Long-term economic and short-term educational savings.

*"Full-day pre-kindergarten is a vital component to raising academic standards and narrowing the achievement gap. It levels the playing field for our urban students by proactively engaging them in linguistic and social development that will, over the long-term, minimize the need for remediation and optimize their potential for high school graduation and college success." Bernard Pierorazio, Superintendent, Yonkers Public Schools; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Orange County, September 10, 2012*

<sup>26</sup> Some members of the Commission recommend that high quality pre-kindergarten be made more available by allowing high quality charter schools to offer pre-kindergarten in highest needs districts.

<sup>27</sup> Barnett, S. (2012). Investing in Effective Early Education: Getting NY Back on a Path to Success. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from [www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/images/stories/NY\\_CED\\_Barnett\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.centerforchildrensinitiatives.org/images/stories/NY_CED_Barnett_Presentation.pdf).

## Ensuring Quality in Pre-kindergarten Programs

In expanding access to pre-kindergarten, New York should replicate successful models that have focused on quality, such as the Abbott program in New Jersey. New Jersey established pre-kindergarten guidelines defining quality standards in Abbott pre-kindergarten programs, provided training and professional development opportunities to build the skills and credentials of early childhood educators, and collected and used appropriate data at all levels of program provision (child, classroom, provider, district, and statewide) to drive continuous quality improvement in pre-kindergarten.

These strategies resulted in significant quality improvements. Research shows that children who participated in Abbott pre-kindergarten programs made significant learning gains while in the programs and sustained these benefits through second grade. The findings demonstrate that children who attend a preschool program, whether in public schools, private settings or Head Start, improve in language, literacy, and math at least through the end of their kindergarten year.<sup>28</sup>

*“One of the critical components of closing student achievement gaps is improved access to affordable high quality early childhood education.” Ernest Logan, Council of School Administrators; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Orange County, September 10, 2012*

In addition, the Commission believes there should be additional analysis done to explore expanding potential high quality providers to offer pre-kindergarten.<sup>29</sup>

More broadly, New York should ensure quality by carefully monitoring data to maximize the return on its investment. The purpose of age-appropriate assessment in early childhood is not to “test,” penalize, or label children or providers, but rather to help providers and parents focus on areas that are most critical for school readiness, help providers use data to inform and improve instruction, and help policymakers to identify gaps and target resources effectively to improve early childhood outcomes.<sup>30</sup>

### **Recommendation 2. Restructure schools by integrating social, health, and other services through community schools to improve student performance.**

One of New York’s major priorities is school readiness and achievement, which the State supports through a range of health and social service programs offered and supported by State funding. However, too many State programs are insufficiently coordinated and disconnected from schools, which can serve as effective and efficient hubs to reach the school-aged population.

New York has the opportunity to become a national leader in providing targeted, integrated services that address children’s academic, social, health, nutrition, security, and family needs as part of a comprehensive strategy that leverages collective impact to increase achievement and provide New Yorkers with the tools for lifelong success.

<sup>28</sup> Frede, E., Jung, K., Barnett, S., & Figueras, A. (2009, June). The APPLES blossom: Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES), Preliminary results through 2nd grade: Interim report. Retrieved from [http://nieer.org/pdf/apples\\_second\\_grade\\_results.pdf](http://nieer.org/pdf/apples_second_grade_results.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> In particular, some Commission members believe the state should examine changing current policies that prevent charter schools from operating pre-kindergarten programs, and should explicitly allow charter schools to receive state pre-kindergarten funds as part of the pre-kindergarten funding that districts must distribute to community-based providers by law. States such as California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, Georgia, and Washington, D.C. allow quality charter schools to operate pre-kindergarten programs. However, New York state policies prevent charter school providers from operating quality pre-kindergarten or receiving state funds to do so. As a result, high quality New York charter schools must wait until kindergarten to serve children – even as poor-quality providers are allowed to offer pre-kindergarten. New York could seize the opportunity of allowing high quality charter schools to offer pre-kindergarten in high needs districts and expand the available slots of high quality programs.

<sup>30</sup> Potential strategies to address this include: replicating New Jersey’s strategy of requiring providers and districts to collect and use appropriate data at all levels to drive ongoing quality improvement; replicating and scaling-up New York City’s Early Learn model to help state-funded pre-kindergarten programs focus their activities on improving children’s school readiness; and adopting Maryland’s statewide kindergarten-readiness assessment implemented in 1998 to help policymakers evaluate how effectively the state was preparing young children for school.

Building on homegrown success stories like Children’s Aid Society Community Schools, the Harlem Children’s Zone, Say Yes to Education, and Strive , the Commission recommends New York launch a competitive grant program that would encourage highest needs communities and school districts to re-configure or integrate existing programs and funding streams to reach and support every student in the community. Building off the best practices of these successful programs, New York should ensure quality by embedding a performance-based process that is designed to monitor and improve implementation of the community’s proposed program within the grant program.<sup>31</sup>

The net effect of providing wrap-around and integrated services to New York’s students in the highest-need districts – paired with education reform – will be improved student achievement; health and wellness for students and families; and improved economic development outcomes at the community and state levels. Through increased coordination, the State expects to maximize investments at all levels of government and provide more efficient delivery of services, thereby saving money while increasing effectiveness.

*We are bringing CEOs and heads of community organizations, educators and union leaders, and government officials together to reallocate resources and strengthen our education system. And the results we have seen from committing to working together on behalf of our young people are transforming this community. ...Because we are focused on helping students who encounter some of life’s harshest challenges, we are seeing fewer young people fall into a life of crime and instead pursue a higher level of learning. Graduation rates are going up, property values are increasing and for the first time in generations, every sector of our community—from government, to the school district, to community providers—is focused on improving the educational trajectory of our young people.” Joanne M. Mahoney, Onondaga County Executive; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Syracuse, August 14, 2012*

Through testimony presented at various public hearings, the Commission finds that there is a lack of collaboration and communication between local and State agencies to share services and integrate funding to better serve students in low-income communities. The State can play a major role through realigning existing funding streams to allow for increased collaboration at the school level in places where community schools are being established. In this case, communication between the State and community schools needs to be informative and feedback-oriented in order to increase efficiencies and coordination.

*Cincinnati’s Community Learning Centers started in 2001 when the Board of Education adopted a vision for a district-wide redevelopment of all schools as centers of their community. CLCs act as hubs for community services, providing access for students, families and community to health, safety and social services, as well as recreational, educational and cultural opportunities. Key principles center on the engagement of each school and its surrounding neighborhood in planning, implementation and ongoing governance, and an insistence that all partnerships must be financially self-sustaining without dependence upon the school budget. The goals of the CLC are to support student achievement, revitalize neighborhoods and maximize the community’s return on their financial investments.*

To address this challenge, New York should facilitate, through targeted incentives, a community level, collaborative approach to planning and action across government silos, resulting in an integrated, effective, and sustainable service delivery model. This will in turn reduce long-term costs to the taxpayer around remedial programs in education, criminal justice, and health.

The initiative should select a diverse set of targeted communities with demonstrable need, including densely populated urban and rural areas, as well as smaller cities.

<sup>31</sup> Successful models have used the following core principles: 1) Place-based focus on an entire community of children and families; 2) A pipeline of coordinated, integrated programs, services and strategies; 3) A common set of metrics based on evidence of what works; 4) Access to and application of data; 5) Leadership and accountability; and 6) Community engagement.

## Models of Education-Centered Comprehensive Programs in NY

### *Children's Aid Society Community Schools*

A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources, where an integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. The Children's Aid Society partners with the New York City Department of Education in more than 20 community schools, located in Washington Heights, Harlem, the South Bronx and Staten Island. These Community Schools are based on a "developmental triangle," which calls for a strong instructional program, expanded learning opportunities through enrichment and services designed to remove barriers to students' learning and healthy development, so that they can thrive academically and socially. They offer an integrated approach to education that extends the hours and services of traditional public schools, with facilities typically open all day and well into the evening, six days per week, year-round. Because students receive high quality services inside the community schools, they arrive to classes ready to learn, and teachers are able to focus on instruction. Children's Aid community schools produce better student and teacher attendance, increased grade retention, more appropriate referrals to special education services, improved test scores and higher parent involvement than similar schools

### *Harlem Children's Zone*

The HCZ designs, funds, and operates a holistic system of education, social-services and community-building programs within Harlem to counter the negative influences of crime, drugs and poverty and help children complete college and transition to the job market. The HCZ seeks to help kids in a sustained way, starting as early in their lives as possible, and to create a critical mass of adults around them who understand what it takes to help children succeed. The network includes in-school, after-school, social-service, health and community-building programs. The program has dual pathways for children with the same ultimate goal: college completion. On one track, the children go through Promise Academy charter schools; while on the other track, HCZ works to support the traditional public schools in the Zone, both during the school day with in-class assistants and with afterschool and summer programs as well as with health and social work support. Components of the HCZ programs include: The Baby College®, a series of workshops for parents of children ages 0–3; All-day pre-kindergarten; Extended-day and extended-year charter schools; Health clinics and community centers for children and adults during after-school, weekend and summer hours; Youth violence prevention efforts; Social services such as a foster-care prevention service; and college admissions and retention support.

### *Say Yes to Education*

The focal point for Say Yes is positioning and supporting students to realize college and career success, to be achieved by organizing the entire community to work together towards a postsecondary completion goal. Say Yes initiates public-private partnerships to deliver resources to children in four core areas – academic readiness, social and emotional readiness, health and well-being, and financial aid – all of which are meant to contribute to a young person's completion of high school and postsecondary education. There are five critical components: (1) institutionalization of a new governance structure that results in high levels of transparency and broad-based community and political commitment to sustain a universal college and career access agenda; (2) availability of student-centered scholarship incentives and supports; (3) collection and use of objective data for continuous quality improvement at the student, school, district, agency, city, and county levels; (4) implementation of research-based whole school reform programs that result in the delivery of rigorous and engaging college-preparatory programming for all students; and (5) effective and efficient delivery of comprehensive community services proven to address barriers to post-secondary access (e.g., extended day/year programs, physical/mental healthcare, legal, family counseling, & social services).

### *Strive*

Strive works with community leaders representing the education, business, faith, not-for profit, philanthropic and civic sectors to develop a partnership to identify and support specific strategies that research and experience show are integral for student success. The core attributes of a Strive Partnership are: (1) shared community vision; (2) evidence based-decision making; (3) collaborative action; and (4) investment and sustainability. While Strive has a centralized infrastructure, it is organic and allows each community to set its own goals and priorities, and develop its own strategies to address them. Local Strive staff coordinate, monitor progress, collect, analyze and report data, and facilitate a quality improvement process but – believing that this promotes ownership of the approach by community organizations – they do not develop or help to implement the strategies identified by Strive Partnership members.



Partnerships for integrated services also provide a significant opportunity to improve student achievement through early literacy. Across New York, only 55 percent of middle school students read at grade level, a proportion that drops to 38 percent of minority middle school students, and to only about 25 percent of 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse.

*“Research shows that children are more likely to succeed when parents and families are engaged in their child’s early learning opportunities. Initiatives such as wraparound services, community schools, and parent led activities increases parents’ confidence in their role as their child’s first teacher, gives them ownership in their child’s education, and creates a sense of belonging to community.” Alan Hertel, Executive Director, United Way of Broome County; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Binghamton, August 8, 2012*

The grant design should include performance metrics, including, but not limited to the use of research-based curriculum and material that address the components of effective reading instruction, assessments and screening tools to monitor children’s progress in acquiring key literacy skills, and providing additional support to ensure children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

It is vital to remember the role of parents and communities in these efforts. An extensive body of literature demonstrates the impact of family and community engagement on student performance. Many researchers have found that parental involvement in a child’s education is positively associated with increases in student academic achievement.<sup>32</sup> School-sponsored parental involvement programs may improve student achievement by increasing parents’ expectations or improving parenting skills related to education.<sup>33</sup> There may be no ingredient more vital to student achievement than a family with high expectations for academic success and active involvement in supporting excellence. The Commission will endeavor to discover the best means to encourage continued parent involvement in their children’s education.

*“There is a community schools pilot that the UFT is co-sponsoring with the New York City Council and The Partnership for New York City...based on the Cincinnati Community Learning Center model. [There] it was about uncovering any impediment to learning and addressing it right in the school. Children need to be ready to learn. Cincinnati got it. They knew that the resources were available; they just weren’t necessarily accessible or aligned to the needs at individual schools... We have the opportunity in New York to create a unique model where the state government leads—from the governor to the education commissioner and beyond. The State could facilitate the public-private partnerships and incentivize the local schools to do the necessary work to accomplish what we know is best for children.” Michael Mulgrew, President, United Federation of Teachers; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, October 16, 2012*

Pursuing new and more vigorous ways of engaging parents, families and communities in New York’s schools must – in the Commission’s view – be a thread that weaves throughout the proposed strategy to better-integrate services that relate to the environment for learning among New York school children. Families and communities are both key beneficiaries and co-producers of successful changes to come from the State’s efforts to strengthen these braided, wrap-around services in school settings.

<sup>32</sup> Jeynes, W. (2005). A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban Education*, 42(1):82-110. Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students’ academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13(1):1–22. Henderson, A., & Berla, N. (Eds.). (1994). *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Education.

<sup>33</sup> D’Agostino, J., Hedges, L., Wong, K., & Borman, G. (2001). Title I parent involvement programs: Effects on parenting practices and student achievement. In Borman, G., Stringfield, S., & Slavin, R. (Eds.), *Title I: Compensatory Education at the Crossroads*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

### **Recommendation 3. Begin to restructure the school day and year by extending student learning time with academically enriched programming.**

New York, like many states, continues to operate its schools in the same manner and with the same calendar that we inherited from prior generations. Our educational structure is in many ways built upon agrarian and factory traditions. We must fundamentally rethink whether students need six months off from school every year. In New York, the minimum length of the school year is 180 days of instruction. Minimum school day instruction is defined as 5 hours for kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade and 5.5 hours for 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.<sup>34</sup>

*"There is a growing consensus that our education system needs to increase the time students spend in school or at school-sponsored learning activities. This is especially important in low-income communities, where students may not have access to enrichment activities or academic supports outside of school." Rosemary Rivera, Organizing Director, Citizen Action of New York; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Rochester, October 22, 2012*

New York can, and must, do better to ensure that we are supporting students by providing quality, extended learning time in order to improve student achievement and close the learning gap between our most disadvantaged students and their better off peers.

In academically successful countries, expanded learning time is often a key ingredient to student achievement. Students have more time on task, as well as a longer calendar year to stay engaged in an academically rigorous environment. There is also some evidence that extending the school day and year has the most positive impact for students who may be at-risk for school failure, since it provides the opportunity for additional growth and support these students may need.

Closer to home, the Center for American Progress and Mass2020 found that expanding learning time to low-income students in Massachusetts public schools increased student proficiency on state assessments an average of 20 points.<sup>35</sup>

In its report, *Choosing More Time for Students: The What, Why and How of Expanded Learning*, the Center for American Progress found that "expanded learning time is a school-wide improvement strategy to boost student academic performance, close achievement gaps, and expand enrichment opportunities. The policy definition we prefer is the lengthening of the school day, school week, or school year for all students in a given school. The purpose: to focus on core academics and enrichment activities to enhance student success. Such an increase in academic learning time requires an engaging rigorous curricula as well as activities that expand the opportunities typically available to students. Because expanded learning time initiatives have the potential to result in substantial student achievement gains and other positive outcomes, it is widely considered an important strategy for low-performing, high poverty schools."<sup>36</sup>

*"ExpandED Schools [is an] expanded learning initiative that gives students approximately 35 percent more learning time at 10 percent additional cost to the school day, making better use of existing public funds and attracting private investment. External evaluation of the three-year pilot [in 10 New York City public elementary and middle-schools] found a positive and statistically significant effect on academic achievement and attendance." Lucy N. Friedman, President TASC [The AfterSchool Corporation]; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, October 16, 2012*

<sup>34</sup> The minimum length of the school day is defined in State Education Department regulations (8 N.Y.C.R.R. § 175.5) and the minimum length of the school year in order to receive State funding is defined in State law (N.Y. Educ. Law § 3604).

<sup>35</sup> Research information about the results and impacts of extended learning initiatives is available at <http://www.mass2020.org/node/72>.

<sup>36</sup> Rocha, E. (2007). *Choosing More Time for Students: The What, Why, and How of Expanded Learning*. Washington, D. C.: Center for American Progress. Retrieved from [http://www.americanprogress.org/wpcontent/uploads/issues/2007/08/pdf/expanded\\_learning.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/wpcontent/uploads/issues/2007/08/pdf/expanded_learning.pdf).

Expanding on Massachusetts' success, New York should explore replicating a similar model for school districts that develop plans to improve student achievement by expanded learning time initiatives that add at least 25 percent more time of quality programming to their school calendar.

Commission Member Karen Hawley Miles noted in her co-authored report for the Center for American Progress, *Taking Stock of the Fiscal Costs of Expanded Learning Time*, "As with simply adding more dollars to schools, adding time makes little sense unless it is part of an overall strategy for improving student performance." In a comprehensive study done by the Center for American Progress of cities that lengthened the school day or year, the cost to implement expanded learning time varied significantly between districts because some districts established side contracts to shift teacher's schedules, and some districts paid teachers more to teach longer.

The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) has two charter schools that operate with an extended day and extended year (September through the first week in August), as well as providing after school programming. According to economist Roland Fryer, these charter schools closed the achievement gap in Mathematics for elementary and middle school students and closed the gap in English for the elementary school students.<sup>37</sup> In more recent, unpublished results, Fryer has found that students who were juniors and seniors in the HCZ high school had higher scores on Regents exams, dramatically reduced pregnancy rates, and higher rates of college acceptance than a comparison group who did not win the lottery to enter the charter school.

In Massachusetts, the state provides \$1,300 per student to participating schools that submit a higher quality plan to expand learning time and enrichment programs. Beginning in 2006, Massachusetts funded the Expanded Learning Time Initiative and has spent about \$50 million to date in state support for 19 public schools, serving a total of 10,500 students in 9 districts.<sup>38</sup>

By extending learning time and closing the achievement gap, we can ensure that our students are on track to be college and career ready.

#### **Recommendation 4. Improve the education pipeline through the smart and innovative use of technology.**

Technology has transformed virtually every aspect of America's economy and society. In our education system, technology holds the potential to improve student learning by providing teachers with the tools to personalize instruction, engage students, and create access to learning opportunities that would otherwise be impossible. Technology breaks down school walls to make learning accessible in different ways, even beyond the typical school day. Technology is transforming the way our students are learning both inside and outside of school.

Through testimony, district leaders offered solutions to these complex problems through innovative uses of technology, including the cost effective use of digital textbooks, utilization of distance learning, and through emerging technologically advanced educational models. These solutions carry even greater urgency as schools work to implement the new Common Core academic standards, which raise the bar for students and educators.

The Commission recommends that the State create Innovation Zones. This offers the chance for schools to invest in transformative technology and increase student achievement. The State could do this through several ways, including through a competitive grant that rewards school districts that propose innovative ways to use technology to support teachers and students.

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<sup>37</sup> Dobbie, W., & Fryer, R. (2011). Are High Quality Schools Enough to Increase Achievement Among the Poor? Evidence from the Harlem Children's Zone. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 3(3), 158-187.

<sup>38</sup> O'Reilly, F., & Kolbe, T. (2011). Where Does the Money Go? Expenditures for the Massachusetts Expanded Learning Time (MA ELT) Initiative. Prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Retrieved from <http://www.doemass.org/research/reports/1211maelt.pdf>.

*"It is not about technology in isolation – it is how we use the tools that will make the real difference in student understanding in science, technology, engineering and math in critical fields for jobs in a global economy." Donna DeSiato, Superintendent, East Syracuse Minoa Central School District; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Syracuse, August 14, 2012*

New York's public education system should lead the nation by finding the best ways to take advantage of technology to increase student achievement.

Innovation Zones grants should reward school districts that propose innovative ways to use technology to support teachers and students, including:

- Providing access to instructional resources like digital curricula and e-textbooks, videos and other learning materials aligned with the Common Core State Standards;
- Personalizing learning to reach both the students who are struggling and those who have already mastered the lesson – all at the same time;
- Ensuring that students can access the latest hardware and software – from iPads to smart boards to educational apps – that make it possible to reach students using the technology that they consider second-nature; and
- Providing on-line or blended learning courses in rural and other under-served communities so that all students have access to advanced courses, foreign languages, dual enrollment, etc.

*"Digital learning and technology interface with all aspects of our students' lives. They empower users, encourage collaborations, and prepare tomorrow's workforce for communicating in a **'connected world.'** Teachers and administrators must embrace new technologies, such as cloud computing and mobile devices, as legitimate **'tools of the trade.'** Doing so will require a transformation in pedagogy.....Technologies need to be embedded in the instructional activities at all levels in all content areas." Anthony Collins, President, Clarkson University; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Lake Placid, August 28, 2012*

Importantly, New York should create a process to evaluate the effectiveness of grant-funded programs and services on each of these criteria in order to make recommendations about best practices to school districts. Proposals should also outline safeguards for ensuring data privacy for children and a plan for professional development of teachers and other staff in the integration of technology.

Pilot programs provided through school districts, BOCES, or SUNY, and approved by the State Education Department, should be awarded with the intention of scalability and replicability in the future. Programs that demonstrate good returns on investment and which appear scalable would be considered for implementation throughout New York.

The application of learning technologies has important potential benefits for enhancing family and community engagement in education. Blended course offerings including instruction on-line will provide new opportunities for family members to work directly with students receiving this instruction, and to build their own abilities as well. There are also existing opportunities to advance on-line learning in New York that school districts should take advantage of, including expanding course offerings through BOCES.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> In June 2011, the Regents approved regulatory changes that prescribed requirements for earning credit toward a Regents diploma via on-line or "blended" (on-line and classroom-based) courses. The regulations ensure that such coursework is aligned with New York State learning standards; provides for documentation of student learning outcomes; is taught by or completed under the direction of a certified teacher; includes regular and substantive interaction between the student and teacher; and meets a standard "unit of study," meaning the equivalent of at least 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year. The Regents have recently issued an RFP for the development of virtual (on-line) Advanced Placement courses in school districts serving concentrations of high needs students. In addition, the State provides aid to BOCES member districts participating in BOCES-operated virtual learning programs.

Of course, in order to effectively integrate technology into the classroom, there needs to be sufficient access to the Internet in both schools and communities. In August 2012, Governor Cuomo committed \$25 million to expand broadband Internet access to rural upstate and underserved urban areas of New York. The program, along with the more than \$2 million awarded through the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) initiative, represents the single largest direct investment of State funding into expanding broadband access in the United States. Grants are made available through the REDC and Empire State Development and will help expand high speed Internet access in underserved, rural and urban areas of New York. The Commission recommends that each REDC partner with school districts to make integrating technology in their schools a priority, and ensure that their community is wired.<sup>40</sup>

### **New York should model performance-based funding for on-line programs.**

In order to ensure quality of on-line programming, and to drive delivery of education focused on student performance and outcomes, on-line providers should be paid based on the performance of the student, with full payment delivered when a student is proficient in the material or passes the final, statewide assessment to measure mastery.

For example, Utah only pays an on-line provider 50 percent of the funds at the start of the course and the remainder when a student successfully completes a course. Given New York's rich history with the Regents exams, a portion of the payment for on-line providers should be tied to the successful passage of an end-of-course assessment, provided that the assessment was on-line and could be taken virtually on-demand whenever a student finished a course. In New Hampshire, the Virtual Learning Academy Charter School only receives funds for the competencies a student successfully masters.

Every student needs to be successful at every phase of their education. Engaging students and providing increased access to evidence-based programs is an important step to ensuring that key transition areas are reached and students move successfully on to the next phase of their education. New York has an opportunity to create a college and career going culture by breaking down the walls between the high school system, the university system, and the expectations for career-readiness.

### **Recommendation 5. Build better bridges from high school to college and careers.**

The effects of strategic academic interventions will dissipate if we do not sustain supports at every step in the education pipeline. Too many of our students, especially those in the lowest performing schools, are slipping through the cracks and are not on track to graduate high school or are ill-prepared for college. Similarly, business leaders report that our graduating college students don't have the critical skills needed to be successful in the working world. The system is leaking a significant amount of early investment not only through a massive attrition of students but in students that are not adequately prepared. These problems disproportionately affect children on the basis of race and poverty.



<sup>40</sup> The Broadband Access update to the Board of Regents on February 23, 2010 found that a bandwidth of 100 megabits per second (100 mbps) is a recognized minimum standard by the Regional Information Centers (RICs) and the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA). Approximately 86 percent of school buildings meet this minimum standard. The remaining schools do not have this capacity primarily due to geographic location (e.g., mountainous or rural areas) and the expense of a large initial capital investment to build broadband infrastructure to the surrounding community. The costs to fully connect a school building at 100 mbps can range from as little as a few hundred dollars to almost \$5,000 per month, depending in part on location and current infrastructure. Further data from the RICs will be presented in a future Regents item.

Our public education system – including primary education, secondary education, and post-secondary education – should be a coordinated continuum stewarding students from birth through college and then career. Currently, these systems act in isolation, creating poor transitions that may lead some students to leave the system too early. We can create a more seamless transition, connecting parts of the educational pipeline, by expanding programs, such as Early College High School and Career and Technical Education programs, which create a culture of preparation for students who participate in those programs.

Too many students enter higher education unprepared for college work. This leads to extensive remediation and college dropout, at high costs to the student, the institution of higher education, and society. As postsecondary education struggles with remediation, proven models should be expanded to create a seamless transition from high school to college and through career.

- **The Commission recommends that New York State build upon the success of existing Early College High School programs, by leveraging private sector funding to expand Early College High School programs.**

High-risk students traditionally have low rates of high school graduation and college attendance, but across the country and here in New York, Early College High School (ECHS) programs have had dramatic success in bridging the gap between high school and college, helping students earn college credit at no cost to their families while preparing them for continued success. ECHS programs create a college-going culture for students who might otherwise not attend college. It connects high school and college, and it also makes college more affordable by providing an opportunity for students to earn college credit in high school.

*“ECHS has helped our Hispanic/Latino and economically disadvantaged students to become college and career ready and to change their educational trajectory. It is changing the community’s goals and expectations for these students and is in fact changing our high school. For many students, this program is providing their families with their first exposure to the college culture, thereby changing their families’ expectations and aspirations.” Susan Stoya, Director of Secondary Instruction, Amsterdam School District; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Albany, July 10, 2012*

ECHS programs prepare students for college by making it possible for them to earn college credit while completing traditional high school coursework. ECHS programs target students who traditionally do not go on to college, and expanding these programs will raise the State’s high school graduation and college readiness rate, change the culture of underperforming schools, streamline the transition from high school to college, and close the achievement gap.

At every regional public hearing, the Commission heard from successful ECHS programs that significantly improved college preparation for high-risk students.

New York State should provide permanent performance-based funding to continue the success of existing ECHS programs. With permanent State funding in place, private sector funding can be attracted and leveraged to establish new programs in the lowest performing school districts in the State.

There are 28 states that operate ECHS programs, and New York is a leader alongside North Carolina, Texas, and California, with 23 ECHS programs across New York State educating over 5,600 students. ECHS programs in New York have an 84 percent success rate in passing students in college level coursework. The NYC-based ECHS programs have been in existence for ten years, and serve a student body that is 90 percent minority, have an average graduation rate of 85 percent, and graduate students with an average of 10 college credits.

ECHS programs bridge the distance between high school and college to encourage collaboration that truly prepares high school students for the demands of college. By improving student achievement and college readiness of high risk students, the cost of remediation will drop significantly. Currently, CUNY spends over \$33 million in remediation costs at its community colleges and SUNY estimates close to \$100 million for this purpose

system wide. By expanding ECHS enrollment and adding programs in struggling school districts, New York can change the high school culture to one that emphasizes college preparation and matriculation, as well as decrease the need and cost for remediation.

**New York should establish performance-based funding for successful early college high schools.**

To sustain ECHS programs, as well as hold them accountable, New York should provide performance-based funding designed to encourage the participation of low-income students, as well as those youth who are not on track to graduate from high school. Performance-based funding will ensure that programs maintain quality, and also primarily educate those students who are most at-risk of not going to college.

Private funding will continue to play a role in expanding and supplementing existing ECHS programs, alongside the new promise of stable State funding. With funding tied to successful program outcomes, the State can expand programs by partnering with the private sector.<sup>41</sup>

ECHS programs that are successful in preparing underprivileged students will have funding with which to expand and grow while the investment in unsuccessful schools will be limited.

- **New York should leverage existing resources and public-private support to establish high tech Career and Technical Education programs in every region with a focus on 21st Century programs in advanced manufacturing, science and technology.**

The Commission heard many business owners report on the large gap in workforce preparation and on their own readiness to collaborate with the public school system to better prepare students for the workplace and future careers. Expanded, high quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs will improve graduation rates, better prepare students for successful careers, and help strengthen the economy by supplying businesses with the highly-skilled workers they need for current and future job openings.

*“Career and Technical Education has the potential to maximize educational performance and create solid economic value. CTE programs must emphasize public-private partnerships between educators and employers connected to real jobs, and ensure that school curricula are academically rigorous and economically relevant. Working together, educators and employers can structure course content and classroom experiences to create a seamless link between education and careers.” Stanley Litow, IBM Vice President for Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs and President IBM International Foundation; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, October 18, 2012*

Testimony presented at various public hearings focused on the problem that New York’s students are not being adequately prepared for college and careers. Specifically, the Commission heard from many business owners that there is a large gap in workforce readiness, and that New York’s businesses are ready and willing to collaborate with the public school system to better prepare students. The Commission heard from students, teachers and principals representing 21st Century CTE programs that had impressive results, especially when paired with a local business, such as Tech Valley High School in New York’s Capital District.

The recent Harvard Graduate School of Education report, *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenge of Preparing Young Americans for the 21st Century*, warned that our nation’s education system is failing to prepare students for economic success, because, in part “we have focused too exclusively on a few narrow pathways to success.”

<sup>41</sup> Currently, New York State partners with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to fund up to \$500,000 per program over a multi-year period for 27 Smart Scholars/Early College High Schools across New York State serving over 4,000 students. The Gates Foundation provided a \$6 million matching grant to the State’s \$6 million commitment to fund this program, and it should be expanded.

## Career Academies

Established more than 30 years ago, Career Academies have become a widely used high school reform initiative that aims to keep students engaged in school and prepare them for successful transitions to postsecondary education and employment. Typically serving between 150 and 200 students from grades 9 or 10 through grade 12, Career Academies are organized as small learning communities, combine academic and technical curricula around a career theme, and establish partnerships with local employers to provide work-based learning opportunities. There are estimated to be more than 2,500 Career Academies operating around the country.

A rigorous evaluation found Career Academies produced sustained gains that averaged 11 percent per year, and particularly strong annual gains (17 percent) among African American males. More than 90 percent of participants received a high school diploma or GED, and half completed a postsecondary credential.

New York's Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) is a best-practice model that combines ECHS and CTE. In partnership and collaboration with the NYCDOE, CUNY and IBM, P-TECH is a 9<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup> grade school that confers both a high school diploma and an associate degree in technology and ensures that graduates are first in line for jobs. Now entering its second year, P-TECH is achieving exciting results that are replicable in any similar school, and scalable nationwide, as the school spends the same amount per pupil that traditional schools spend. At P-TECH students begin taking college courses in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Attendance at P-TECH averages over 95 percent; two-thirds of the students started at P-TECH reading two years below grade level and are now reading at their appropriate grade level. Importantly, every P-TECH student gets an IBM mentor; the curriculum was mapped to entry level skill requirements at IBM and the company has been closely involved in school designed operations, from training teachers to assisting the principal. Last September, five schools with this model opened in Chicago.<sup>42</sup>

The National Academy Foundation (NAF) also has an effective model that works. NAF's Academies are helping students gain the skills and confidence to pursue careers in growing fields. NAF's current themes are: engineering (where today less than 3 percent come from a minority background and less than 10 percent are women), information technology, health sciences, finance, and hospitality and tourism. In its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, NAF has 500 career academies in 39 states and 162 school districts across the country. In addition:

- There are 61 Academies in New York State that can easily be scaled-up quickly, at a cost of less than \$500 per student;
- 97 percent of NAF seniors graduated in 2011;
- 80 percent plan to pursue college;
- 85 percent of 5- and 10-year alumni currently work in a professional field;
- Career academy graduates, including NAF students, out-earned their non-academy counterparts by 11 percent according to a longitudinal study of career academies;
- Employees of more than 2,500 companies volunteer in classrooms, act as mentors, engage NAF students in paid internships and serve on local Advisory Boards;
- 60,000 students enrolled, 76 percent of whom are from underrepresented populations; and
- 70 percent of NAF students are low-income.

<sup>42</sup> Testimony of Stanley Litow, Vice President, Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs & President, IBM International Foundation. Heard before the New NY Education Reform Commission on October 16, 2012 at Bank Street College of Education, NYC.



*"The evidence in support of high school dual enrollment as a practice that not only promotes high school graduation but also college readiness, enrollment and persistence is overwhelming. When one couples the improved student outcomes in high school graduation, college and career readiness, and college persistence with the well-documented gap in the middle-skills workforce pipeline, the solution found within Career and Technical Education Pathways -- where students attain college credits within a specific career path-- seems like the proverbial "no-brainer." Anne Kress, President, Monroe Community College; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Rochester, October 22, 2012*

The Board of Regents has commissioned a report from Cornell and Harvard to identify CTE credentials that are as rigorous and reflective of college and career readiness as Regents exams. The Regents are expected to consider in February/March a specific proposal on Multiple Pathways to graduation that include Career and Technical Education, including programs focused on STEM. The State Education Department should create an RFP process to establish public-private partnerships with local businesses and a regional educational entity, such as a BOCES, to establish high tech, industry-aligned CTE programs with a focus on 21st Century programs in advanced manufacturing, science, and technology. This program will not come at a cost to the State, but will leverage existing resources and private support. This work should be conducted in partnership with the Regional Economic Development Councils.

*"The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education has found that students who participate in high-quality CTE with a strong convergence of academics and career education have improved learning outcomes, higher academic achievement including persistence in higher education, higher wage earning potential, and lower dropout rates. Increased participation in CTE and engagement with the higher order skills present in career-based instruction and context offer the best opportunity for students to become engaged, achieve and avoid remediation in postsecondary education." Edward Shafer, Director of the Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Utica, September 23, 2012*

In addition to increasing the graduation rate and preparing students for successful careers, expanded high quality, advanced manufacturing CTE programs will strengthen the economy by supplying highly-skilled workers to businesses that have openings that they cannot fill with the current, underprepared work force.

- **New York State should expand the use of real world experience as an avenue for awarding college credit towards graduation.**

The Commission recommends New York strengthen the supply line of career ready students by incorporating more opportunities for experiential education for college graduates. New York should expand the use of real world experience as an avenue for awarding college credit towards graduation.

New York State is committed to educating students to be career ready. Studies of the Federal Work Study Program show that students who complete experiential internships show improved time management skills, enhanced academic performance, and more active involvement in campus activities or community service.<sup>43</sup> Workplace competencies are sought by businesses looking for career ready students with experience in real world settings, as well as non-profit and humanities groups searching for candidates that understand the rules of the road. Employers, whether corporations, non-profit organizations, or academia, seek competency in team situations, an ability to work with or in diverse settings, problem solving skills, and critical thinking that may not be explicitly taught in General Education requirements. These skills are most effectively and efficiently learned in actual work settings, internship experiences, and community service. New York should strengthen our supply line of workers and better prepare students for 21st century career paths by incorporating experiential education opportunities in college degrees.

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (2000). The National Study of the Operation of the Federal Work-Study Program: Summary Findings From the Student and Institutional Surveys. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

*"As we prepare for the next decade there are some things that seem self-evident. Text books will be digital, there will be more States offering on-line classes, and computer labs will be replaced with more mobile devices. It is already happening in other States." Daniel Marmion, Chief Technology Officer, Buffalo City School District; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Buffalo, NY July 18, 2012*

With more than 1.2 million students enrolled in college each year, and some 738,000 students enrolled in public schools alone, New York State is a leader in higher education and preparing the next generation of employees. The State should set a national benchmark for creating the career ready worker needed by the modern day workforce, and universities are the prime place to expand internship opportunities and utilize co-curricular education. The Commission recommends that New York's public colleges and universities advance efforts to create partnerships with employers to produce students trained to respond to modern day workforce needs.

**Recommendation 6. Promote increased access to educational opportunities by encouraging school district restructuring through consolidation and regional high schools.**

More than half of New York's nearly 700 school districts educate fewer than 2,000 students, and yet many have their own administration and back office functions, often leading to unnecessary and expensive duplication. This situation would appear to invite functional consolidation of services as well as district reorganizations to streamline the way school districts deliver education. However, there are social and political obstacles to restructuring the system that must be addressed.

*"We encourage your efforts to explore whether shared services, consolidations or regional strategies will result in greater efficiencies that can improve student performance." Vito Sciscioli, Board Member Syracuse 20/20; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Syracuse, August 14, 2012*

The manner in which school districts are organized in New York State remains a matter of local determination. Under current law, school districts have opportunities to expand their educational offerings as well as to reduce their operating costs through reorganizations and shared services. While the State provides incentives to encourage consolidations between school districts, very few have taken place in the past decade. Since 2000 there have only been three reorganizations, with the most recent merger – between North Colonie and Maplewood in Albany County – in 2008. The process for district reorganization – whether through centralization, annexation or consolidation – can be cumbersome and should be streamlined and incentivized.

Additional opportunities for savings lay in shared services, through regionalization and other means. New York has sought to encourage shared services through several programs, including: Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), School District Management Efficiency Grants, Department of State Shared Service Grants, and a Regional Transportation Initiative. School districts are also authorized to develop their own shared service initiatives, but more encouragement and success is needed to achieve real savings.

Drawing upon the testimony presented at Commission hearings and upon prior related work in this area by the New York State Legislature and the State Education Department, the Commission finds that the shifting demographics of a declining student population makes it imperative that shrinking districts fundamentally restructure in order to maximize educational opportunities for their students. Therefore, the Commission recommends that New York State adopt legislation to regionalize educational opportunities, especially for students in small rural districts, that includes mechanisms for collaboration and regionalization between school districts and BOCES.

“New York should incentivize programs that result in efficiencies and cost-savings through sharing of services or consolidations.” Stacey Duncan, Government Relations Manager, Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Binghamton, August 8, 2012

- **First, legislation is needed to ease the school district consolidation process.**

Currently, residents of school districts that are considering consolidation must vote twice; first in a straw vote required by the Commissioner of Education and second in a binding vote after the Commissioner approves the districts’ consolidation plan. When other forms of local governments are considering consolidation, citizens are required to vote only once and, in some cases, have the opportunity to request a second vote on the final plan. New York State should adopt legislation streamlining the school consolidation process, such as by eliminating the initial straw vote, provided citizens in the affected school districts maintain a final vote on any Commissioner-approved consolidation process.

- **Second, the Commission recommends that New York State review the existing incentives for consolidation.**

Commission members have observed that while school districts do receive reorganization aid, which addresses the costs of consolidating educational programs and services, there may need to be additional financial incentives to encourage district mergers. This may be because when the districts’ tax bases are combined, the prospect of increased school taxes in previously lower-taxed areas may be a disincentive to consolidation.

“Allow the ‘popular vote’ to determine the final outcome of a centralization between two or more school districts. This change would revert the legislation back to its original language and allow for a higher success rate for centralizations. Tiny school districts should be targeted for extra incentives for consolidation with neighboring districts whenever practical and possible. Incentives are even more powerful in a time of scarce revenues for public schools. The Commission should evaluate the existing incentives to determine if they are sufficient. This will provide for greater efficiency and better programming for students, especially at the secondary level.” Paul Joseph DiFonzo, Superintendent Fredonia Central School District; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Buffalo, July 18, 2012

- **Third, allow for increased regionalization of programs and services across districts and BOCES, such as regional high schools.**

One model is regional high schools, whereby two or more school districts combine academic programs or work collaboratively with their BOCES to operate a regional high school. The State should enact legislation to allow districts and BOCES to enter into long-term contracts to form a regional high school, provided they meet appropriate academic and administrative requirements and reach a contractual agreement before the school opens. Some school districts have already established the functional equivalent of regional high schools by paying tuition for their students to attend high school in neighboring districts. New York should encourage these de facto regional high schools by working to eliminate obstacles to these multi-district partnerships.

One of the barriers to regionalization is the lack of schedule coordination across districts. When districts operate on different calendars and bell schedules it can be difficult, if not impossible, to offer joint academic programs, develop on-line learning opportunities, regionalize transportation, or otherwise coordinate programs and services. The Commission recommends that New York encourage school districts to align their calendars and schedules on a regional basis. Districts that have established a regional high school should be required to consult with one another to align prospective labor agreements, as well as calendars and schedules. This would allow for the efficient provision of transportation services between the two districts in the short-term, and eliminate obstacles to further consolidation in the future. The State should also encourage school districts to pursue other regionalization opportunities, such as joint health insurance purchasing.

**Recommendation 7. Create a school performance management system that will streamline district reporting and increase transparency and accountability.**

To ensure that the recommendations and solutions being adopted truly help students succeed, we need transparency to ensure our interventions are working, and we need stakeholders to see clearly that they are getting a return on their investment in education.

*“Give parents and the public real tools to hold the system accountable.” Ernest Flagler-Mitchell, Rochester Parents United; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Rochester, October 22, 2012*



The cost and effectiveness of public education in New York are central challenges to our State’s competitiveness. The Commission believes that it is critically important that our schools have the necessary resources to invest in the people, programs and strategies that will increase student achievement and outcomes. There are certain supports that all students and schools in New York need in order to succeed. The structure and funding of New York’s education system should be designed around the goal that all schools and students have these supports. Addressing the adequacy and equitability of State funding is important, and the first step toward this must be

having the ability to understand the actual cost of providing services and to benchmark the costs in similar schools through improved transparency.

New York spends more on public education than any other state, but does not produce the necessary results. Balancing proper regard for students and taxpayers, our current and our future economic competitiveness as an enviable place to live, raise a family, and grow a business, we simply must maximize the impact of every dollar spent on public education to ensure that it is directed toward student achievement. The Commission found that New York can lower school operating costs through such efficiencies as energy conservation, establishing regional healthcare consortiums, and other ways of reducing costs.<sup>44</sup>

It is notably difficult for parents, community members, and stakeholders to hold school district management accountable in New York, because, despite extensive reporting requirements, timely data that clarifies the returns on investment to particular programs are scarce. This is not only a problem for the public, but also for school managers, providing few benchmarks against which to compare their district’s financial performance. The Commission recommends that New York increase public school accountability and transparency by reforming the current district reporting process to reflect the actual cost of providing education in each public school district and Local Educational Agency, down to the building level.

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<sup>44</sup> New York can lower school operating costs through efficiencies, including energy efficiency initiatives. Improving energy efficiency in school buildings is a smart way to save on costs and provide a healthier, more comfortable environment. Depending on the district, energy consumption can account for approximately 20 percent of a school district budget in New York. The Commission recommends New York offer a package of financing, incentives, refunds, project coordination, and technical assistance for energy efficiency retrofits to k-12 public schools. By packaging all of the available resources and services from the various agencies together, the State could make it easier for schools to take advantage of this savings opportunity.



The sufficiency and effectiveness of funding for public education cannot be addressed prudently without clear information on current expenditures. School districts are required to report financial information to various federal, state and local entities. There are existing requirements on districts for financial reports to their residents, the Office of the State Comptroller (OSC), and to the State Education Department. Those school districts receiving over \$500,000 of federal funds must also file a federal single audit report. The State Education Department and OSC report school district financial information on their websites and monitor school districts' fiscal stress.

However, currently available information has several shortcomings if the intent is to provide clear, easily compared and timely information. There is little agreement among agencies about the way information is collected or shared. As a result, consolidated reports and clarity of communication suffers.

Additionally, this information is often not posted in the one place that most people, especially parents, would look first – the school districts' websites. It is scattered across multiple websites and may not appear on-line for months, if at all, thereby limiting its relevance to policy makers and others interested in the cost-effectiveness of public education.

Based on testimony presented at various public hearings and its own research, the Commission finds that it is difficult for stakeholders to hold New York's school district management accountable because school districts do not publish reliable, consistent budget data. This is a problem for the public, which funds our education system and has the right to understand how its resources are invested, and for school district officials themselves because they cannot compare spending and savings with similarly situated districts in order to find efficiencies.

New York should re-examine school district accountability and transparency by reforming the current public school reporting process in the following ways:

- Examining all of the reports that all public schools submit to the State and federal government, identifying which reports should be suspended or combined, and areas where more accurate data can be solicited in order to increase transparency around where money is actually being spent;
- Requiring every public school to post a uniform summary of its budget, down to the building level, so that the community can compare spending within the district as well as across districts;
- Requiring that all public schools provide, as part of the budget process, a one page summary outlining the major cost items that are incurred, using a rubric developed by the State Education Department that shall include, but is not limited to, key cost drivers, such as student-teacher ratios by grade level and program, salary levels and distribution, benefits costs and structure, work hours and days, and size of schools;
- Providing technical support and facilitation to create a labor management process in each school district that is charged with reporting to the district on areas of potential savings, ways to improve transparency and more effectively use public funds; and
- Investing at the State level to enable electronic access to data that enable comparison of resource use and cost drivers to districts with similar demographics along with data on student growth and performance.

## Part 2. Good Teachers Enable Good Students

### Ensure that the Best Teachers and Principals are Educating New York's Students

Teaching and school leadership are among the most important and most challenging jobs in our society. Research shows that teachers account for one-third of a school's total impact on student achievement, and principal leadership accounts for another 25 percent of that impact.<sup>45</sup> Together, these educators have a significant effect on student achievement. They are essential partners.

New York must recruit the highest caliber people into teaching and leading. We must ensure that they have the preparation and training needed to become excellent teachers and the continuous development and support they need to continue to grow in their profession. Despite the need for a systemic teacher preparation process, there is a lack of coherence to the way New York recruits, trains and develops our teachers and school leaders, and there is an opportunity to strengthen the pipeline in order to maximize student performance.



Our schools have many high quality teachers and school leaders. We must investigate ways in which we can leverage their skills to improve the work of the entire teaching force. To retain these excellent teachers in our schools, we must ensure that each school is led by a highly-effective principal with the skills to support teacher development and create a culture of collaboration and high expectations. And we must develop career ladders that recognize these effective teachers and provide them with opportunities to grow as educators and leaders over the course of their careers.

New York can strengthen the pipeline of high quality teachers and principals in our schools by providing more support at each transition. The Commission concurs with the conclusion drawn by the AFT Teacher Preparation Taskforce in its December 2012 report *Raising the Bar: Aligning and Elevating Teacher Preparation and the Teaching Profession*. Coherence, collaboration and professional leadership do not systematically characterize American teacher preparation programs today—particularly given the fragmented nature of the larger system and stakeholders involved.

*"I would argue for constructing a culture of success by feeding systems with greatness. Starting immediately, raise expectations of entry into New York State teaching colleges. The research base into effective teaching practice is clear and compelling....Preparing members of society to educate our children is a public covenant, a sacred trust that deserves our respect, reserved only for the best and brightest among us." David Gamberg, School Superintendent on Eastern Long Island; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, October 11, 2012*

New York faces a challenge of building much higher quality teacher and principal preparation programs, but recognizes that the challenge does not sit only on the doorstep of higher education institutions or alternative certification providers. For program coherence to have maximum impact, New York must require a higher degree of systemic coherence between schools and preparation programs; between teacher and principal educators and k-12 practitioners; between higher education faculty in the academic content areas and teacher educators; among policies, practices, and resources; and among stakeholders from teachers unions to the State government.

<sup>45</sup> Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*. New York, NY: Wallace Foundation. Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. (2005). *School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Calls for teacher preparation reform are not new. What must be different this time around is how we answer.

*“Our education colleges...pump out too many candidates, with not enough classroom experience, and not enough skills to successfully handle today’s challenging classroom environs, particularly in our needy urban areas. Additionally, these programs, rather than attracting our top students from our most prestigious undergrad institutions, have low standards for admission and often serve as moneymakers for cash-strapped colleges. By flooding the market with under-prepared, mediocre candidates, our teacher preparation programs do both short and long term damage to our schools and to the profession. Quite simply: the bar for becoming a teacher must be set much higher, and the programs to prepare them must be much more rigorous.” Geoff Schutte, Teacher, Tapestry Charter High School; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Buffalo, July 18, 2012*

New York must recruit the highest caliber people into teaching and leading, and ensure they have the preparation and training needed to excel in the classroom and the continuous development and support to grow in the profession. If we multiply the impact of high quality teachers and school leaders, we can improve entire school systems for the benefit of all students. Ownership and leadership of the changes in educator preparation that the Commission recommends should include the practitioners responsible for implementation, including the teachers and leaders in our public schools, and university level faculty.

**Recommendation 1. Establish model admissions requirements for teacher and principal preparation programs to raise the bar for new educators.**

While the world’s best performing school systems often recruit their teachers from the very top of their high school and college classes, only about 30 percent of US teachers come from the top 1/3 of their college graduating class. According to the September 2007 McKinsey Report, *How the World’s Best Performing School Systems Came Out on Top*, most people who become teachers in successful countries come from the top 10 percent of their high school or college graduating class; university students see the teaching profession as one of top three career choices; the ratio of applications to available places in initial teacher education courses in some successful countries is roughly 10 to 1.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the importance of teacher education programs in improving teacher quality, only 15 states have established minimum admissions requirements for individuals seeking a degree in education. Many states limit their academic screening to basic skills tests, which typically assess only middle school-level skills and are generally compared only to the prospective teacher population.<sup>47</sup>

*“I believe we must restore the luster to what it means to be a teacher. If we want to be certain we offer students the highest caliber education we can provide, we must be sure we are attracting the best and brightest to the profession of teaching.” Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts, President of SUNY Old Westbury and Pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, July 26, 2012*

Far too many teacher and principal preparation programs do not properly screen candidates, and can invest considerable resources in individuals who may not be able to successfully complete the program and pass licensing tests. Candidates in need of additional support should complete remediation before entering the program so as to reduce the possibility of a poor investment of significant public tax dollars.

<sup>46</sup> Barber, M., & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world’s best performing school systems came out on top*. London: McKinsey & Co. Retrieved from [http://www.mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Worlds\\_School\\_Systems\\_Final.pdf](http://www.mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Worlds_School_Systems_Final.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> National Governors Association. (2009). *Building a High Quality Education Workforce: A Governor’s Guide to Human Capital Development*. Washington, D.C.: Author.



Currently, New York does not set minimum admissions requirements for teacher or principal preparation programs; colleges and universities set their admissions requirements independently. Prospective teachers and leaders in New York face no test of academic proficiency as a criterion for admission to teacher or principal preparation programs and candidates need not pass a basic skills assessment requirement until they are ready to apply for licensure.

The Commission recommends that all SUNY, CUNY, and independent colleges and universities, with their faculty and administration, raise their admissions requirements for teacher and principal preparation. Further, the Commission concurs with recommendations from the National Council on Teacher Quality and the Center for American Progress that New York should require programs to use an assessment, such as the GRE or equivalent for graduate programs or the SAT/ACT for undergraduate programs, in tandem with a minimum 3.0 GPA requirement to demonstrate that candidates are academically competitive with all peers, regardless of their intended profession.<sup>48</sup>

Most SUNY Masters of Education programs require a minimum GPA of 2.75, while all CUNY Masters of Education programs require a minimum GPA of 3.0. The best private preparation programs, including Bank Street College of Education and Columbia Teachers College, require a minimum GPA of 3.0, as well.

Similarly, few, if any, of New York's SUNY or CUNY Masters of Education Programs require a competency test for admissions into a program. Many Masters of Education programs in the country, including Harvard Graduate School of Education, Stanford Graduate School of Education, and most concentrations at Columbia Teachers College in New York City require the GRE for admissions.<sup>49</sup> These schools have demonstrated that they can be highly-selective in admission policies, while protecting the vital objective of assuring diversity and appropriate cultural competence among teaching candidates.

*"Being a k-12 teacher in the United States does not have the same status it does in other nations. As a country, we appear not to value our educational system. ... Schools of education must revise their teacher preparation. Aspiring teachers need to spend considerably more time in the classroom than they are required to at present. The high number of young teachers dropping out of the profession within the first 2-3 years of their careers would indicate that they were not prepared for the realities of teaching. Educational programs must do a better job of connecting the philosophy of teaching with the practice."*  
Douglas Ann Land, New York State School Boards Association representative for Central New York/Southern Tier; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Syracuse, August 14, 2012

By using a competency test, such as the GRE, the SAT, or an equivalent, as a requirement for admissions, New York's programs will employ an assessment that demonstrates that candidates are academically competitive with all peers, regardless of their intended profession. Using a single test which is normed to the general college population would allow for the selection of applicants in the top half of their class, while also facilitating program comparisons.

The Commission also recommends that programs that have met the State's outcome expectations for results can apply to the State to institute an admissions process based on a demonstration of candidate skills (for example, a track record as an effective teacher, instead of a GRE score).

<sup>48</sup> Perry, A. (2011). Teacher Preparation Programs: A Critical Vehicle To Drive Student Achievement. James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.hunt-institute.org/elements/media/files/reVISION-Number-1-November-2011.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> U.S News & World Report (2012). Best Education Schools. Retrieved from <http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-education-schools/edu-rankings>.



Through these recommendations, the Commission seeks to raise the bar for admission across the State.

**Recommendation 2. Recruit non-traditional candidates into teaching and leading by expanding alternative certification programs.**

### Alternative Pathways to Teaching

The Teaching Opportunity Program is a collaboration of the City University of New York and the NYC Department of Education to produce middle and high school math, science and Spanish teachers. TOP teachers begin with an intensive summer program run by a CUNY campus that includes experiences in teaching. They continue to take courses at CUNY that count towards both their certification and MA degrees. TOP participants generally complete their requirements for certification and a MA degree in two to three years, after which they are committed to teaching in NYC public schools for an additional two years.

Alternate route teachers typically have higher individual academic performance and are typically placed in schools with more students of poverty – schools that generally have the hardest time attracting and retaining teachers. The NYC Teaching Fellows, Teach for America, New Leaders, and the NYC Leadership Academy are designed specifically to place teachers or leaders in underserved communities or difficult-to-staff schools.<sup>50,51</sup>

New York should have a goal of creating, expanding, or recruiting one high quality alternative preparation program to partner with low performing districts in the State. Alternative programs would be required to describe to the State their plan to develop or implement a program based on the best research and practices, in order to best prepare our teachers and principals for the demands of highest needs schools.

New York should prioritize preparing excellent teachers and principals who are well-equipped to meet the diverse strengths, interests and needs of today's students on their first day in the school.

In order to meet this goal, New York should strategically invest in expanding high quality alternative preparation programs to partner with low performing school districts, or groups of districts by region, to recruit highly qualified teacher and principal candidates into hard-to-staff subjects and areas.

For example, in New York City, the Teaching Fellows placements are largely targeted towards difficult-to-staff subjects that attract very few traditionally prepared applicants, such as middle and high school math and science and special education teachers.

Similar to New York's model preparation programs, New York's alternative preparation programs should require a minimum standard of admission, as well as a strong project-based and clinical experience to best prepare teachers prior to their actual entry into classrooms. This approach will also provide principals with practice in instructional and school leadership skills before they lead a school.

<sup>50</sup> Boyd, D. J., Grossman, P. L., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2009). Teacher preparation and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 31(4), 416-440.

<sup>51</sup> Kane, T. J., Rockoff, J., & Staiger, D. (2008). What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness? Evidence from New York City. *Economics of Education Review*, 27(6), 615-31.

*“Teach For America has been working for over 22 years to recruit, train and support mostly recent college graduates who are both committed to closing the achievement gap for the students they teach during their initial corps member experience and committed to fighting the causes of the achievement gap over their lifetime, as alumni of our program. TFA’s model successfully identifies teachers who will have a positive impact on student achievement, and also helps to predict who will be most successful from the beginning of their time in the classroom in year one. Several rigorous, external studies demonstrate the positive impact of our corps members, as well as the growing number of our teachers who have had transformational impact on students, garnering national, state, and local teacher awards. We see the evidence of the achievement gap and the need for high quality teachers in low-income communities across the state, and are open to the idea of expanding our program to other regions in New York.” Jemina Bernard, Senior Vice President Regional Operations, Teach For America; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, July 26, 2012*

The State Education Department should expand on what we know works:

- Strong content knowledge, demonstrated through a program design that draws on best research and practice and may include a partnership with a research university;
- 250 hours of candidate preparation before first entering the teacher candidate’s full-time classroom placement, such as the NY Teach for America summer institute;
- Project-based learning experiences; and
- Clinical experience in an authentic setting where candidates can be evaluated on their practice as a part of program completion.



It is critical that each alternative pathway, like every traditional teacher or principal preparation program, have similar admissions requirements as described above.

**Recommendation 3. Enhance the education training curriculum to better prepare teachers and principals to be highly effective upon entering the classroom.**

In New York’s teacher and principal preparation programs, the lack of “systemness” compounds the lack of curricular coherence in some teacher and principal preparation programs, but provides no excuse for it. In too many cases, teacher and principal preparation program coursework is fragmentary; a stubborn divide exists between practice and theory, and there is a gap between mastery of content and its application. Teacher and principal preparation curricula should be structured around a conceptual framework that explicitly describes what high quality teachers and leaders need to know and be able to do by laying out the necessary knowledge base, ethics, dispositions and skills, and leadership and collaborative competencies. Such a framework would connect discrete courses, allowing teacher and principal candidates to apply what they are learning. Moreover, clinical practice ought to be seamlessly connected to courses and the framework, which, in many cases, it is not.

- **The Commission recommends that the State Education Department set standards, and provide guidance, for teacher and principal preparation programs and public schools to align the expectations of today’s classrooms with that of the preparation programs.**

The standards should include a stronger component of clinical practice, like that required of medical residents and other professionals. Additionally, the State Education Department should provide guidance and standards for teacher and principal preparation program curricula in order to ensure it is consistently and sufficiently rigorous, to best prepare the next generation of teachers and leaders.

It is imperative that teacher and principal candidates are learning from the most effective teachers and leaders in New York's schools. New York does not have standard requirements for supervisory teachers who mentor student teachers. The National Council on Teacher Quality has found that a mediocre student teaching experience is difficult to remedy. The State should play a leadership role in redefining how student teachers are supported in the classroom by mentor teachers in order to strengthen the clinical experience of teacher candidates.

*"We need to attract more qualified people into the profession of science teaching and reform teacher training and provide professional development to improve teacher content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and science process skills. ... Mentors and networks are critically needed to foster and maintain student interest in the teaching profession, assist new teachers through the often overwhelming first years in the classroom, and enrich and renew the experience of more veteran teachers." Dr. Julie Nucci, Director CNS Institute for Physics Teachers and adjunct professor Cornell University; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, Utica, September 23, 2012*

In order to ensure high quality student teaching experiences, and provide the best training to our student teacher candidates, regulations should be created that identify eligibility and expected practices of supervisory teachers in New York State. Regulations would need to consider:

- Qualifications of supervisory teachers, including effectiveness ratings and years of experience;
- Expectations of supervisory teachers, including attending professional development sessions, evidence of research-based practice, etc;
- Roles and responsibilities of supervisory teachers, including attending workshops/seminars provided by university and college programs; and
- Potential incentives for supervisory teachers, including decreased instructional responsibilities to provide greater mentoring time and incentives connected to career ladder mobility.

By providing regulatory guidance, the State will raise the bar for supervisory teachers and the experiences we provide to our teacher and principal candidates, as well as clearly establish a standard of training and practice for our student teachers.

This alignment process should be driven by standards that will improve teacher and principal preparation programs and ensure that classrooms are staffed with competent beginning teachers and principals who are on the path to become accomplished practitioners. There is a great opportunity for New York to revise program requirements for teacher and principal preparation programs to ensure that they are prepared to develop teacher and principal candidates who will meet high standards and that programs include a minimum set of requirements and opportunities for continuous improvement.

New York is home to many high quality teacher and principal preparation programs, public and private. Programs like Columbia Teachers College, Bard, Bank Street College of Education and public schools like SUNY Fredonia and CUNY College of Education have literally helped to set the standard. The City University of New York is a national leader in transforming the way teachers are prepared through clinical experiences and partnerships with the New York City public schools – demonstrating exactly the reforms that national organizations have called for all around the country, and that we need more of here in New York State. However, not all teacher and principal programs in New York are up to the high standards of these nationally-prominent programs. In fact, from testimony heard by the Commission and from its own research, it has become clear that greater consistency is needed in the standards of excellence for our teacher and principal preparation programs; more must be done so that new teachers and principals are better prepared to succeed in the classroom from their very first day on the job.

The Common Core State Standards will bring significant changes in what is expected from a teacher's instructional approach. And principals will be tasked with leading the transition to the new standards, including ensuring that teachers meet the increased level of instructional rigor. Aligning expectations of our educators, and educator preparation programs with the Common Core State Standards, is an opportunity to reexamine how we are preparing teachers and principals to meet the new, more rigorous expectations in place for our students.



Clinically rich preparation programs are an effort to emphasize school-based experiences rather than what is traditionally a more classroom-based academic preparation with relatively minor hands-on experiences in actual school classrooms. New York is home to national models of innovative, clinically rich graduate teacher preparation programs, which the State Education Department has approved through Race to the Top. Teacher candidates in these programs will receive hands-on experience and the real world skills needed to succeed in today's classrooms. It is estimated that about 400 teaching candidates will be prepared in hard-to-staff subjects through these clinically

rich programs. While these programs will certainly prepare some of New York's best teachers and leaders, there is an opportunity for the State to do more by requiring that every teacher and principal preparation program provide significantly enhanced clinical experience.

Research identifies the following components of a clinically rich teacher preparation program and the State Education Department has modeled its work on these components:

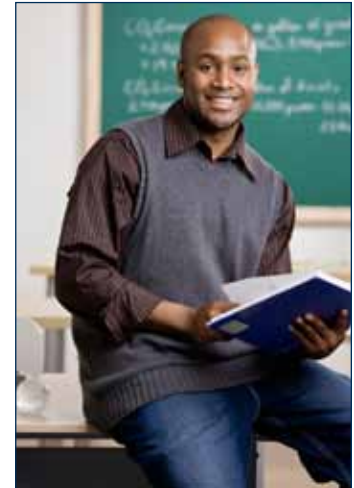
- Rigorous recruitment of candidates and intensive candidate selection criteria;
- Collaboration for rigorous selection and training of the mentor-teacher;
- Integration of pedagogy with on the job training;
- Guided classroom practice through a residency of one school year with an effective educator;
- Mentoring by a trained mentor-teacher;
- Rigorous undergraduate level course work leading to a baccalaureate degree that includes learning theory, research and content;
- Cohort placement strategies;
- Institutional accountability;
- Support of partnerships through ongoing professional development for mentor-teachers;
- Integration of technology; and
- Continued support upon successful completion of the program.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. (2010). Transforming Teacher Education Through Clinical Practice: A National Strategy To Prepare Effective Teachers. Retrieved from <http://www.ncate.org/Public/Publications/tabid/697/Default.aspx> . [www.ncate.org/publications](http://www.ncate.org/publications)

- **The Commission recommends that the State Education Department set standards for New York’s teacher and principal preparation programs to include stronger clinical practice, like doctors and other professionals, in order to develop skills needed for the classroom.**

The State Education Department has recently approved several model teacher preparation programs that focus on clinical practice:

- American Museum of Natural History: program offers intensive mentoring and extensive use of technology in an inquiry-based approach to learning. Candidates work with scientists and educators at the Museum, which offers two years of training.
- SUNY Oswego: coursework maximizes the strengths associated with the synchronous on-line learning environment. Integration of theory, concepts, and practical aspects of pedagogy and practice with hands-on experiences are cornerstones of the clinical program models; and production of a series of videos that will illustrate the candidates’ development over the course of the academic year.



The Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning, convened by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and co-chaired by SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher, called for teacher education to be “turned upside down” by revamping programs to place clinical practice at the center of teacher preparation.

Research also indicates that leadership development programs should include experiential learning components where participants are able to apply what they are learning and practice those skills in an authentic setting.<sup>53</sup> In fact, one survey indicated that 96 percent of administrators agreed that on-the-job experience had been better training than their graduate programs.<sup>54</sup>

The reformed model of teacher and principal preparation requires new and stronger partnerships with school districts in which teacher and principal education becomes a shared responsibility between P-12 schools and higher education. CUNY and SUNY are statewide leaders in enhancing and reforming the clinical component of their teacher preparation programs:

- Over the next two years, all CUNY campuses are revising their curriculum to enhance clinical training. This is being accomplished through the formation of teams at each campus comprised of faculty from their major programs and faculty and building leaders from their respective k-12 partnership schools. The curriculum will be transformed to enhance the clinical experience by, among other things, revising the fieldwork experience, better integrating coursework with clinical experience, and providing training on how data is used in the schools for data-driven and differentiated instruction.
- SUNY has launched the Statewide Teacher Education Network (S-TEN), a network of institutions with the shared purpose of renewing and improving the preparation of teachers and educational leaders throughout New York, engaging SUNY faculty across the State who prepare future teachers and educational leaders

<sup>53</sup> Wahlstrom, K. L., Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., & Anderson, S. E. (2010). Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning. The Informed Educator Series. Alexandria, VA: Educational Research Service.

<sup>54</sup> Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A., with Syat, B. & Vine, J. (2003). Rolling Up Their Sleeves: Superintendents and Principals Talk About What’s Needed to Fix Public Schools. New York, NY: Public Agenda.

in high quality professional development and research. Focus is placed on adoption of the Common Core Standards, teacher performance assessments, data-driven instruction, and clinically rich teacher and school leader preparation.

- Additionally, CUNY houses teacher residency programs in three of its six graduate schools of education: Hunter College, Lehman College, and Queens College.
- CUNY's Hunter College has taken the lead nationally in the video-based clinical preparation of students. They have developed a state-of-the-art system, which allows easy uploading of candidate videos for viewing and coding, according to multiple assessment rubrics, by faculty and cooperating teachers in order to consistently evaluate and offer feedback to student teachers.
- SUNY Plattsburgh has restructured its teacher preparation program and now places education students in the field as early as their first semester. The campus has also created Project CONNECT, an afterschool program at three elementary schools and one middle school that provides education students with clinically rich learning environments.
- SUNY Cortland teacher candidates use technology to virtually observe in classrooms and then work in-person with the students through tutoring, allowing teacher candidates to follow an in-service teacher's course and provide continued support for the student.
- The Professional Development Schools (PDS) Consortium at Buffalo State College launched an award-winning model of clinically rich partnerships to enhance undergraduate and graduate teacher education in Buffalo. Through the PDS Consortium, Buffalo State College works collaboratively with school partners to bring course work and clinical preparation together to build teacher candidates' knowledge and skills in school settings in real-time. Simultaneously, school leaders engage with Buffalo State College faculty as research and professional development partners to improve the future of teaching and learning in P-12 schools.



Another example of a New York-based best practice is at Columbia Teachers College (TC) with its Teaching Residents at Teachers College (TR@TC), a fourteen-month intensive master's degree program that places TC students in classrooms with experienced teachers at high-need New York City schools. The program seeks career changers who understand the circumstances of the populations they will serve. Residents work three full days a week in the classroom of a master teacher, supplemented by one day of community-based work, and one day on campus at TC. In the second half of the year, residents are in their schools four full days a week. William Gaudelli, Chair of the Teacher Education Policy Committee at Columbia Teachers College, noted in his testimony before the Commission that clinical residencies have been shown to increase student achievement, teacher retention, and teachers' sense of preparedness.<sup>55</sup>

While SUNY and CUNY are transforming many of its own programs, the Commission recommends that the State Education Department set standards for all of New York's teacher and principal preparation programs to include stronger clinical experiences in order to better educate our next generation of students. The Commission

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<sup>55</sup> Testimony of William Gaudelli, Chair, Teacher Education Policy Committee. Teachers College, Columbia University. Heard before the New York Education Reform Commission on October 16, 2012 at Bank Street College of Education, NYC.

recommends that SUNY and CUNY teacher and principal preparation programs enhance their clinical practice component to comprise at least 35 percent of total teacher and principal preparation by fall of 2015. CUNY is currently on track to do this and can serve as a model for the State.

- **Build on success of New Leaders and New York City Leadership Academy to expertly prepare principals.**

A need for highly effective school leaders is among the core issues at the heart of our education crisis. Great schools require great leaders – and every child deserves an outstanding principal and great instructional leadership team that can ensure quality teaching in every classroom. If we are unable to build a pipeline of highly effective principals and teacher leaders who can drive change at the school level, at scale, then all other public school reform efforts are at risk.



*"I would recommend that any principal evaluation system take into account the retention of high-performing teachers. Teachers leave schools because their principals do not work to keep them, and we need a system that places emphasis on retaining high-performing teachers. The Commission should recommend for the state to mandate that all principal evaluations contain some measure of a principal's ability to retain high performing teachers." Evan Stone, co-CEO Educators for Excellence; New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, July 26, 2012*

School leaders have a disproportionately large impact on student achievement. A meta-analysis of 35 years of research found that leadership actions account for 25 percent of a school's total impact on student achievement, while classroom factors explain one-third.<sup>56</sup> This impact can largely be attributed to the actions that a school's leaders take to hire and dismiss, evaluate, and support the ongoing professional development of teachers in their schools. In a national survey of 40,000 teachers, 91 percent described effective school leadership as having a very important impact on student achievement. Moreover, 97 percent rated supportive school leaders as very important to retaining good teachers, more than any other factor and in confirmation of a wide body of prior research.<sup>56</sup> Yet, there is a shortage of consistently strong principals across school systems. A survey of superintendents found that about half had difficulty finding qualified principal candidates.<sup>57</sup>

The most effective leadership development programs provide full-time internships under the wing of expert principals tightly connected to courses on instructional leadership, change management, and organizational development. Allowing candidates to engage in the critical hands-on work of a high quality administrative internship is central to the most powerful program designs. Some states, such as North Carolina, make this kind of training available for nearly all principal trainees. Other program models – like the Education Leadership Development Academy in San Diego and the New Leaders program – provide a one-year program in which the full-time internship occurs under the wing of an expert principal while candidates are taking related courses for the credential. The New York City Leadership Academy has also been successful in training principals who have

<sup>56</sup> Marzano et al. (2005); Leithwood et al. (2004).

<sup>57</sup> Scholastic Inc. (2010). Primary sources: America's teachers on America's schools. New York, NY: Scholastic and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and, Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). The schools teachers leave: Teacher mobility in Chicago Public Schools. Chicago, IL: Consortium on Chicago School Research; and, Clotfelter, C., Glennie, E., Ladd, H., & Vigdor, J. (2008). Teacher bonuses and teacher retention in low performing schools: Evidence from the North Carolina \$1,800 teacher bonus program. *Public Finance Quarterly*, 36(1), 63-87.

<sup>57</sup> Grissom, J. A. (2008). But do they stay? Addressing issues of teacher retention through alternative certification. In P. Grossman & S. Loeb (Eds.), *Alternative routes to teaching: Mapping the new landscape of teacher education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press; and, Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., Meyerson, D., Orr, M. T., & Cohen, C. (2007). *Preparing school leaders for a changing world: Lessons from exemplary leadership development programs*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.

produced encouraging comparative results in the schools they lead. In order to prepare candidates well for the tough jobs they will take on, the Commission recommends that:

- The State should expand on successful models in New York – including CUNY Baruch Master’s in Educational Leadership, an existing partnership with the NYC Leadership Academy, New Leaders and New Visions for Public Schools, the NYCDOE and Bank Street College of Education – to train principals to meet the demands of the classroom, as well as address the needs of teachers and staff to improve student achievement. This program should be expanded for all CUNY Leadership degrees.
- SUNY should develop a similar Leadership Academy to develop rigorous training programs, host local and regional principal networks, and coordinate professional development opportunities for educational leaders across the State. A core focus of this work will include a plan to meet the needs of a diverse array of district partners.

#### **Recommendation 4. New York must raise the bar for entry into the teaching profession.**

New York currently requires educators to be certified before entering the classroom, but the certification exam does not adequately measure a potential educator’s ability to meet the every day demands and expectations of teaching. The State Education Department is making the certification exam more rigorous; the certification exams used to have a 99% pass rate. In addition to supporting the strengthened certification exams, the Commission recommends that New York go one step further by adopting a “bar” like exam for teachers that is constantly being monitored, evaluated and improved to ensure that the certification exam is aligned to what we expect our teachers to be able to do in the classroom on their very first day and throughout their career.

*“New York’s certification requirements for teachers might make sense if they set a high bar for the training and skill of new teachers, but they do not—by a long shot. For school leaders (and the public), this is the worst of both worlds: the certification rules create expensive, time-consuming hassles without assuring quality. We know this is not a New York-specific problem. Nationwide, the coursework at many schools of education is not reliable preparation for effective classroom teaching, and qualification exams are far from rigorous. Not surprisingly then, researchers find that differences in teacher effectiveness appear to be largely unrelated to certification.” James Merriman, CEO New York City Charter School Center, New NY Education Reform Commission Hearing, New York City, July 26, 2012*

The State Education Department is currently revising standards for teacher and principal certification exams so that New York’s next generation of teachers and principals will be ready to teach the new, higher college and career readiness standards for students, the Common Core State Standards.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, new performance assessments for teachers and principals will evaluate practice-based skills proven to have a positive impact on student achievement. The State Education Department expects that teacher and principal preparation programs will adjust their curricula in order to prepare teacher and principal candidates to pass the new exams, and is providing preliminary frameworks on-line to provide time for programs to adjust.<sup>59</sup>

In order to continuously strengthen educator preparation programs to ensure that we are adequately preparing educators to meet the demands and standards of the classroom, the Commission recommends that New York adopt a “bar” like exam for educators in order to continuously raise the standards of entry into the teacher and principal profession, similar to the bar process in law or the boards process in medicine.<sup>60</sup> Establishing a core set of standards and a common set of professionally rigorous assessments to ensure the best prepared teachers are

<sup>58</sup> The State Education Department anticipates that candidates applying for certification on or after May 1, 2014 will be required to take the new certification exam.

<sup>59</sup> Information can be found at: [http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/NY\\_flds100-101\\_PG\\_opener.asp](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/NY_flds100-101_PG_opener.asp).

<sup>60</sup> The Commission agrees with the AFT Teacher Preparation Taskforce in its December 2012, report Raising the Bar: Aligning and Elevating Teacher Preparation and the Teaching Profession, that New York, and other states, should establish a “bar” like exam for entry into the teaching and principal profession for all, including alternatively prepared teachers and principals.



entering the classroom will only happen if, like the American Bar Association or the American Medical Association, these standards are consistently monitored and evaluated, and the exam is able to change accordingly to measure those high standards.

If adopted, the “bar” like exam for educators will strengthen the current teacher and principal certification exams. Generally, certification exams are static, and not subject to change. The “bar” like exam promotes alignment of standards and expectations between our school systems, both elementary and secondary schools, and also the university and college level where we are preparing our educators. However, in order to align the standards and expectations of what we expect our students to know, we must measure the ability and preparedness of prospective educators to effectively teach students, and those standards are not static.



While the State Education Department’s new certification exams are a great step forward, the Commission recommends that the State Education Department continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new teacher and principal certification exams to ensure that the bar is sufficiently high to measure a teacher’s or principal’s ability before they enter the classroom.

**Recommendation 5. Strengthen educator preparation and in-service supports by establishing best practices to assure quality.**

The New York State Education Department committed in its Race to the Top (RTTT) application to reform, strengthen, and hold accountable teacher and principal preparation programs by backward mapping the teaching and school performance of those graduates to the institutions that prepared them. The information gathered will be used to create teacher and principal preparation program profiles, including:

- Reports for each program area detailing the certification performance levels, employment and retention rates, and effectiveness data;
- The percentage of graduates who pass teacher and principal certification exams, including the chosen field of the candidate (elementary education, special education);
- Data on teacher effectiveness – what impact have graduates of the program had on students in rural districts, suburban districts, etc; and
- The teacher and principal evaluation ratings of graduates.

While these profiles will provide critical information, it is unclear how they will be used to hold teacher and principal preparation programs accountable for preparing their candidates to be highly effective teachers and leaders. The Commission recommends that the State Education Department monitor and analyze this information in order to provide critical and specific feedback to strengthen teacher and principal preparation programs.

- **Provide ongoing training and tools for teachers and principals, so they can continuously improve.**

The second step in ensuring that New York's students have the best teachers and principals is ensuring that our teachers and leaders have the tools they need to maximize student performance.

New York committed to the Common Core State Standards in its successful Race to the Top plan and began implementation in January 2011.

New York has provided Common Core preparation materials to the field (far more than in past NYS standards adoption efforts), including:

- Content frameworks, exemplar curriculum materials, a rubric for evaluating curriculum materials (developed with MA and RI), professional development videos and materials, and sample assessment items (all produced with guidance from the authors of the Common Core);
- Race to the Top-funded Network Teams throughout the State charged with implementing Common Core professional development; and
- Various complementary initiatives have prioritized Common Core professional development according to their funding agreements with the Department.

In addition, although curriculum and associated professional development are district responsibilities, New York continues to build additional statewide exemplar curriculum modules.

School districts have received millions of dollars in State and federal funding to provide professional development to their teachers and leaders, including implementation of the Common Core State Standards.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, the State Education Department is leveraging its Race to the Top funds to develop supports and resources to help districts implement the Common Core Standards, including professional development, curriculum modules, and video exemplars of excellent teaching. However, the Commission heard from individual teachers that they are not receiving training opportunities in order to implement the Common Core State Standards. The Commission believes that there is an opportunity to ensure that teachers and principals in school districts are receiving targeted professional development opportunities through collaboration with university systems and colleges. In order to ensure consistency and high standards, the Commission recommends that the State Education Department continue to provide materials for both elementary and secondary teachers and leaders, as well as faculty members at the university level in order to develop all educators in line with the expectations of the Common Core State Standards.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> School districts received 50 percent of the New York's \$696 Million Race to the Top award. Funds are intended to support: implementation of Common Core instruction and aligned assessments; implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems; and development of data systems that support high quality instruction that will serve to benefit students, teachers and administrators. In addition, the State Education Department is leveraging the remaining funds to develop supports and resources to help districts implement the Common Core Standards, including professional development, curriculum modules, and video exemplars of excellent teaching. Additionally, school districts in New York received \$582 million in Federal Title IIA grants since the 2010 school year to provide high quality professional development. School districts have also received over \$30 million in State Aid over the last two years to fund teacher centers.

<sup>62</sup> The State Education Department hosts EngageNY.org, a hub for resources on professional development modules, curriculum exemplars, videos, and other tools.



- **Support quality teaching and learning conditions.**

Across the country, districts leading the way in improving teaching and learning are focused on building strong, collaborative school communities to help all children succeed. Quality school buildings and working conditions, school leadership and community factors all play a role in attracting and retaining quality teachers and helping our children learn and grow. Teachers stay in their schools and in their profession when there is a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility among teachers, principals and administrators;

a focus on continuous professional development for teachers; and when they have the time, tools and trust they need to improve their practice.

The Commission recommends that the State incentivize districts to retain quality teachers through such efforts as encouraging cooperative planning time for teachers and rewarding schools that have consistently high or improving teacher satisfaction surveys, coupled with high or improving student achievement levels.

- **Create Professional Development Schools for teachers and principals.**

Rather than have P-12 and university systems each pay for, administer, and evaluate separate professional development in new areas of need and Common Core State Standards and the requirements of Annual Professional Performance Review, a combined effort would strengthen the relationship between university systems and elementary and secondary education systems, and show significant cost savings. Additionally, the collaboration between those in the classroom and those preparing the next generation of teachers and leaders would likely lead to new models of teaching and learning as mutual understanding grows.

Teacher and principal preparation schools must also focus on developing clinical faculty with an understanding of the demands of today's schools. The relationship between both the university faculty and the in-service teacher or principal will support the development of both professionals. Higher education and school districts both understand what the demands are; professional development dollars on both sides can go towards the same goal.

The Commission encourages school districts to collaborate with SUNY, CUNY, and independent colleges and universities to provide ongoing professional development for Common Core implementation. Currently, CUNY is collaborating with the NYCDOE in order to train its clinical faculty in the APPR. Additionally, the Commission recommends that the State Education Department provide guidance to align the elementary and secondary education systems with that of the university systems to ensure that both systems are constantly communicating, as well as to ensure the Common Core State Standards are implemented in both.

In order to provide quality training to teachers and principals, partnerships must be created between school districts and university and college programs. The creation of a professional development school would allow for deep collaboration between school districts and teacher and principal preparation faculty, while addressing the needs of our teacher and principal candidates and preparing high quality teachers and principals, with a focus on those who are willing to assist our low-performing, urban districts.

The Commission recommends that both SUNY and CUNY establish and expand professional development schools. The model should feature a partnership between districts and universities wherein the two partners focus on collaborative teacher and principal preparation practices and professional development. This model results in high quality preparation of teacher and principal candidates, provides professional development to practicing teachers and school leaders, and focuses on research-based practices to maximize student achievement.



Each professional development school would require a partner district to provide essential experiences and trainings to candidates. Teachers and administrators would need to embrace a clinical training model and be willing to work with candidates as part of a team, rather than placing candidates into a classroom with limited support and mentoring. The teachers and administrators would need to demonstrate a track record of effective teaching practice and student achievement.

Accordingly, the university and college programs should be able to identify and recruit candidates who are interested in pursuing a

teacher or principal position. The university and college faculty will collaborate with the school district and identify key pedagogy and content that candidates would need to have upon entering the classroom.

- **Improve teacher and principal performance by incentivizing districts to replicate successful career ladder programs.**

In March 2012, the Governor and Legislature acted together to strengthen the framework of the APPR program, which governs the teacher and principal evaluation process in New York State. While implementation of this new process of teacher and principal evaluation is still in the early stages, the Commission at this time recognizes the potential of this program to allow school districts to incentivize and reward highly effective teachers and principals and to improve performance for all educators.

When fully implemented, these evaluations will give school districts the tools to identify, recognize, and reward highly effective teachers and leaders. Under current law, evaluations should be a significant factor in employment determinations including promotion and tenure. Current law also allows for school districts to use evaluation results when determining levels of supplemental compensation.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to identifying educators that are already showing outstanding results, APPR is also intended to allow school districts to best utilize their career development resources. School districts are currently directed to formulate and implement an individually tailored improvement plan for teachers and principals who are identified as needing improvement in a particular area.<sup>64</sup> School districts should consider tapping into the career ladder programs as part of a global professional development plan to improve performance and results across the board.

Through testimony presented at various public hearings, the Commission finds that there is a need for ongoing professional development and broader opportunities for career growth for teachers. Career ladders are a proven method to retain and develop a high quality teaching force. International leaders such as Finland and Singapore implement career ladders in each school as a way to continuously develop their teachers and create a culture of teachers working together to solve problems in the school. The recent TNTP report, *The Irreplaceables*, is the latest in a long line of research that has identified career advancement pathways as a needed incentive to retain effective teachers.

*The Irreplaceables* found that many high performing teachers complained of a lack of opportunities to serve as teacher leaders. Many teachers felt that the only way up the career ladder is to become an administrator—which comes with a higher salary, but fewer opportunities to teach students. High performing teachers who decided to leave often cited dissatisfaction with career advancement opportunities as a reason for leaving their school.

<sup>63</sup> N.Y. Educ. Law § 3012-c(1).

<sup>64</sup> N.Y. Educ. Law § 3012-c(4).

Such turnover is particularly problematic for low performing districts and hinders student achievement and growth. These surveys were done in geographically diverse urban districts comparable to ones found across New York State.<sup>65</sup>

Members of the Commission believe that a district-established career ladder can significantly improve teacher performance, retention, and morale. Models from across the country, including the Milken Foundation's Teacher Advancement Program, and locally created plans in districts including Toledo, Pittsburgh and St. Francis, Minnesota, are designed to retain accomplished teachers by recognizing excellence in teaching; encourage and reward teachers who work collaboratively to raise student academic achievement; attract and reward accomplished teachers, such as those who have achieved National Board certification or have obtained outstanding rating on district teacher evaluations. These programs can create opportunities for teachers to assume additional curriculum, instructional and school improvement responsibilities and leadership; and support and reward veteran and exceptional teachers who not only volunteer for placement in the most difficult teaching assignments but also achieve measurable student academic results.

The Commission is also committed to encouraging replication of innovative and successful programs to support in-service teachers and leaders, such as James Simons' Math for America. MfA NY Master Teacher Fellowship in Mathematics and Science is a four-year program that rewards outstanding experienced public secondary school mathematics and science teachers. The program includes a stipend for participating educators, as well as high quality professional development programs and opportunities. Participants mentor early career teachers and share innovations and best practices with like-minded colleagues. MfA Master Teachers attend many professional development sessions throughout the year and develop professional learning communities with other Master Teachers and content experts.



Additionally, the Commission is committed to encouraging pathways into teaching for classified staff. As we increase standards for entry into the profession, we should also seek diversity of the pool of recruits into teaching. One way to address this would be to provide a broader set of supports for paraprofessionals and other classified staff in schools who would like to pursue a teaching credential. New York City has important experience in this regard that the State can learn from in creating a statewide incentive. For example, researchers recently found that 43 percent of a cohort of paraprofessionals who entered the Leap to Teacher Program at CUNY obtained their bachelor's degree. The average rate of college completion for all part-time students is much lower. Moreover, of that group, 60 percent have taught in NYC public schools for six or more years.<sup>66</sup> The Commission recommends creating a statewide program that would build on the lessons of New York City's experiences, as well as encourage school districts to support pathways into teaching as an extension of the career ladder program.

By learning and applying lessons from these models, the State can help districts make evidence-based investments in students, particularly those in underperforming schools, by helping the people that most matter to school success: teachers. The Governor's competitive education grants should encourage school districts and unions to work collaboratively to develop career ladders by giving bonus points to those districts that already have, or will develop, career ladders.

<sup>65</sup> Jacob, A., Vidyarthi, E., & Carroll, K. (2012). *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*. Brooklyn, NY: TNTP.

<sup>66</sup> Abramovitz, M. (2011). *Triple Pay Off: The Leap to Teacher Program* (Doctoral dissertation, School of Professional Studies, City University of New York).



## Looking Ahead



The problems facing our schools are difficult and complex, and require significant research and analysis in order to propose sound recommendations. The Commission will continue to look within our State and around the nation for effective practices and programs that we can replicate or build upon. To do this will require an extensive process of building consensus around shared goals and developing plans that work in the field.

The recommendations set forth in this preliminary report represent important avenues for evidence-based reforms. Going forward, the Commission will continue to explore the following areas:

First, the Commission will investigate additional mechanisms to improve teacher and leader recruitment and performance, including the new teacher evaluation system, as well as supporting current teachers and leaders. As was repeatedly stated in this report, the quality of a student's teacher is the most important in-school factor in his or her success. Specifically, the Commission will continue to examine which incentives result in hiring and retaining our best teachers and principals; potential improvements in the teacher evaluation system; and the use of teacher evaluations for decisions regarding promotion, hiring, and termination as required in the teacher evaluation law.

Second, the Commission will continue to identify and replicate proven models that increase student achievement, including a review of academic and curriculum requirements and their implementation to determine if the system sufficiently prepares students; strategies to ensure that every student makes satisfactory progress toward meeting State standards, including intervention and support systems; and policies to improve student attendance and retention.

Third, the Commission will further explore education funding, distribution and costs, including efficiency and utilization of education spending at the district level.<sup>67</sup> Specifically, the Commission will continue to:

- Investigate the cost analysis of spending that goes into the classroom as compared to non-instructional spending and benefits.
- Explore ways to improve special education programs and outcomes for students while also reducing costs.
- Identify ways to reduce transportation costs, including in rural areas, while still providing needed services to students.
- Pinpoint successful strategies to create significant savings and long-term efficiencies while maintaining the integrity of educational services.
- Examine district-by-district returns on educational investment and educational productivity to identify districts that have higher student outcomes-per-dollar spent, and those that do not.

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<sup>67</sup> Commissioner opinions with respect to education funding vary greatly, whether it be that the State spends too much money, too little money or does not spend money on education efficiently. The Commission will continue to explore these issues in greater detail.

Fourth, the Commission will continue to explore methods to increase parent and family engagement in education, including reworking the school calendar to optimize engagement; district and school-level policies to address student attendance issues; and parental involvement in school policies, including placement of students in low-performing schools and the classrooms of ineffective teachers.

Fifth, the Commission will continue to examine the issues confronting high-need and low-wealth school communities including continuing to identify the unique challenges for students in high-need urban and rural school districts, and how best to support them to overcome obstacles to academic success; comparing best practices and services that will meet the needs of our high-risk students; and prioritizing spending in high-need school districts in order to address problems that may require additional or differentiated services to adequately prepare high-risk students in urban and rural schools.

Sixth, the Commission will continue to analyze the structure of New York's public education system, including ways to reorganize the system to meet the needs of our students while respecting taxpayers, such as district consolidation and/or shared services; comparing models from other states to achieve efficiencies and improved educational outcomes; identifying reforms and savings in special education that will contain costs through provider reforms while maintaining quality service; and continuing our examination of ways to reduce costs and improve effectiveness, maximizing informed participation in local elections, and facilitating shared services, consolidation and regional governance.

In the coming months the Commission will build upon the success of the first Action Plan by building consensus around solutions to these important challenges. That is the Commission's task. We are ready for the challenge.





## **APPENDIX I**

### **Commission Members**

## Commission Members



### **Chairman Richard D. Parsons**

*Senior Advisor, Providence Equity Partners, LLC*

Chairman Parsons was CEO of Time Warner from 2003-2008. He is credited for stabilizing the company after the merger with AOL and streamlining some of the media conglomerate's business practices. In its January 2005 report on America's Best CEOs, Institutional Investor named Parsons the top CEO in the entertainment industry. Parsons is the retired chairman of Citigroup, where he served from 2009-2012. He is currently a senior advisor to Providence Equity Partners.

Parsons got his start in New York politics as an assistant counsel and then first assistant counsel to Governor Nelson Rockefeller (1971-74), served as his Counsel when he was appointed Vice President, and then went on to work for President Gerald Ford. He is a moderate Republican who served as co-Chair

(along with former NY Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan) of President George W. Bush's Social Security task force, and is also on President Obama's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness.

Parsons is a Brooklyn native and public school graduate. He is the current incumbent of the King Chair in Public Policy at Howard University, where he served as a trustee for more than 20 years, and is a member of the board of Teach for America.

Parsons has served on a number of boards and commissions, including chair emeritus of The New York City Partnership and Mayor's Commission on Economic Opportunity in New York. He currently serves as chairman of the Apollo Theater Foundation, co-chairman of the Advisory Council of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and is on the boards of the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History and the Jazz Foundation of America. Parsons is also a parent and grandparent of NYC public school students and a former school board member.



### **Lisa Belzberg**

*Founder & Chair Emerita, PENCIL*

Lisa Belzberg is the Founder and Chair Emerita of the non-profit organization PENCIL (Public Education Needs Civic Involvement in Learning). She has worked for political campaign consultant David Garth, as a producer of The Charlie Rose Show, as a Principal at Leeds Equity Partners, and is an Adjunct Professor at Teacher's College/Columbia University. Dr. Belzberg is a Member of the Board of Directors of Barnard/Columbia Center for Urban Policy, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Dean's Council/NYU Steinhardt School of Education, OneFamily Fund, and ActionCanada.

In 1999, Dr. Belzberg was presented with the John Stanford Education Heroes Award from the U.S. Department of Education for her "extraordinary work in helping children learn." Belzberg has a Ph.D. from

the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University, a Masters in Economics and Public Policy from the London School of Economics and a B.A. degree with honors from Barnard College. Ms. Belzberg is a parent of 6 children.



### **Geoffrey Canada**

*Founder & CEO, Harlem Children's Zone*

In his 20-plus years as President and CEO of Harlem Children's Zone, Inc. (HCZ), Geoffrey Canada has become nationally recognized for his pioneering work helping children and families in Harlem and as a passionate advocate for education reform.

The HCZ provides comprehensive services to children and their families with the goal of ending the cycle of poverty by preparing and sending these children to college. The United States Department of Education created a \$60 million competitive grant challenge for communities to recreate Canada's Promise Neighborhoods. Canada and his education reform agenda starred in Waiting for "SUPERMAN."

Despite his upbringing in troubled surroundings in the South Bronx, Mr. Canada was able to succeed academically, receiving a B.A. from Bowdoin College and a master's degree in education from the Harvard School of Education. After graduating from Harvard, Mr. Canada decided to work to help children who, like himself, were disadvantaged by their lives in poor, embattled neighborhoods. Mr. Canada is a former teacher and principal. Mr. Canada is a parent of four children who attended public schools.



**Jessica Cohen**

*Retired Superintendent, Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES*

Dr. Jessica Cohen serves as OCM BOCES' District Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer, working closely with component districts as a liaison to and agent of the NYS Commissioner of Education.

Starting out as a school psychologist, Cohen has worked in education for 40 years. Before OCM BOCES, she was the assistant superintendent for instruction for the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego Board of Cooperative Educational Services since 1992.

Upon retirement this summer, Cohen, 64, will have held the position for nine years. As BOCES superintendent, Cohen also serves as a liaison between the state Education Department and local school districts. Cohen lives in DeWitt with her husband.



**Jean Desravines**

*CEO, New Leaders*

Jean Desravines serves as the chief executive officer of New Leaders, a national non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring high academic achievement for all children, especially students in poverty and students of color, by developing transformational school leaders and advancing the policies and practices that allow great leaders to succeed. Prior to his appointment as CEO, Mr. Desravines served as chief officer for cities and policy at New Leaders for five years. Jean has more than 15 years of professional leadership experience working with parents and communities on education issues and community development, with a primary focus on improving outcomes for children in underserved communities.

Before joining New Leaders, Mr. Desravines served as senior counselor to the chancellor of New York City's public school system. He has also served as the executive director for the Office of Parent and Community Engagement, chief of staff to the senior counselor for Education Policy, and director for community relations at the New York City Department of Education, as well as director of organizational development and community programming for the Faith Center for Community Development, Inc.

Mr. Desravines earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from St. Francis College and a master's degree in Public Administration from New York University, where he was the recipient of the Dean's Scholarship - the school's most prestigious scholarship. Mr. Desravines and his wife Melissa reside in Long Island and have two children.



**Elizabeth Dickey**

*President, Bank Street College of Education*

Appointed in 2008, Elizabeth D. Dickey is Bank Street's sixth president. She received her B.A. in Art History from Lake Forest College in 1967, and her M.Ed. and Ed.D. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where she studied educational psychology. In addition, she held a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in the Yale University Medical School Department of Psychiatry from 1978-80 where she worked with Dan Levinson on his Adult Development Research Project.

Prior to her appointment at Bank Street, President Dickey was at The New School for seventeen years. Initially Dean of The New School/General Studies, she then served as Provost for several years before taking a faculty appointment at Milano in The New School for Urban Policy. There she resumed her research activities related to adult development. Prior to her time at The New School, President Dickey held faculty and administrative posts at Antioch College.



**Stanley Druckenmiller**

*Former Chairman & President, Duquesne Capital*

Stanley Druckenmiller is the former Chairman and President of Duquesne Capital, which he founded in 1981. He closed the hedge fund in August 2010 because he felt unable to deliver high returns to his clients. Mr. Druckenmiller was the lead portfolio manager at George Soros's Quantum Fund from 1988-2000.

In 2009, Mr. Druckenmiller was the most charitable man in America, giving \$705 million to foundations that support medical research, education, and anti-poverty work. Mr. Druckenmiller is Chairman of the Board of Harlem Children's Zone, which was founded by his fellow Bowdoin College alumnus Geoffrey Canada. In 2006, Druckenmiller gave \$25 million to the organization. Mr. Druckenmiller and his wife are also principal sponsors of the New York City AIDS Walk.



**Senator John Flanagan**

*Chair, Senate Education Committee*

Senator John J. Flanagan represents the Second Senate District, which includes the entire Town of Smithtown and portions of both the Town of Brookhaven and the Town of Huntington. He was first elected to represent this portion of Suffolk County in 2002.

Senator Flanagan is currently the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Education. He has been a constant voice for educational quality in New York State with a long history of fighting to ensure that all regions get their fair share of State Aid to reduce class size and to protect property taxpayers.

To enhance safety in all schools he represents, Senator Flanagan has supported the Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (Project SAVE) and worked to permanently extend the Child Safety Zone law which gives otherwise ineligible children access to bus service. And to help provide all students with the ability to succeed, he has also expanded funding for pre-kindergarten programs, made college more affordable by maintaining funding for New York State's tuition assistance program and also has been supportive of the college savings programs that allow for tax-free savings and increased deductions for future college tuition payments.

Senator Flanagan resides in East Northport with his wife, the former Lisa Perez of Maryland. Together, they have raised three children including a daughter who recently graduated from college, a son who is currently attending college and a younger son who is a student in the Northport-East Northport School District.



**Patricia Gallagher**

*Lake Placid School Board Member & Lake Placid Community Alliance for Responsible Excellence in Education (C.A.R.E.E.)*

Patricia Gallagher was born in Wilmington, NY and attended Lake Placid Elementary and Lake Placid High School. She graduated from Alfred State University of New York Nursing School in 1986. She received her RNFA from Delaware Community College in 1995 and her B.S. in Nursing from Regents College in New York in 2001. Patti and her husband, Chris, have 3 children who attend Lake Placid public schools. Patti has been an emergency room nurse, a traveling nurse, and a labor and delivery nurse. Since 1993, she has worked full-time as an Orthopedic CRNFA for Lake Placid Sports Medicine Center. She has been involved in the FRIENDS parent-teacher organization at the Lake Placid Elementary School, a C.A.R.E.E. member and assists with the medical tent for the Lake Placid Ironman event.

Patti was elected to the Lake Placid School Board in May 2012. She became actively involved in her school district because it became clear that the perspective of the parents with children currently enrolled in school was needed.



**Chancellor Matthew Goldstein**  
*Chancellor, City University of New York*

Dr. Goldstein has served in senior academic and administrative positions for more than 30 years, including president of Baruch College, president of the Research Foundation, acting vice chancellor for academic affairs of CUNY and president of Adelphi University. He has held faculty positions at several colleges and universities and has written extensively on mathematics and statistics.

Under Dr. Goldstein's leadership, CUNY is experiencing a widely lauded transformation. The University has raised academic standards, improved student performance, increased enrollment, built its faculty corps, created new colleges and schools, and expanded its research capacity.

Currently, Dr. Goldstein is a member of the Board of Trustees of the JP Morgan Funds, the Museum of Jewish Heritage, the Business-Higher Education Forum, as well as a director of the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education, ex officio. By appointment of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, he is co-chair of the New York City Regional Economic Development Council. He previously served as chair of the 2010 New York City Charter Revision Commission at the appointment of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg.

Dr. Goldstein earned his doctorate from the University of Connecticut in mathematical statistics, and a bachelor's degree with high honors in statistics and mathematics from CUNY's City College. Chancellor Goldstein has two children who were educated in the public school system.



**Karen Hawley Miles**  
*President & Executive Director, Education Resource Strategies*

Karen Hawley Miles is the president and executive director of Education Resource Strategies, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to helping urban school systems organize talent, time and money to create great schools at scale. Dr. Miles has worked intensively with Syracuse and other large urban school systems across the nation to analyze and improve their funding systems, school level resource use, and human capital and professional development systems.

Dr. Miles has taught school leaders at Harvard University, in school districts, for New Leaders for New Schools, and the Broad Institute for School Boards. She has a B.A. in Economics and Political Science from Yale University and a Doctorate in Education from Harvard University, specializing in school organization, change and finance. Dr. Miles is the parent of two twin boys who were educated in the public education system.



**Michael Horn**  
*Executive Director & Co-Founder, Innosight Institute*

Michael Horn is the co-founder and executive director of the Innosight Institute, a non-profit think tank devoted to applying the theories of disruptive innovation to solve problems in the social sector. He has written widely about the emergence of digital learning and how to blend technology with traditional classroom instruction. Mr. Horn has testified at many state legislative sessions and is a frequent keynote speaker at education conferences and planning sessions around the country.

In addition, he serves on a variety of boards, including as an executive editor of Education Next, a journal of opinion and research about education policy, and as a board member of Fidelis, a technology company that provides an end-to-end education solution for the military-to-civilian career transition. Mr. Horn is also an advisory board member for the Shared Learning Collaborative, a joint initiative funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation, as well as on the Education Innovation Advisory Board at Arizona State University. Mr. Horn holds an MBA from the Harvard Business School and a BA in history from Yale University.



**Thomas Kane**

*Professor of Education & Economics, Harvard Graduate School of Education*

Thomas Kane is Professor of Education and Economics at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Over the past three years, he has directed the Measures of Effective Teaching project for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the largest study of instructional practice ever undertaken. His research has influenced thinking on a range of topics in k-12 and higher education, including: measuring teacher effectiveness, school accountability, college financial aid, charter schools, race conscious college admissions, and the economic payoff to a community college education. Mr. Kane has been a faculty member at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and UCLA's School of Public Affairs as well as serving as a senior economist in President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. He has held visiting fellowships at the Brookings Institution and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. Mr. Kane is a public school parent.



**Commissioner John B. King, Jr.**

*Commissioner, New York State Department of Education and President, University of the State of New York*

Dr. John B. King, Jr. was appointed by the Board of Regents to serve as Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York (USNY) on May 16, 2011. USNY is comprised of more than 7,000 public and independent elementary and secondary schools; 270 public, independent and proprietary colleges and universities; 7,000 libraries; 900 museums; 25 public broadcasting facilities; 3,000 historical repositories; 436 proprietary schools; 48 professions encompassing more than 761,000 licensees plus 240,000 certified educators; and services for children and adults with disabilities.

Dr. King previously served as Senior Deputy Commissioner for P-12 Education at the New York State Education Department. In that role, Dr. King was responsible for ensuring quality and accountability for New York State's education system, which serves 3.1 million students. Dr. King coordinated the development of New York State's successful Race to the Top application, which earned the second highest point total of the winning states in Round 2 and secured \$696.6 million to support the P-12 education reform agenda of the Board of Regents: (1) making New York State's educational standards and assessments more rigorous and better aligned to college and career readiness; (2) developing a comprehensive P-20 data system and instructional reporting system that provides accurate, actionable, and interconnected data to support improved decision making at all levels of education; (3) improving the preparation, evaluation, professional development, and support of teachers and school leaders; and (4) working with districts and partner organizations to turn around the state's lowest performing schools.

Dr. King brings to his role extensive experience leading urban public schools that are closing the achievement gap and preparing students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Prior to his appointment as Senior Deputy Commissioner, Dr. King served as a Managing Director with Uncommon Schools, a non-profit charter management organization that operates some of the highest performing urban public schools in New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Prior to joining Uncommon Schools, Dr. King was Co-Director and Principal of Roxbury Preparatory Charter School. Under his leadership, Roxbury Prep's students attained the highest state exam scores of any urban middle school in Massachusetts, closed the racial achievement gap, and outperformed students from not only the Boston district schools but also the city's affluent suburbs. Prior to founding Roxbury Prep, Dr. King taught high school history in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. King earned a B.A. in Government from Harvard University, an M.A. in the Teaching of Social Studies from Teachers College, Columbia University, a J.D. from Yale Law School, and an Ed.D. in Educational Administrative Practice from Teachers College, Columbia University. In February 2011, Dr. King was appointed by U.S. Secretary Arne Duncan to serve on the U.S. Department of Education's Equity and Excellence Commission. In addition, Dr. King has served on the board of New Leaders for New schools and is a 2008 Aspen Institute-New Schools Entrepreneurial Leaders for Public Education Fellow.



**Eduardo Martí**

*Retired Vice Chancellor of Community Colleges, CUNY, retiring*

Eduardo Martí is an experienced educator who has led several community colleges with distinction for more than 25 years. Dr. Martí is retiring as Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges at CUNY, a position he has held since 2000. Previously, Dr. Martí was the President of Queensborough Community College, as well as President of SUNY’s Corning Community College, and for eight years, as President of SUNY’s Tompkins Cortland Community College.

An advocate for community college education, high standards and traditional values of education, Dr. Martí serves on the Board of Trustees of Teachers College at Columbia University, as well as the Community College Research Center Advisory Board of Teachers College at Columbia University.

Additionally, he serves as Chair of the Board for the Hispanic Educational Telecommunications System (HETS), a member of the Board of Governors of the Council for Aid to Education, and of The College Board’s Advisory Board on Community Colleges. Having served on the Board of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and was a member of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in October 2010. Dr. Martí holds a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, and Ph.D. degrees in biology from New York University. Dr. Martí is a parent and grandparent of public school students.



**Sara Mead**

*Partner, Bellwether Education Partners*

Sara Mead is a principal with Bellwether Education Partners, a non-profit organization working to improve educational outcomes for low-income students. In this role, she writes and conducts policy analysis on issues related to early childhood education and k-12 education reform and provides strategic advising support to clients serving high-need students. She has written extensively on education issues including federal and states education policy, charter schools, teacher effectiveness, and early childhood education. Her work has been featured in numerous media outlets including The Washington Post, New York Times, and USA Today, and she has appeared on CBS and ABC News and on NPR. Before joining Bellwether, she directed the New America Foundation’s Early Education Initiative. She has also worked for Education Sector, the Progressive Policy Institute, and the U.S. Department of Education. She serves on the District

of Columbia Public Charter School Board, which authorizes charter schools in the District of Columbia and holds them accountable for results, and on the board of Democrats for Education Reform. The daughter, granddaughter, and sister of public school educators, she holds a bachelor’s degree in public policy from Vanderbilt University.



**Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan**

*Chair, Assembly Education Committee*

Catherine Nolan represents the 37th Assembly District in Queens County, which includes the historic New York City neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Ridgewood, Long Island City, Queensbridge, Ravenswood, Astoria, Woodside, Maspeth, Dutch Kills and Blissville. She was first elected to the Assembly in 1984.

A resident of the district for most of her life, she is a graduate of St. Aloysius R.C. School and Grover Cleveland High School. Assemblywoman Nolan graduated from New York University cum laude with a B.A. degree in Political Science.

Speaker Sheldon Silver appointed Assemblywoman Nolan to Chair the Assembly’s Committee on Education in 2006. She has spearheaded efforts to achieve class size reduction, universal pre-k, middle school initiatives, improve high school graduation rates and other measures that will ultimately mean success for the more than three million school children in New York State. As a parent of a public school student, Assemblywoman Nolan brings a parent’s perspective to ongoing education debates.



### **Michael Rebell**

*Executive Director, Campaign for Educational Equity, Teachers College, Columbia University*

Michael A. Rebell is an experienced litigator, administrator, researcher, and scholar in the field of education law. He is the executive director of the Campaign for Educational Equity and Professor of Law and Educational Practice at Teachers College, Columbia University. The Campaign seeks to promote equity and excellence in education and to overcome the gap in educational access and achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged students throughout the United States. He is also a member of the national Equity and Excellence Commission that is preparing a report that will be presented to the Secretary of Education and the Congress.

Previously, Mr. Rebell was the co-founder, executive director and counsel for the Campaign for Fiscal Equity. In *CFE v. State of New York*, the Court of Appeals, New York State's highest court, declared that all children are entitled under the state Constitution to the "opportunity for a sound basic education" and it ordered the State of New York to reform its education finance system to meet these constitutional requirements. Mr. Rebell has also litigated numerous major class action lawsuits, including *Jose P. v. Mills*, which involved a plaintiff class of 160,000 students with disabilities. He also served as a court-appointed special master in the Boston special education case, *Allen v. Parks*.

Mr. Rebell is the author or co-author of five books, and dozens of articles on issues of law and education. In addition to his research and litigation activities, Mr. Rebell is a frequent lecturer and consultant on education law. He is also currently adjunct Professor of Law at Columbia Law School and previously was a Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School, and for many years, a Visiting Lecturer at the Yale Law School. Mr. Rebell is a graduate of Harvard College and Yale Law School. Mr. Rebell is a public school parent.



### **Carrie Remis**

*Executive Director, Parent Power Project*

Carrie Remis began her career in education in 1994 as an advocate for New York State's community college system, representing both the college presidents and boards of trustees. She later served on the administration of the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music and the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development. As Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management at the Warner School, she led the overhaul of the teacher and administrator recruitment program in response to sweeping changes to New York State's teacher credentialing system enacted by former Commissioner Richard Mills.

It was as a parent leader in the Rochester City School District that Ms. Remis became concerned about inequities within the public school system and the limited opportunities for meaningful community participation to address these systemic problems. In 2006 she co-founded the Rochester Fund for Educational Accountability, a volunteer organization of professionals who provided pro bono advocacy and policy guidance for Rochester's low-income families encountering barriers to their participation. She frequently consults on Title I, shared decision-making and transparency to Rochester's faith community, grassroots organizations and parent groups working for educational justice.

In 2007, Ms. Remis joined the administration of the former Nazareth Schools, an independent k-12 Catholic school system with a long tradition of excellence and diversity. As Director of Enrollment Management, she became convinced of the transformative power of school choice in the lives of students living in poverty. The Parent Power Project is in large part inspired by her work with Nazareth families seeking transfers from failing city schools.

Ms. Remis is a former member of the Democrat and Chronicle's Board of Contributors and frequent contributor of articles on education reform. She serves on the National School Choice Week Coalition, the Rochester Student Lobbyist Association and the New York Campaign for Achievement Now advisory board. Ms. Remis and her husband Tom have a daughter in a public high school in the Greater Rochester region.





**José Luis Rodríguez**

*Founder & CEO, Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network, Inc (HITN).*

José Luis Rodríguez is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network, Inc. (HITN), which was established in 1983 as a non-profit organization with the purpose of advancing the educational, cultural, and socio-economic aspirations of the Hispanic community.

Mr. Rodríguez's vision to create a national television network was realized in 1987, with the launch of HITN-TV: the first and only Latino-controlled, non-commercial, "PBS-like" Spanish-language network in the US, with service that reaches more than 40 million households nationwide with carriage on both Satellite and Cable.

HITN-TV's award-winning programming - including *En Forma con Carlos Pina*, *Dialogo de Costa a Costa*, and *La Vida Privata de las Plantas* - reflects Mr. Rodríguez's continuing commitment to education. Many HITN programs were developed with youth and education in mind and include distance learning strategies.

Mr. Rodríguez's lifelong advocacy of education as a way for Hispanics to succeed in and contribute to the world made HITN's participation in One Economy's Connect to Compete initiative a foregone conclusion, giving HITN the opportunity to assist in building a foundation of digital empowerment for lower income families on a national level.

Mr. Rodríguez received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Puerto Rico in Business Administration, then moved to New York City to pursue graduate work in School Administration and Supervision at Teachers College of Columbia University. With over 25 years of experience in education, he has served as a teacher, a United Federation of Teachers delegate (elected citywide), a National Education Association representative, a daycare center director, a guidance counselor, an assistant principal, and - at age 25 - the youngest principal in New York City's public school history. Mr. Rodríguez is a parent and grandparent of public school students.



**Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey**

*President, Say Yes to Education*

Mary Anne Schmitt-Carey is President of Say Yes to Education, Inc. (Say Yes), a national non-profit foundation committed to changing the lives of inner-city youth through the promise of post-secondary education and the delivery of comprehensive support services. Additionally, Say Yes to Education works with local government officials and stakeholders to leverage funding and offer wrap-around services to students and families in order to improve educational outcomes and college attainment. Ms. Schmitt-Carey is responsible for helping Syracuse reallocate resources to support their reform strategy.

Ms. Schmitt-Carey joined Say Yes from New American Schools (NAS), where she was the President, and the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, DC. Prior to joining NAS, Schmitt-Carey worked for the U.S. Department of Education as Director of the Goals 2000 Community Project, where she created and managed a support network for local communities seeking to improve education.

Ms. Schmitt-Carey earned her MBA degree from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in May 2001 and graduated magna cum laude from SUNY Albany in May 1987, earning a B.A. degree in Political Science and English. Ms. Schmitt-Carey is a parent.



**Sanford I. Weill**

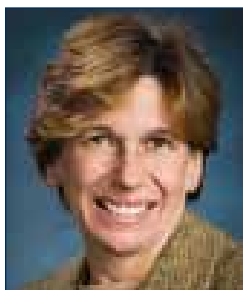
*Former CEO & Chairman, Citigroup*

Sanford “Sandy” I. Weill was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York and married his wife Joan shortly after graduating from Cornell University in 1955. Weill has had a successful career in buying, improving, and selling large companies.

In 1960, Weill and three partners started a small brokerage: Carter, Berlind, Potoma & Weill. Over the next 20 years, Weill built the brokerage into the financial powerhouse Shearson, the second largest company in the securities industry. He sold Shearson to American Express in 1981, became President of American Express and turned around their failing insurance operation, Fireman’s Fund.

In 1993, he regained control of Shearson and bought Travelers Group. In April 1998, Travelers Group merged with Citicorp, the parent company of Citibank, to create Citigroup, Inc.

At first, Weill served as Co-Chairman and Co-CEO with John Reed, but in 2000 Weill became the sole Chairman and CEO of Citigroup. Under Weill’s leadership, Citigroup achieved unprecedented growth, earning \$13 billion in 2001. Weill stepped aside as CEO in 2003 and retired from the Chairmanship in 2006. Sandy and Joan Weill live in Greenwich, Connecticut. Weill is very well known for his active philanthropy.



**Randi Weingarten**

*President, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO*

Randi Weingarten is president of the 1.5 million-member American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, which represents teachers; paraprofessionals and school-related personnel; higher education faculty and staff; nurses and other healthcare professionals; local, state and federal employees; and early childhood educators. With her leadership, the union has pursued an agenda that reforms education by holding everyone accountable, revamping how teachers are evaluated, and ensuring that children have access to broad and deep curriculum as well as wraparound services. Of particular note is the AFT’s leadership in the “Reconnecting McDowell” partnership, the unprecedented public-private partnership to enhance educational opportunity for children in the McDowell County, West Virginia public schools in Central Appalachia, while addressing the underlying problems caused by severe and chronic poverty and economic decline.

Ms. Weingarten served for 12 years as president of the United Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2, representing approximately 200,000 nonsupervisory educators in the New York City public school system, as well as home child care providers and other workers in health, law and education.

Ms. Weingarten also served on Governor Pataki’s 2004 State Commission on Education Reform (a.k.a. the “Zarb Commission”).

Ms. Weingarten holds degrees from Cornell University’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Cardozo School of Law. Born in 1957 and raised in Rockland County, New York, Weingarten now resides on Long Island and in Washington, D.C.



**Irma Zardoya**

*President & CEO, NYC Leadership Academy*

Irma Zardoya is the President and CEO of the NYC Leadership Academy, a national independent non-profit organization that works with states, school districts, universities and other organizations to develop effective leadership programs, with a focus on preparing and supporting principals to lead high-need schools. Born and raised in the Bronx, Ms. Zardoya has been an innovative agent for change on behalf of New York City public school students. Prior to joining the Leadership Academy, she worked with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) in the citywide roll-out of the accountability tools and the establishment of collaborative inquiry teacher teams in every school.

From 2003 to 2006, Ms. Zardoya served as Superintendent of the former Region One in the Bronx, where she oversaw a portfolio of 134 schools. Prior, Ms. Zardoya served as Community School District 10 Superintendent for nine years and also as Deputy Superintendent of Community School District One on the Lower East Side, where she was instrumental in the development of “schools of choice,” an initiative that supported small learner centered nurturing environments for students. She was principal of Community School 211, The Bilingual School, for nine years and, before that, the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Community School District 12. Ms. Zardoya began her career as a bilingual professional assistant and taught for seven years.

Ms. Zardoya was a member of the advisory group that developed the Principals’ Institute at Bank Street College in the late 1980’s which addressed the need to recruit and develop minorities and women to become principals in the New York City educational system. She has also taught as an adjunct professor at Bank Street College and Long Island University. She earned her M.S. degree from City College in Supervision and Administration and a B.S. degree from Thomas More College, Fordham University. Ms. Zardoya also participated in the Superintendent’s Leadership Institute at Harvard University’s Kennedy School for Government, which was sponsored by The Wallace Foundation. Ms. Zardoya is a parent and grandparent.



**Chancellor Nancy Zimpher**

*Chancellor, State University of New York*

In June 2009, Nancy L. Zimpher became the 12th Chancellor of the State University of New York, the nation’s largest comprehensive system of higher education. Since that time, she has led the university in creating and launching a systemwide strategic plan called The Power of SUNY, with the central goal of harnessing SUNY’s potential to drive economic revitalization and create a better future for every community throughout New York.

Dr. Zimpher is active in numerous state and national education organizations, and is a leader in the areas of teacher preparation, urban education, and university-community engagement.

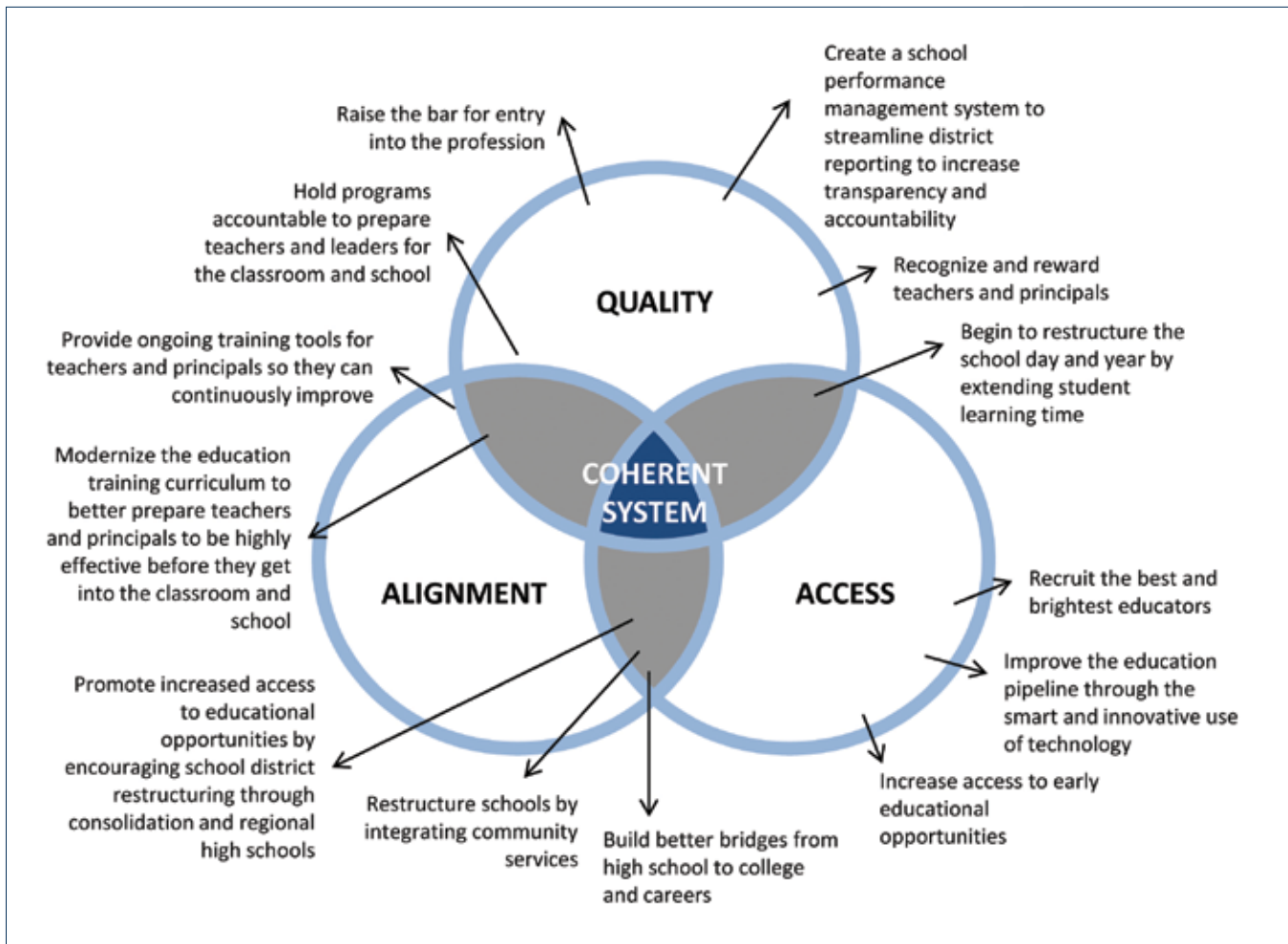
Prior to coming to SUNY, Dr. Zimpher served as president of the University of Cincinnati, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and executive dean of the Professional Colleges and dean of the College of Education at The Ohio State University. Chancellor Zimpher is the parent of three children, all of whom were educated in the public school system.



## **APPENDIX II**

### **NY Commission Recommendations by Theme**

## NY Commission Recommendations by Theme



## **APPENDIX III**

### **Regional Public Hearings**

## Regional Public Hearings Held by the New NY Education Reform Commission

Monday, April 30, 2012	Inaugural Meeting of the Commission in Albany	The State Capitol Albany, NY
Tuesday, June 26, 2012	Meeting of the Commission in NYC	SUNY Global Center New York, NY
Tuesday, July 10, 2012	Regional Hearing (Capital District Region)	Empire State Plaza Albany, NY
Wednesday, July 18, 2012	Regional Hearing (Western NY Region)	Stanley Makowski Early Childhood Center, Buffalo, NY
Thursday, July 26, 2012	Regional Hearing (New York City I)	Hostos Community College Bronx, New York
Wednesday, August 8, 2012	Regional Hearing (Southern Tier)	Binghamton University Vestal, NY
Tuesday, August 14, 2012	Regional Hearing (Central NY)	Lemoyne College Syracuse, NY
Tuesday, August 28, 2012	Regional Hearing (North Country)	Lake Placid Convention Center Lake Placid, NY
Monday, September 10, 2012	Regional Hearing (Mid-Hudson)	SUNY Orange County Community College, Newburgh, NY
Monday, September 24, 2012	Regional Hearing (Mohawk Valley)	Mohawk Valley Community College Utica, NY
Thursday, October 11, 2012	Regional Hearing (Long Island)	SUNY College at Old Westbury, Old Westbury, NY
Tuesday, October 16, 2012	Regional Hearing (New York City II)	Bank Street College of Education New York, NY
Monday, October 22, 2012	Regional Hearing (Finger Lakes)	Rochester City Hall Rochester, NY



## **APPENDIX IV**

### **Executive Order**



## Executive Order

### No. 44 Establishing the New NY Education Reform Commission

WHEREAS, a strong public education system is the cornerstone of a democratic society, helping to strengthen the middle class, lift families and individuals out of poverty and fuel economic growth and innovation; and

WHEREAS, the public education system provides our children the opportunity to become productive members of society, obtain a college education and thrive in an increasingly competitive world; and

WHEREAS, New York State and local spending on public education exceeds \$53 billion annually – the highest per-pupil spending level in the nation – yet New York ranks 38th in graduation rate as of 2011 and scores below the national average in 4th and 8th grade mathematics on the Nation’s Report Card, and only 37 percent of its students are college ready upon graduation from high school; and

WHEREAS, the State faces unprecedented economic and educational challenges that require fundamental changes in the way our government and school systems do business; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of New York, do hereby order as follows:

#### A. The New NY Education Reform Commission

1. There is hereby established the New NY Education Reform Commission (“the Commission”). The Commission shall provide guidance and advice to the Governor on matters pertaining to education policy, performance and innovation.

2. The Governor shall appoint up to 25 voting members to the Commission. The members of the Commission shall include, but not be limited to, representatives of academic institutions, representatives of public employees, and stakeholders with experience in education policy.

3. No member of the Commission shall be disqualified from holding any public office or employment, nor shall he or she forfeit any such office or employment by virtue of his or her appointment hereunder. All members of the Commission and its subcommittees shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

4. The Governor shall designate a Chair, or co-Chairs, from among the members of the Commission. Every agency, department, office, division or public authority of this State shall cooperate with the Commission and furnish such information and assistance as the Commission determines is reasonably necessary to accomplish its purposes.

5. A majority of the total members of the Commission who have been appointed shall constitute a quorum, and all recommendations of the Commission shall require approval of a majority of its total members. Any subcommittee shall present its findings to the Commission for approval.

6. The Commission shall attempt to engage and solicit the additional input of a broad and diverse range of groups, organizations, and individuals who are not members of the Commission, including, without limitation, members of school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and representatives of public sector employees, and may request documents, conduct public hearings, hear the testimony of witnesses and take any other actions it deems necessary to carry out its purposes.



## **B. Duties and Purpose**

1. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Commission shall study the best national and international public education models and best practices in order to make recommendations regarding ways to increase educational productivity and student performance in New York State.

2. The Commission shall comprehensively review and assess New York State's education system, including its structure, operation and processes, with the goal of uncovering successful models and strategies and developing long-term efficiencies that will create significant savings while improving student achievement and providing students with a high quality education. Such review shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. studying teacher recruitment and performance, including incentives to keep the best teachers, and the teacher preparation, certification and evaluation systems;
- b. analyzing factors that support student achievement from pre-kindergarten through high school in order to ensure that all students are on track to graduate from high school ready for college, careers, and active citizenship;
- c. evaluating education funding, distribution of State aid, and operating costs to identify efficiencies in spending while maintaining the quality of educational programs, including special education;
- d. increasing parent and family engagement, including examining the school calendar and district-level policies that increase parental involvement;
- e. examining the unique set of issues faced by high-need urban and rural school districts, including comparing best practices and identifying the different services that these districts might require to be successful;
- f. analyzing the availability of technology and its best use in the classroom, including the accessibility of, and obstacles to, using technology in the classroom in light of the requirements and demands of the job market to best prepare our students; and
- g. examining the overall structure of New York's education system to determine whether it meets the needs of our students while respecting the taxpayer.

3. The Commission shall compare student achievement outcomes with education spending, focusing on districts that generate higher than average achievement per dollars spent, including high-need school districts that are providing students with the opportunity to receive a sound basic education, and identifying how school districts can boost student achievement without increasing spending.

4. The Commission shall submit preliminary recommendations to the Governor by December 1, 2012, or such other date as the Governor shall advise the Commission. The Commission shall make final recommendations to the Governor no later than September 1, 2013, at which time it shall terminate its work and be relieved of all responsibilities and duties hereunder, unless its authority is extended.

GIVEN under my hand and the Privy Seal of the  
State in the City of Albany this thirtieth  
day of April in the year two thousand twelve.

BY THE GOVERNOR  
Secretary to the Governor

