October 1, 2015

**RE: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

Dear New York Congressional Delegation Members:

The reauthorization of the Federal Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the top federal policy priority of the New York State Council of School Superintendents (“THE COUNCIL”) and school superintendents throughout the state.

As you are aware, this law has not been updated since passage of the “No Child Left Behind” act in 2001. Similar bills passed both the House and Senate in July, and are currently in the conference committee process. We write to request that you urge your leaders and colleagues to reach an agreement to reauthorize the outdated law with the changes expressed herein.

Current regulatory actions by the United States Department of Education (US DOE) have only made the reauthorization of this law that much more of a necessity. In dealing with the inflexibility of the underlying law, the current US DOE waiver process has created uncertainty and inequity in the application of federal requirements. In essence, US DOE has been unilaterally legislating national education policy in the absence of action by the Legislative Branch.

It is imperative that an agreement be reached between the House and the Senate to reauthorize this law in a form that will advance educational progress for New York’s students.

In reauthorizing ESEA, Congress must be careful to retain important elements of local control, reject privatization and “funds portability” schemes, and ensure an adequate funding mechanism that meets the goals of educating all the nation’s children.
Education standards should be state-developed, not dictated by federal mandates. Local control over curriculum should be maintained to the maximum extent possible.

Accountability should also be returned to the states, by allowing states to develop their own clear and appropriate accountability standards for schools. To the extent possible, use of a rewards system in accountability should replace punishment of schools.

Further, we ask that our representatives be cognizant of federal requirements that cause over-testing of students and create too great of a focus on “teaching to a test.” An estimated 20% of eligible New York students opted not to take this year’s federally-mandated grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and math assessments; in some schools the opt-out rate was as high as 90%. Within the reauthorization of ESEA, current federally-required annual testing for ELA and math in grades 3-8 should be replaced by tests administered once at each school level (elementary, middle, high school).

In addition to reducing federally-mandated testing, decisions regarding appropriate uses for assessments designed for school accountability and testing parameters for students with disabilities and English Language Learner (ELL) students should be shifted to the state level. In New York and elsewhere, the federal regulatory requirement for use of assessments in evaluating teachers has been derided by most educators and has caused considerable disruption in teaching and learning.

Finally – and most importantly – fully funding Title I of ESEA is absolutely imperative. It is unrealistic to expect students to achieve success without providing schools the necessary funding to meet higher standards.

It remains a priority to ensure that Title I funds continue to be distributed using a fair funding formula. The proposed Senate amendment to alter the formula to the disadvantage of New York schools should be rejected. School Improvement Grants must also continue to be distributed in a way that helps the schools and students who need it most and Title I funds must not be subject to portability or turned into vouchers.

ESEA should be reauthorized in a comprehensive undertaking, not in a piece-by-piece fashion. There are many intertwined issues within this law which are only appropriately addressed as a singular policy.

The knowledge and skill set of the next generation is our nation’s greatest commodity. Our students must not be left needing because of short-sighted austerity or political wrangling.
Our students must also not be subject to a one-size-fits-all policy approach to their futures.

We urge you, our elected federal representatives, to work together to adopt a new ESEA that meets the needs of New York’s students and to accomplish this as quickly as possible.

Signed:

Robert J. Reidy, Jr., Executive Director
New York State Council of School Superintendents

Charles Dedrick, Capital Region BOCES
Co-Chair COUNCIL Federal Legislative Committee

Mary-Beth Fiore, Elmira Heights Central School District
Co-Chair COUNCIL Federal Legislative Committee

Council Executive Committee

Maureen Donahue, Southwestern Central School
COUNCIL President

Patricia Sullivan-Kriss, Hauppauge UFSD
COUNCIL President-Elect

Neil O’Brien, Port Byron Central School
COUNCIL Immediate Past President

Phyllis S. Harrington, Ed.D., Oceanside


Kevin McGowan, Brighton CSD

Marie Wiles, Guilderland Central School District
Hudson Valley

Lauren Allan, Ardsley
William Donohue, Byram Hills CSD
Diana Bowers, Haldane Central School District
Dr. Edward R. Fuhrman, Jr., Croton-Harmon Union free School District
Joseph L. Ricca, Ed.D., Elmsford UFSD
Laura Mitchell, Garrison UFSD
Dr. Kris Harrison, Irvington UFSD
Andrew Selesnick, Katonah-Lewisboro School District
Dr. Lyn McKay, Chappaqua Central School District
Peter J. Mustich, Rye Neck UFSD
Joseph Hochreiter, Hendrick Hudson
Jere Hochman, Bedford Central School District
Kenneth R Freeston, North Salem Central School District
Ray Sanchez, Ossining UFSD
Mary Fox-Alter, Pleasantville UFSD
Jonathan Ross, Ed.D., Blind Brook-Rye UFSD
David Fine, Peekskill City School District
Victoria S. Kniewel, Edgemont
Valencia F. Douglas, Pocantico Hills School District
Dr. Susan Guiney, Mount Pleasant Central School District
Ellen Bergman, Mt Pleasant Blythedale UFSD
Dr. Brenda Myers, Valhalla UFSD
James T. Langlois, Ed.D., Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES
Dr. Paul R. Fried, White Plains City School District
Dr. Walter Moran, Eastchester Union Free School District
Dr. Peter Giarrizzo, Pelham Public Schools
Sean Michel, Chester UFSD
Ileana Eckert, Haverstraw-Stony Point C.S.D.
William J. Hecht, Orange-Ulster BOCES
Kenneth W. Eastwood, Middletown City School District
Dr. J. Thomas Morton, Clarkstown Central School District
Dr. James J Montesano, Nyack Public Schools
Marco F. Pochintesta, Pearl River UFSD
Brian C. Monahan, Minisink Valley CSD
David Leach, Warwick Valley Central School District
Roberta L. Greene, Washingtonville Central School
Mary Jean Marsico, Rockland BOCES
Dr. Ralph P. Ferrie, Sewanhaka Central High School District
Patrick Manley, Franklin Square Union Free School District
Charlie Cardillo, Manhasset UFSD
Robert Katulak, New Hyde Park-Garden City Park
Kathleen A. Mooney, Ed.D., Port Washington Union Free School District
Rosario Agostaro, Rondout Valley Central School District
Kate Farrell, Catskill Central School District
Nicholas J. Savin, Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES
Thomas J. O’Brien, Roxbury
Seth M. Turner, Saugerties Central School District
Neal S. Miller, Cornwall Central School District
Neil Howard, Taconic Hills Central School District
Michael Tierney, Dover UFSD
Susan LS Brown, Germantown Central School District
Deborah A. Haab, Highland Central School District
Greer Rychcik, Hyde Park Central School District
Brendan Lyons, Arlington
Philip D. D’Angelo, Jr., Millbrook Central School District
Maria C. Rice, New Paltz Central School District
Andy Irvin, Carmel Central School District
Joan Carbone, Pine Bush Central School District
Martin D. Handler, Pine Plains Central Schools
Paul Finch, Red Hook Central School District
Richard M. Hooley, Ed. D., Dutchess Country BOCES
Tammy Mangus, Monticello Central School District
Robert M. Dufour, Eldred Central School District
Ivan J. Katz, Ed.D., Fallsburg Central School District
William Silver, Liberty CSD
Deborah L. Fox, Livingston Manor Central School
John Evans, Roscoe Central School District

Long Island

David J. Flatley, Carle Place UFSD
Lisa J. Ruiz, East Rockaway School District
Dr. Kishore Kuncham, Freeport Public Schools
Dr. Edward Fale, Valley Stream 24
David Weiss, Long Beach City School District
Melissa Burak, Lynbrook Union Free School District
James Hunderfund, Malverne UFSD
Dominick Palma, Merrick UFSD
David S. Feller, North Merrick UFSD
Dr Elaine Kanas, East Williston
John DeTommaso, Bellmore-Merrick CHSD
Edward K Melnick, North Shore Central School District
Nicholas A. Stirling, Valley Stream 30
Dr. Ralph Marino, Jr., Hewlett-Woodmere UFSD
Dr. Mary T. Kelly, Amityville Union Free School District
Linda Rozzi, Babylon UFSD
Glen A. Eschbach, North Babylon UFSD
Terrence Clark, Bethpage Union Free School District
Lynda G. Adams, Connetquot Central School District of Islip
Robert A. Gerold, Middle Country Central School District
Craig G. Carr, Ed.D., Central Islip Union Free School District
James W. Polansky, Huntington UFSD
Susan A. Schnebel, Islip UFSD
Henry L. Grishman, Jericho Union Free School District
Timothy T. Eagen, Kings Park CSD
Charles Murphy, Island Trees UFSD
Tonie McDonald, Levittown Public Schools
Daniel E. Giordano, Lindenhurst UFSD
Gordon Brosdal, Mount Sinai
Robert Banzer, Norhtport- EastNorthport UFSD
Dr. Laura Seinfeld, Oyster Bay-East Norwich CSD
Kenneth R. Bossert, Ed.D., Port Jefferson UFSD
Michael F. Ring, Ed.D., Rocky Point Union Free School District
Dr. Walter F. Schartner, Smithtown CSD
Dr. Walter F. Schartner, Sayville UFSD
James J. Grossane, Ed. D., Smithtown Central School District
Cheryl Pedisich, Three Village Central School District
Cynthia Stachowski, Little Flower UFSD
Bernadette Burns, West Islip UFSD
Dr. Lois R. Favre, Superintendent, Bridgehampton UFSD
Dr. Anne H. Smith, Mattituck-Cutchogue Union Free School District
Mark A. Nocero, Eastport-South Manor Central School District
Dr. Michael R. Lonergan, Longwood CSD
J. Philip Perna, Montauk UFSD
Ronald M. Masera, Ed.D., Remsenburg-Speonk UFSD
Michael R. Radday, Westhampton Beach UFSD
Joseph Famularo, Bellmore UFSD

Capital Region

James D. Hoffman, Averill Park Central
Joseph P. Dragone, Ph.D., Ballston Spa Central School District
Dr. Timothy W. Mundell, Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central School District
Stephen Tomlinson, Broadalbin-Perth Central School District
Robert Horan, Schodack School District
Cheryl A. Nuciforo, Chatham Central School District
Carl J. Mummenthey, Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District
Christine Crowley, Duanesburg Central School
Jody Monroe, Bethlehem
Shannon Shine, Galway Central Schools
Michael B. Vanyo, Gloversville Enlarged School District
Kenneth A. Facin, Hoosick Falls Central School District
Brian M. Corey, Jefferson CSD
Robert DeLilli, Greater Johnstown SD
D. Joseph Corr, North Colonie
Jon W. Peterson, Mayfield Central School
Michael J. McCarthy, Mechanicville City School District
Leslie H. Whitcomb, New Lebanon CSD
Kimberly Hromada, Edinburg Common School
Dr. Leslie Ford, Northville Central School District
Amy V. Goodell, Hoosic Valley CSD
Thomas Jennings, Schenevus Central School District
David M Blanchard, Schoharie Central School District
Dr. Stan Maziejka, Stillwater CSD
Dr. Angelina Maloney, Brunswick(Brittonkill) CSD
John Carmello, Troy City School District
Cynthia DeDominick, Lansingburgh
George Zini, Kinderhook CSD
Patrick Pomerville, Waterford-Halfmoon Union Free School District
Dr. Lori S Caplan, Watervliet City School District
Thomas Sincavage, Wells CSD
William Diamond, Worcester Central School District
Thomas B. Reardon Ed.D., Wynantskill Union Free School District
Jonathan W. Buhner, South Colonie Central School District
Patrick M. McGrath Jr., Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake CSD
Cosimo Tangorra, Jr., Ed.D., Niskayuna Central School District
Paul Jenkins, Glens Falls City School District
Michael Patton, South Glens Falls Central School District
Douglas W. Huntley, Ed.D., Queensbury Union Free School District
Jan Jehring, Argyle Central School
Michael J. Graney, Bolton Central School District
Vince Canini, Cambridge Central School District
Bernard T. McCann, North Warren Central School
Kevin Froats, Fort Ann Central School District
Jeffery Ziegler, Fort Edward Union Free School District
Linda J. Goewey, Hudson Falls Central
Mark Bessen, Granville Central School District
Andrew Cook, Hartford Central School District
Mark Fish, Greenwich CSD
Mark Brand, Indian Lake Central School District
Patrick M. Dee, Lake George Central School
Michael J. Markwica, Johnsburg Central School
David Glover, Salem Central School District
Michael M. Piccirillo, Saratoga Springs City School District
Dr. Oliver Robinson, Shenendehowa Central School District

North Country

John S. Goralski, Warrensburg Central Schools
Donna M. Andre, Brushton-Moira Central School District
Loretta Fowler, Chateaugay Central School District
Stanley Harper, Salmon River Central School District
Daniel J. Mayberry, Keene Central School
Dr. Roger P. Catania, Lake Placid Central School District
William J. Larrow, Moriah Central
Alan M. Tessier, St Regis Falls Central School
Jonathan A. Parks, Saranac Central School District
Seth McGowan, Tupper Lake Central School District
Kyle L. Faulkner, Alexandria Central
William A. Gregory, Canton Central School District
Thomas Burns, St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES
Peter J. Turner, Carthage Central School
Scott N. Connell, Copenhagen Central School District
Lauren F. French, Gouverneur Central School District
Robert Finster, Harrisville CSD
Travis W. Hoover, LaFargeville Central School
Lynn M. Roy, Madrid-Waddington Central School District
Patrick Brady, Massena Central School District
James Cruikshank, Norwood-Norfolk Central School District
Timothy M. Vernsey, Ogdensburg City School District
Darin P. Saiff, Parishville-Hopkinton CSD
James Kettrick, Indian River Central School District
Joann Chambers, Potsdam Central School District
Frederick E. Hall, Jr., Sackets Harbor Central School District

**Central New York**

David Hamilton, Baldwinsville
Christopher R. Brown, West Genesee Central School District
June C. Clarke, Canastota Central School District
Michael Schiedo, Chittenango Central School District
Steven V. Hubbard, Cincinnatus
Michael J. Hoose, Cortland Enlarged City School District
Dr. Jeffrey A. Matteson, TST BOCES
William R. Lynch, Fulton City School District
Nancy S. Ruscio, Homer Central School District
Mary E. Curcio, McGraw Central School
Judith C. Pastel, Marcellus
Robert McKeveny, Seneca Falls Central School District
Lawrence Wright, Solvay Union Free School District
Alice Kendrick, Jamesville-DeWitt Central Schools

**Mohawk Valley**

Edward Niznik, Adirondack
Stephen Grimm, Clinton Central School District
Christine M. Reynolds, Dolgeville Central School District
David W. Ziskin, Fort Plain CSD
Dr. Anael Alston, Hamilton Central School District
Robert J Miller, Herkimer CSD
Dr. Kathleen M. Davis, Hollanad Patent Central Schools
Richard Hughes, Central Valley Central School District
Christine Holt, Inlet Common School
Perry Dewey, Madison Central
Donald J. Shepardson, West Canada Valley CSD
Kathy S. Houghton, New York Mills Union Free School District
Rex A. Germer, Town of Webb Union Free School District
William T. Crankshaw, REMSEn
Frank D. Myers III, Richfield Springs Central School District
Ronald Wheelock, Sauquoit Valley Central School District
Douglas Premo, South Lewis Central Schools
Brennan M. Fahey, Owen D. Young CSD
Chuck Chafee, Waterville Central School District
Robert J Service, Mt. Markham Central School District

Binghamton

James Harter, Charlotte Valley CSD
John Evans, Downsville Central School District
Suzanne McLeod, Union Endicott Central School District
Gordon Daniels, Franklin Central School
Jonathan R. Retz, Greene CSD
Mary Kay Frys, Johnson City Central School District
Romona N. Wenck, Laurens Central School District
Matthew Sheldon, Morris Central School
Joseph Yelich, Oneonta City Schools
David S. Richards, Ph.D., Otego-Unadilla Central School District
William C. Russell, Ph.D., Owego Apalachin Central School District
Patricia Norton-White, South Kortright Central School
Roger Clough, Walton
Dr. Jason A. Andrews, Windsor Central School District

Western New York

Kevin Shanley, Akron Central School District
Kathleen Maerten, Alexander Central School District
James E. Przepasniak, Evans-Brant CSD (Lake Shore)
Bryce Thompson, Attica CSD
Dr. Roger J. Klatt, Barker Central School District
Christopher J. Dailey, Batavia City School District
Geoffrey Hicks, Ed.D., Clarence Central School District
Jeffrey R. Rabey Ph.D., Depew Union Free School District
Brian Russ, East Aurora Union Free School District
Sandra Anzalone, Eden CSD
Keith Palmer, Elba Central School
Douglas R Scofield, Iroquois Central School District
James Klubek, Gowanda Central School District
Teresa Lawrence, Ph.D., Grand Island
Bret Apthorpe, Frontier Central School District
Cathy Fabiatos, Holland CSD
Michael J. Vallely Ph.D., Lancaster CSD
Michelle T. Bradley, Lockport City School District
Jason Smith, Lyndonville Central School
Jeffrey M. Evoy, Medina Central School District
Dr. Clark Godshall, Orleans-Niagara BOCES
Dr. Roger J. Klatt, Royalton-Hartland Central School District
Joan Thomas, North Collins Central School District
Mark A. Alexander, Oakfield-Alabama CSD
David ORourke, E2CC BOCES
Delia Bonenberger, Silver Creek Central School District
Scott E. Payne, Pine Valley Centrall School District
Sylvia A. Root, SpringvilleGI
Dr. James Preston Newton, Tonawanda City School District
Andrea Galenski, Cheektowaga-Sloan
Anne G. Spadone, Lackawanna City School District
Dennis Kane, Cheektowaga Central
Dawn F. Mirand, Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda Union Free
Lynn Marie Fusco, Erie 1 BOCES
Jon MacSwan, Cleveland Hill UFSD
Joseph R. D’Angelo, Maryvale UFSD
Anthony Day, Sweet Home CSD
Daniel G. Ljiljanich, Niagara Wheatfield Central School District
Cynthia Bianco, City of Niagara Falls City School District
Dr. Karen Geelan, Allegany-Limestone Central School District
Judy L. May, Belfast Central School
Michael Mansfield, Bemus Point Central School District
John R. Marshall, Bolivar-Richburg CSD
John W Hertlein, Brocton Central School  Brocton NY
Sharon Huff, Cattaraugus-Little Valley CSD
Carlos Gildemeister, Cuba-Rushford District
Ravo Root, Fillmore School District
Danielle O'Connor, Frewsburg CSD
Judy L. May, Friendship Central School
Benjamin Spitzer, Chautauqua Lake Central School District
Lynda Quick, Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming BOCES
Colleen Taggerty, Olean City School District
Lori DeCarlo, Randolph Academy UFSD
Kimberly Moritz, Randolph Central School District
Robert J. Breidenstein, Salamanca City Central School District
Kaine M. Kelly, Sherman Central School
Charles Leichner, Cassadaga Valley Central School District

Finger Lakes

Casey Kosiorek, Byron-Bergen
Robert Molisani, Caledonia-Mumford Central School District
Dr. Paul J. Alioto, Dansville Central School District
Timothy C. Hayes, Genesee Central
David Dimbleby, Hilton Central School District
Michael J. Midey, East Bloomfield CSD
Gene Mancuso, Honeoye Falls-Lima Central
Kevin MacDonald, Genesee Valley Educational Partnership
Matthew Cole, Livonia Central School District
Greg Bump, Mount Morris
Matthew Frahm, Naples Central School District
Stephen J Parker Zielinski, South Seneca Central School District
Kenneth Ellison, Pavilion Central School
Howard J Dennis, Penn Yan
Daryl McLaughlin, Perry CSD
Michael Pero, Pittsford Central School District
Dr. Daniel P. Murray, York Central School District
Jeramy Clingerman, Gorham-Middlesex CSD
Joseph E. Englebert, Warsaw Central School District
Carmen Gumina, Webster CSD
Greg Macaluso Ed.D, Williamson
Mickey Edwards, Wyoming Central Schools
Susan K Allen, East Irondequoit Central School District
Kathleen Graupman, Greece central school district
Jeffrey B. Crane, West Irondequoit CSD

Southern Tier

Joe DioGuardi, Addison Central School
Lawrence E. Spangenburg, Andover Central School
Stephen Saxton, Avoca Central School District
Brian Schmitt, Genesee Valley CSD
Chad C. Groff, Canaseraga Central School District
Kyle C. Bower, Hammondsport Central School
Douglas H Wyant Jr, Hornell City School District
Dr. Thomas J. Douglas, Horseheads Central School District
Jeffrey Black, Prattsburgh CSD
Gregory Hardy, Scio Central School
Joseph Morgan, Spencer-Van Etten
Thomas J. Phillips, Watkins Glen
Dr. Randy C. Richards, Waverly CSD
Kimberly Mueller, Wellsville