

Putting Students First

Final Action Plan

New NY Education Reform Commission



www.NYPuttingStudentsFirst.com

January 6, 2014



Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of the members of the *New NY Education Reform Commission*, I am pleased to present you with our Final Action Plan to strengthen and improve the public education system in New York State.

This Final Action Plan builds upon the Preliminary Action Plan that we delivered to you a year ago. As you will recall, that plan reflected the testimony and input of over 300 parents, teachers, students, administrators, and business people from all around the state, as well as our own views and insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with improving public education in the state. Happily, you and your colleagues in the Legislature seized upon our preliminary recommendations and enacted virtually all of them. But, more can and must be done to ensure that all of New York's children have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality education—one that will prepare them to productively participate in the workplace and world of tomorrow.

In this second phase of our work, the Commission heard from a number of national experts about innovative strategies that are working to improve student achievement in school districts and states across the country. We also expanded the scope of our work to include the critical transitions that occur between high school and college and career. We sought to develop a set of recommendations that would integrate our system of public education to provide the maximum benefit to each and every child in our state.

Of course, within a commission as diverse as ours, there were many different voices and perspectives. Not everyone felt we went far enough on every issue to satisfy their particular points of view. In the end, however, the recommendations set forth in this Final Action Plan enjoy the support of virtually all members of the Commission. There was broad consensus among us that these recommendations, if enacted, will greatly strengthen the education pipeline and enhance the opportunities for all children in New York to get the quality education they deserve.

In closing, on behalf of all of the members of the Commission, I want to thank you for your leadership in this critical area, and for allowing us to participate in helping shape the agenda for change going forward.

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

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*"If your plan is for one year, plant rice.
If your plan is for ten years, plant trees.
If your plan is for 100 years, educate children."
- Confucius*

I. Executive Summary

In 2012, Governor Cuomo tasked the *New NY Education Reform Commission* with tackling one of the most important challenges in society: providing our young people with a quality education. Access to a quality education matters; educational opportunity sets children on the path towards a highly successful career and life.¹

However, the unfortunate reality is many students face barriers to a quality education. The Commission's greatest challenge has been to break down those barriers for students. To do so, the Commission solicited guidance from experts, parents, students, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders from across the state in order to gain insight into what was working and should be replicated, and what was not working and should be fixed. That dialogue, along with the expertise of the Commissioners themselves, resulted in our Final Action Plan to improve the education system from cradle to career.

In order to improve education, it is the Commission's firm belief that communities must come together and determine collective goals, develop a community strategy, work collaboratively, and share accountability in order to break down silos and improve student achievement. Therefore, while implementing these recommendations we must work together collectively—government(s),² the private sector, non-profits, parents, local communities, and the philanthropic community—to invest only in proven solutions, and track results/progress to ensure accountability in our education system. Data suggest the collective impact model is already paying significant dividends and therefore that approach guides our recommendations below.³

Moreover, as we stated in our Preliminary Action Plan, the entire education system—from early education through college and career—must be addressed if we are to be successful in improving student achievement. A series of one-off policies and programs will not solve the fundamental problems facing education in New York. Only comprehensive structural change will improve education and opportunities for all of our students.

In presenting our recommendations, a major area of concern was how to improve the schools that need it the most. New York State has many schools that are succeeding; however, we also have schools that struggle with persistently low student achievement and graduation rates.⁴ These struggling schools have graduation rates of an average of 52 percent compared to the 74 percent average school district graduation rate statewide.⁵

¹ There is a proven link between educational attainment and economic opportunity. For example, individuals who did not complete high school had an unemployment rate of 12.4 percent nationally in 2012, compared with 6.8 percent for all workers and 3.5 percent for workers with a master's degree. Workers with a bachelor's degree earned over 30 percent more than the average worker nationally, while those who had only graduated high school earned 20 percent less than the average.

See: Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics available at http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm.

² Levels of government, government agencies, and other government actors often work at cross-purposes instead of collaboratively. Sharing resources and best practices across and throughout government is an important step in the right direction.

³ Strive Together. (2013). Profound impact on education achievement. Retrieved December 21, 2013, from <http://www.strivetogether.org/results/>.

⁴ The New York State Education Department (SED) designates such schools as Priority Schools. Priority Schools are the bottom five percent of schools in the state based on the combined performance of student test scores in both English language arts and math, schools that are not showing progress, or that have had graduation rates below 60 percent for the last several years. In the 2013-14 school year, SED identified 209 Priority Schools operated by major school districts across the state.

⁵ New York State Education Department. (2013). Graduation rate and enrollment outcomes by student subgroup. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20130617/home.html>.

Many efforts to turn schools around fail because of a one-dimensional approach that ignores the interdependency of districts, schools, and communities. It is for this reason the Commission believes that struggling schools need support on multiple levels, while also being held accountable for student success.

Over the past 19 months the Commission has worked diligently to find innovative solutions, programs, and policies to address the complex challenges of New York's education system. Not only did we work hard to develop a blueprint for change, we worked with our state policymakers to make our plan a reality. The Commission's Preliminary Action Plan issued in January 2013 called for a set of actionable recommendations to strengthen the education pipeline and—to the credit of policymakers—most were quickly adopted.

- **The state's first full-day pre-k program for our highest-need students.** The state enacted a program to provide initial support for a full-day (minimum 5-hour) pre-kindergarten program for our highest-need students. The program aims to ensure quality by including indicators that constitute the basis of QUALITYstarsNY including: curriculum consistent with the pre-kindergarten foundation for the common core, valid and reliable measures of environmental quality, effective parental engagement, and the quality of teacher-student interactions and child outcomes.
- **The Extended Learning Time Program.** The state created a program to fund extended school day and/or year programs throughout the state that are academically enriched. The state will cover the cost of schools that increase learning time by 25 percent.
- **The Community Schools Program.** The state created an innovative program designed to transform school buildings into community hubs. The Community Schools program will integrate social, health, mental health, and other critical services to support students and their families.
- **Rewarding high-performing math and science teachers.** The state created the New York State Master Teacher Program, which rewards our best and brightest educators in secondary science and math disciplines. Selected Master Teachers will receive annual stipends of \$15,000 for four years to take part in professional development and mentorship activities.
- **Creating Early College High School programs, like P-TECH.** The state invested millions more in Early College High School programs, like P-TECH, which improve college access and success by offering students the opportunity to get an early start on college during their high school years.
- **Raising the bar for entry into teacher preparation programs.** The SUNY Board of Trustees passed a resolution to require that its 17 teacher and principal preparation programs, which supply approximately 25 percent of the state's teachers, use an entry assessment to verify that candidates are academically competitive with other graduate students and raise the admissions requirement to a minimum GPA of 3.0. CUNY renewed its commitment to excellence in teacher preparation programs by maintaining competitive admissions standards.

Guiding Principles of The New NY Education Reform Commission

Access. Access to high-quality programming, starting at the earliest age possible and continuing through all phases of the education pipeline, is critical to a student's success. As Chairman Parsons says, "Get students sooner, keep them longer, and do more with them when you've got them."

Accountability. We must make our education system more accountable so we can measure outcomes and understand what works and what does not. If a student exits the education pipeline or is underachieving, we should be able to understand how, where, and why in order to make changes. Transparency will also allow us to reward performance, replicate high-performing programs, and incentivize success.

Collective Impact. Communities are our greatest asset in education. All societal stakeholders—local governments, the private sector, community organizations, families, teachers, and students—can be agents of change. The power of each of these actors is maximized through collective impact—when a community mobilizes efforts towards shared goals.

Invest in What Works. The state should invest in programs that work by replicating and bringing to scale programs that have demonstrated success in improving student outcomes.

The Commission's Final Action Plan builds upon our success in the Preliminary Action Plan. Although we are enormously proud of the prompt adoption of our initial recommendations, we continued to work with a sense of urgency because there was critical work yet to be done. Below is a summary of final recommendations that will build upon our Preliminary Action Plan by further breaking down barriers that impede student achievement.

Recommendation 1. Expand early education because it is critical for getting students on a path to success.

The Commission recommends the state build upon, and bring to scale, the success of the first-ever state-funded full-day pre-kindergarten program and commit to developing a clear plan to expand access to high-quality full-day pre-k, starting with New York's highest-need students.

Recommendation 2. Expand the use of technology in our schools, especially schools that have not been able to keep pace. The Commission recommends the state provide incentives and enact a program to improve access to technology in schools, especially our highest-need schools, as a way to help complement teaching and academic programs in order to improve student achievement.

Recommendation 3. Reward the best and brightest educators, especially in our struggling schools.

A quality teacher is perhaps the best thing a student can have to be successful in life. The Commission recommends creating a Teacher Excellence Fund to reward teacher excellence and attract and keep talented educators in the classroom, particularly in our lowest-performing schools. This will build upon the Commission's preliminary recommendations to improve teaching including the teacher bar exam, raising the standards for entry into SUNY and CUNY teacher preparation programs, and the Master Teacher Program.

Recommendation 4. Replicate programs that connect high school to college in order to create greater college opportunities, especially for underrepresented students. The Commission recommends that the state provide incentives such as college scholarships and other financial assistance to cover the cost of college for high-performing students, especially underrepresented students, as well as expand innovative Early College High School programs so that at-risk students have a chance to attain both a high school diploma and an affordable college degree.

Recommendation 5. Strategically invest in higher education to successfully connect students to the workforce. The Commission recommends expanding the state's strategic investment in public higher education to further incentivize providing access to all students and setting them up for success in careers, including incentivizing paid internships, expanding academic programming, and increasing access to college degree programs through innovative methods, like online learning.

Recommendation 6. Focus on efficiencies to reinvest administrative savings into the classroom.

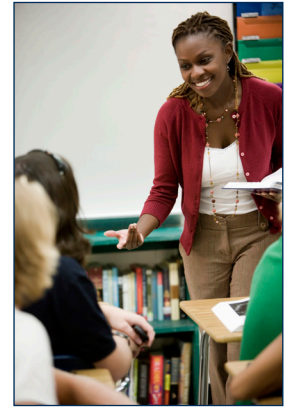
The Commission recommends that the state expand opportunities for shared services, reduce obstacles to the school district merger process, and provide mechanisms for the creation of regional high schools.

These recommendations, which are more fully discussed in Section IV of this report, in addition to the recommendations and accomplishments from the Commission’s Preliminary Action Plan, will help to make sure New York’s education pipeline presents the best possible opportunities to all of our students.

Throughout its work, the Commission heard testimony and received input on a number of issues that were clearly relevant to the effective and equitable delivery of public education in our state, but which were beyond the scope of our ability to tackle, given the constraints of time and limited resources, or on which we simply could not come to a consensus. These include:

- State Funding of Education;
- The Common Core Standards;
- Special Education;
- English Language Learners; and
- Minority Youth.

Each of these subjects is important enough to justify its own task force review. Each is addressed, albeit in summary form, in Section V of this report.



II. Overview Of The Commission's Work To Date

On April 30, 2012, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed an Executive Order establishing the New NY Education Reform Commission. This Commission brought together 25 nationally-recognized education, community, and business leaders from across the state. We focused on a shared objective: developing an actionable set of reforms—based on proven models of success from within New York as well as other states and nations—that would provide the level of educational excellence that all New York's school children deserve, that the state's future economy demands, and that taxpayers can afford. Specifically, the Commission was asked to perform a comprehensive review of the structure, operation, and processes of New York State's education system and tasked with the following objectives: find ways to improve teacher recruitment and performance, including the teacher evaluation system; improve student achievement; examine education funding, distribution, and costs; increase parent and family engagement in education; examine the problem of high-need and low-wealth school communities; and find the best use of technology in the classroom (for the Executive Order establishing the Commission, see Appendix B).

Public Participation

In developing a set of recommendations to bring about both improved student achievement and greater cost-effectiveness in our education system, the Commission held public hearings in each of the ten regions of the state. This provided the public and numerous stakeholders with the opportunity to voice their concerns while offering solution-oriented input regarding the structure of the New York's school system, teacher and principal quality and district leadership, and student achievement and family engagement. Accordingly, we received and reviewed thousands of pages of testimony and 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 for New York's students.



On our listening tour across New York State, the Commission learned a number of things about the status of education. We heard about successful initiatives taking place in New York classrooms and school districts, as well as challenges faced by educators as they work to improve their students' chances for success. The Commission recognizes that New York educators and leaders are committed to preparing students for college and career success. It became clear to us that the challenges facing the education system are not the result of bad actors at the individual level; rather, the Commission saw that New York's educators and communities have shown remarkable flexibility,

creativity, and dedication as they worked to help students develop the skills they need to successfully transition to adulthood and careers.

In addition to the information gathered from the public hearings, the Commission conducted a careful analysis of the New York public education system. We found that the state lacks an effectively unified 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, impeding progress toward the state's overarching goal of preparing all students for college and career.

Furthermore, we acknowledged that the problem the state faces in preparing students for success is not isolated to education; it persists in communities—it is a cross-government, cross-sector challenge, and each part of the system has to work together to overcome the predictable barriers to college and career readiness our students face, particularly those students in high-need communities.

Taking all of these matters into consideration, the Commission developed recommendations that prioritize student success and support teachers and leaders at every point along the education pipeline. These recommendations were 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 recommendations also provided guidance for the system to ensure that the state invests in high-quality programs and constantly assesses their impact and provides tools to empower local communities to support students from pre-kindergarten to college and the workforce.

Preliminary Action Plan

On January 2, 2013, the *New NY Education Reform Commission* submitted its preliminary report to Governor Cuomo with a number of key action plan recommendations. These recommendations promoted system coherence at all levels and incorporated three major themes: alignment, access, and quality. First, the Commission emphasized that New York’s education system should be viewed as one aligned system; a seamless pipeline that supports a student from pre-kindergarten to career. Thus, the recommendations were aimed at creating seamless transitions as well as improving efficiency across the entire system. Second, the Commission noted that the system must improve access to critical educational experiences for students, such as effective teachers and leaders, 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.

Consequently, the Governor accepted these preliminary recommendations and they were incorporated into policies that became part of his 2013 State of the State Address. They were the primary platform for the Governor’s education agenda and, with the support of the Legislature, were included in the 2013-14 Enacted Budget.

Expert Symposia

Following the submission of our Preliminary Report, the Commission convened three public symposia, initiating the second phase of our work. Each symposium was issue-specific, with local and national education experts invited to testify before the Commission. A different approach from the listening tours, these public symposia were meant to dive deeply into specific topics of interest to Commission members. After each testimony, Commission members were given the chance to ask questions of the experts and upon completion of all testimony, the experts took questions from the public audience (for a summary of the symposia, see Appendix C).

The symposia were greatly beneficial to the Commission. We found the experts’ testimonies—and resulting discussions—to be thought-provoking and inspiring. These meetings provided us with valuable background information, insight, and understanding on topics of particular interest to us. This information also informed ensuing discussions amongst the Commission members as we considered recommendations to be included in the Final Action Plan.

III. Overview and Analysis of the New York State Education System

The Commission’s Preliminary Action Plan provided an overview of the New York State education system, with a focus on public P-12 education. This Final Action Plan revisits that analysis and expands the scope to include all of the institutions that are a part of New York’s comprehensive education pipeline, including higher education.

Demographics of New York’s Public School Districts

There are 3.1 million K-12 students in New York State, including the 2.7 million enrolled in 694 public school districts. These include 674 major public school districts, 12 Special Act School Districts, 6 school districts with less than eight teachers, and 2 school districts that are non-operating. Four hundred thousand students are educated in nonpublic schools.

Our system serves a diverse student body that speaks hundreds of languages and represents numerous cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. New York’s students have varying levels of need and support, from the student who needs advanced coursework to stay engaged to the student who requires remedial studies to achieve grade-level goals. Also, students’ learning is affected by a variety of factors outside of the classroom, including limited English proficiency, poverty, and intellectual and physical disabilities. Students grappling with such issues may require numerous interventions and social service supports in order to keep their learning free of disruption. The diversity of our student population must be kept in mind at all times when making decisions that affect our education system.

Approximately 100,000 students participate in the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program. This program supports pre-kindergarten programs for students who are four years old. In addition, state and county governments financially support preschool special education services for approximately 90,000 preschool special education students aged three through five.

Young children receive publicly subsidized early childhood education through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services childcare grants and the federal Head Start program. In addition, there are a number of privately operated and funded early childhood education programs including preschools and child care programs throughout the state.

In K-12 education, student enrollment is not spread evenly among districts. 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 43 percent, of the state’s public school students. New York City alone enrolls approximately 1 million, or 39 percent; the other four large cities enroll an additional 116,000, or four percent.

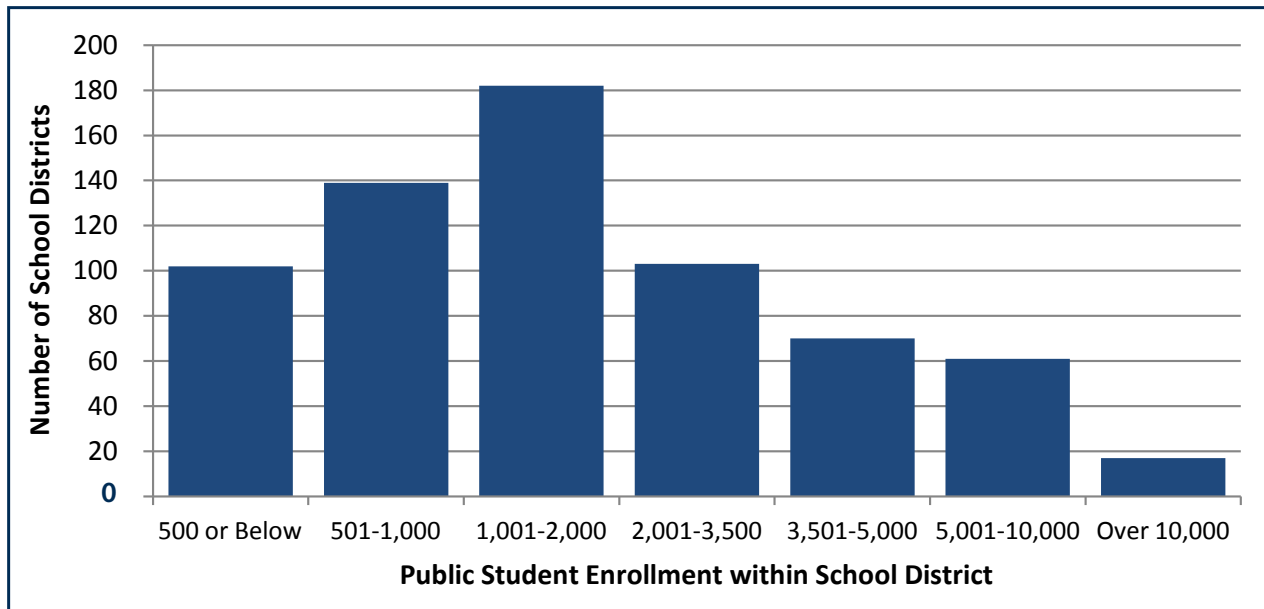
New York Education by the Numbers¹	
K-12	
3.1	million students
694	public school districts
233	charter schools
37	Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
1,800	private elementary and secondary schools
Higher Education	
1.3	million students
64	SUNY campuses
24	CUNY campuses
146	independent colleges and universities

Outside the Big Five cities, the average enrollment across school districts is 2,268 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 102 school districts that have fewer than 500 students each.

Enrollment in public schools declined from 2001-02 to 2011-12 for most, though not all, school districts in New York. Thirty-six districts (five percent of all districts statewide) saw their enrollment increase by more than ten percent, and 82 districts (12 percent of all districts) had less than a ten percent increase in their enrollment.

In contrast, 558, or 83 percent, of districts saw a decline in their enrollment over the last decade. One-third experienced a decline in enrollment between ten and 20 percent, and another quarter of districts had enrollment declines of greater than 20 percent.

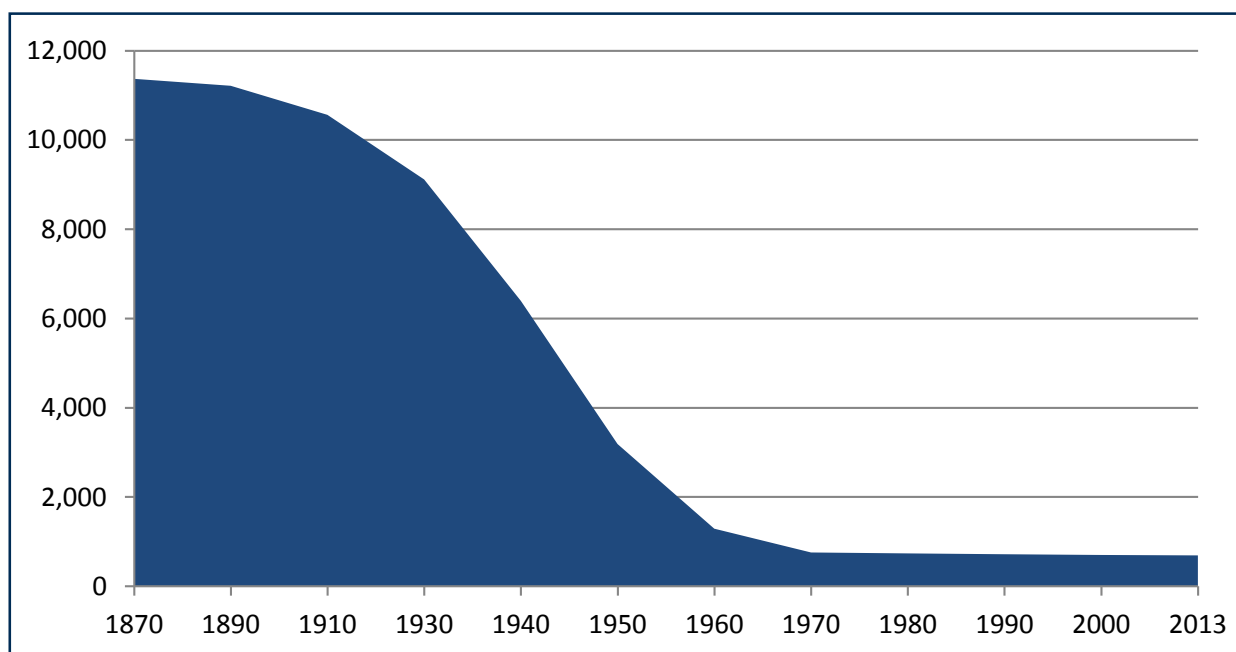
Chart 3.1. School Districts by Enrollment Size⁶



⁶Data from the State Education Department School Aid Database titled "CL002-N"; November 2013.

Although there are still hundreds of school districts across New York, consolidations took place throughout the early 20th century in addition to those initiated by the development of a statewide Master Plan for School District Reorganization in 1947 (and revised in 1958).⁷ A wave of consolidations followed the plan, but in recent decades, the number of districts throughout the state has remained relatively static around 700. Although much was done in the past to encourage consolidation, more could be done to reduce the number today. The graph below shows this change over time.

Chart 3.2. School Districts in New York State⁸



Charter Schools

New York's charter schools enroll approximately 92,000 students. A charter school in New York State is an independent and autonomous public school established under the provisions of Article 56 of Education Law in 1998. While charter schools are governed and operated independently of the school district where they are located, the school district receives State Aid for these students.

There are currently 233 charter schools in operation across the state, located in 19 school districts. New York City has the greatest number of charter schools: 183. Statewide, charter school students make up 3.4 percent of public enrollment. Outside of New York City, charter school students make up one percent of public enrollment. Charter schools are open enrollment: any student can enroll in a public charter school, even if the school is not located in the student's district of residence. Albany, Buffalo, and Lackawanna have the highest concentrations of charter school students in the state. New York City has the greatest number of charter school students in the state (78 percent of total charter school students), but charter school students only make up seven percent of public school enrollment in the City.

⁷ New York State Education Department. (2013). Guide to the reorganization of school districts in New York State. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgt/serv/sch_dist_org/GuideToReorganizationOfSchoolDistricts.htm

⁸ New York State Education Department. (2013). Reorganization of school districts in New York State [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgt/serv/sch_dist_org/REORGANIZATION.ppt

Chart 3.3. Location and Number of Charter Schools (2013-14)

District	Number of Charter Schools
New York City	183
Buffalo	14
Albany	9
Rochester	9
Hempstead	2
Syracuse	2
Troy	2
Greece	1
Ithaca	1
Kenmore-Tonawanda	1
Lackawanna	1
Mount Vernon	1
Newburgh	1
Niagara-Wheatfield	1
Riverhead	1
Roosevelt	1
Utica	1
Wainscott	1
Yonkers	1
Total	233

Charter schools do not directly levy taxes or charge tuition or fees. They are funded through a per-pupil tuition amount that is paid by the school district of residence and is based on an adjusted per-pupil amount. They receive no capital funds and are ineligible for pre-k funding from the state. With the exclusion of New York City, charter school tuition paid by school districts varies, but is less than one percent of total school district general fund expenditures.

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)

During the 1930s, educators envisioned a comprehensive high school that would educate all children for work and life in a democracy. However, most central schools were not big enough to offer a full array of academic and vocational courses. In 1944, a Council on Rural Education, funded by farm organizations, recommended a “new type of rural supervisory district,” responsible to school districts and responsive to needs of rural people. The result was the intermediate district law of 1948. No such districts were ever formed. The act provided for temporary boards of cooperative educational services (today known as BOCES), which the State Education Department hoped would encourage collaboration across district lines and provide shared educational services in rural areas.



Nearly a half-century later, the 37 BOCES are major educational enterprises in their own right: each BOCES is headed by the district superintendent; school board representatives from the component school districts collectively elect BOCES members and approve the BOCES budget; and the Education Department approves BOCES service contracts. BOCES are funded through their component school districts, which are billed for the services they receive. These costs are then eligible for State Aid through the BOCES Aid formula. In the early years, the typical BOCES service was traveling teachers providing courses in specialized subjects. After 1967, BOCES were

authorized to own and operate their own facilities, and BOCES now offer vocational and special education programs as well as many administrative services for member districts.⁹

In fact, BOCES provide educational and administrative services for the vast majority of school districts around the state.¹⁰ Most BOCES offer career and technical education and special education programs for school districts, generating economies of scale that are intended to produce savings for school districts that may only have a small handful of students participating in such programs. Administrative services provided by BOCES include back-office functions, such as payroll and health insurance cooperatives. Many BOCES have developed specialized shared services that are utilized by districts across the entire state.

Nonpublic Schools

There are approximately 1,800 nonpublic schools in New York State providing instruction to approximately 400,000 elementary and high school students. The number of students in these schools accounts for approximately 14 percent of all K-12 New York State students. Enrollment in nonpublic schools has declined 13 percent since 2000-01, while total public school enrollment has decreased five percent over the same time period.

Higher Education

New York State is a major provider of higher education with over 1.3 million students enrolled in degree programs at 343 higher education institutions.¹¹ Over 80 percent of high school freshmen in New York's high schools go on to attend a college in state.¹² New York is also the top destination for first-time freshmen attending private, not-for-profit colleges across the nation.¹³ The state spends over \$1 billion on student financial aid and nearly \$5 billion on higher education operating expenses annually.¹⁴ Annual research expenditures from colleges and universities are approximately \$5.3 billion.¹⁵

⁹ Previous paragraphs excerpted from New York State Education Department. (2008). School district organization and state aid. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/about/history-districts.html>.

¹⁰ Of all the major school districts in the state, only the Big Five City School Districts (New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers), and Albany, Hoosick Falls, Mamaroneck, and Newburgh are not components of BOCES.

¹¹ The Chronicle of Higher Education (2013). Almanac of higher education 2013. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://chronicle.com/article/New-York-Almanac-2013/140699/>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities. (2013). Talent magnet: Students come to New York State from across the nation. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.cicu.org/publications-research/matter-of-fact/talent-magnet-students-come-new-york-state-across-nation>.

¹⁴ The Chronicle of Higher Education (2013). Almanac of higher education 2013. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://chronicle.com/article/New-York-Almanac-2013/140699/>.

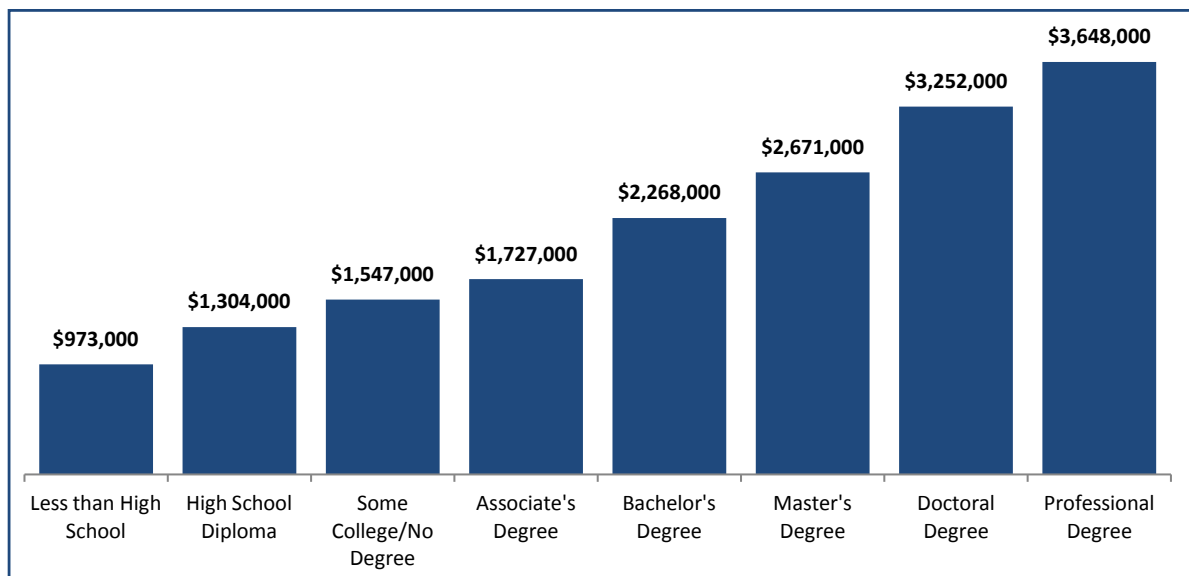
¹⁵ Ibid.

Chart 3.4. Students Enrolled in Higher Education¹⁶

Undergraduate	1,119,284
Graduate and Professional	243,225
• At Public 4-Year Institutions	402,418
• At Public 2-Year Institutions	335,554
• At Private 4-Year Institutions, nonprofit	527,787
• At Private 2-Year Institutions, nonprofit	7,413
• At Private 4-Year Institutions, for-profit	31,380
• At Private 2-Year Institutions, for-profit	29,532
• At Other Institutions	28,425
Total	1,362,509

Postsecondary education has an enormous impact on individuals' career earnings. As shown in the following chart, some postsecondary education—even without completing a degree—boosts lifetime earnings by an average of \$240,000. Graduates with an associate's degree boost their lifetime earnings by \$420,000 on average, earning nearly one-third more than those with just a high school diploma. Students graduating with a bachelor's degree increase their lifetime earnings by an average of over \$960,000 or 74 percent over those with just a high school diploma.¹⁷

Chart 3.5. Median Lifetime Earnings by Highest Educational Attainment¹⁸
2009 Dollars



¹⁶ The Chronicle of Higher Education (2013). Almanac of higher education 2013. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://chronicle.com/article/New-York-Almanac-2013/140699/>.

¹⁷ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. (2013). The college payoff: Education, occupation, lifetime earnings. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/collegepayoff-complete.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

New York has three sectors of postsecondary institutions: public, private non-profit, and private for-profit. New York's public higher education infrastructure boasts two outstanding systems of public education: the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY).

The State University of New York (SUNY) is the largest comprehensive university system in the United States. SUNY educates nearly 463,000 students in more than 7,500 degree and certificate programs, and more than 1.8 million people in professional development and personal enrichment programs. Comprised of 64 college and university campuses, SUNY is highly accessible with 99.8 percent of New York residents living within 30 miles of a SUNY campus.¹⁹

SUNY is an important resource for the state's students; nearly 40 percent of New York State's high school graduates attending a SUNY institution. State University alumni number nearly three million graduates worldwide, over 1.6 million of whom reside in New York State. SUNY provides a high-quality, diverse selection of degrees ranging from doctoral degrees in biomedical engineering at SUNY Stony Brook to a six-week certificate in food handling at Rockland Community College. Resident undergraduate tuition is currently \$5,870 at state-operated four-year institutions and, when combined with average fees of approximately \$1,350, remains the lowest among all state university systems in the northeast and the lowest quartile of all such public institutions of higher learning in the country.²⁰

The City University of New York (CUNY) is a public university system located entirely within New York City. It is the largest urban university system and the third largest public university system in the country. The City University of New York provides high-quality, accessible education for more than 269,000 degree-credit students and 270,000 adult, continuing, and professional education students at 24 campuses across New York City. The City University is an important educational entity in New York City as its colleges account for more than one-third of the business and finance degrees awarded by New York City institutions and train about one-third of the city's public school teachers. In total, 46 percent of all college students in New York City attend CUNY institutions.

¹⁹ The State University of New York. (2013). 2013 SUNY fast facts. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from http://www.suny.edu/About_SUNY/fastfacts/FastFacts_07-2013.pdf.

²⁰ College Board. (2013). Trends in college pricing report. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/college-pricing-2013-full-report.pdf>.

Associate's Degrees, Certificates, and Workforce Training within Postsecondary Education Institutions

Not all of New York's high school graduates plan to obtain a postsecondary degree. Many options exist for students who seek immediate careers or for returning adult learners who have interrupted their educational career. Such programs exist at community colleges, proprietary schools, technical schools, and four-year institutions. Associate's degrees and certificate programs play an important role in students' success along the education pipeline. Some students use these programs to transfer into four-year degree programs, while others obtain associate's degrees and certificates to further their occupational goals and directly enter the workforce. Whether through a full two-year technical degree or a six-week certificate, these programs train graduates for a wide variety of employment opportunities and are a key step in bridging the gap from high school to career.

Community colleges educate a large number of students: at SUNY alone, nearly a quarter of a million. Public community colleges are locally focused and are supported through tuition funding, county support from their local sponsors, and a per-pupil allocation from the state. Through this shared investment, each partner's needs are met: affordable access to higher education for students and responsiveness to community and workforce development needs for the county and community. Many degrees offered by community colleges are guided by the needs of employers who sit on advisory committees to ensure that students are gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to work in fields as diverse as human services, early childhood education, health care, hospitality, building trades, semiconductor manufacturing, solar and wind energy production, optics, plastics, and other advanced manufacturing fields—areas that are vital to the growth of the 21st century economy.

Overview of Education Funding

In total, about \$75 billion is spent annually on education in New York State. To put that in perspective, we spend more on education in New York than 47 other states spend in TOTAL each year.²¹

Of that \$75 billion, New York spends approximately \$58 billion annually on elementary and secondary education.²² The state has increased overall spending in K-12 education by \$1.8 billion over the past two years. Elementary and secondary education is financed by three main sources: federal, state, and local governments. New York receives about \$3.5 billion in total federal aid.²³ The state's spending of \$22.8 billion accounts for approximately 39 percent of total education funding that school districts receive.²⁴ The remaining portion of education spending comes from local revenues, largely from property taxes.

New York spends more on education than 47 other states spend in TOTAL each year.

²¹ The National Association of State Budget Officers. (2013). State expenditure report. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.nasbo.org/sites/default/files/State%20Expenditure%20Report%20%28Fiscal%202011-2013%20Data%29.pdf>.

²² New York State Education Department. (2013). Total expenditures and state funds for public elementary and secondary schools, New York State, 1992-93 through 2011-12. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/public/2012/TABLE10.pdf>.

²³ New York State Education Department. (2013). Federal aid for education administered by the State Education Department, New York State, 1985 through 2012. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/public/2012/TABLE11.pdf>.

²⁴ New York State Education Department. (2013). Total expenditures and state funds for public elementary and secondary schools, New York State, 1992-93 through 2011-12. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/public/2012/TABLE10.pdf>.

Chart 3.6. Education Spending

Education System Component	Total Funding Level
Elementary and Secondary	\$58.00 billion ²⁵
SUNY State Operated Campuses	\$9.96 billion ²⁶
CUNY Senior & Community Colleges	\$4.13 billion ²⁷
SUNY Community Colleges	\$2.33 billion ²⁸
Total	\$74.42 billion

Public schools in New York spend \$19,076 per pupil, more than any other state. However, per-pupil spending varies significantly due to differences in local funding and concentrations of high-need students.

New York's public schools spend \$13,287 per pupil on instructional expenses, which is more than twice the national average and 37 percent more than the closest state in the rankings. New York's public schools spend \$5,401 per pupil on non-instructional expenses, 46 percent above the national average.²⁹

There is great diversity in local fiscal capacity among school districts across New York State. 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 from the state for their educational programs.

²⁵ New York State Education Department. (2013). Total expenditures and state funds for public elementary and secondary schools, New York State, 1992-93 through 2011-12. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/public/2012/TABLE10.pdf>.

²⁶ The State University of New York. (2012). 2012 annual financial report, p. 10. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from http://www.suny.edu/sunynews/2012_AnnualFinancialReport.PDF.

²⁷ The City University of New York. (2012). Basic financial statements, supplementary schedules, and management's discussion and analysis, p. 13. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/bf/uc/uc-links/Financial_Statements_2012.pdf.

²⁸ The State University of New York. (2013). 2013 SUNY fast facts. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from http://www.suny.edu/about_suny/fastfacts/.

²⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). Public education finances: 2011. Table 8. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/g11-aspef.pdf>.

In addition to local fiscal capacity, many communities have student populations that require additional educational supports to succeed. The state collects data on various measures of student need. Among their many uses, such measures are factors in the calculation of State Aid amounts. 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 an additional measure of need.
- **Students with Limited English Proficiency.** Some communities have a high concentration of immigrants, 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 the table below, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch ranges from less 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 five to six times higher, and the proportion in poverty more than eight times higher, than those in low-need districts.

Chart 3.7. Poverty and English Proficiency³⁰

District/Groups of Districts	FRPL Eligible Percent	Census Poverty Percent	Limited English Proficiency Percent
New York City	76%	34%	13%
High Need - Large Cities	81%	38%	11%
High Need - Urban/Suburban	69%	22%	12%
High Need - Rural	56%	18%	1%
Average Need	32%	8%	3%
Low Need	9%	4%	2%
Statewide Maximum	94%	46%	91%
Statewide Minimum	0%	0%	0%

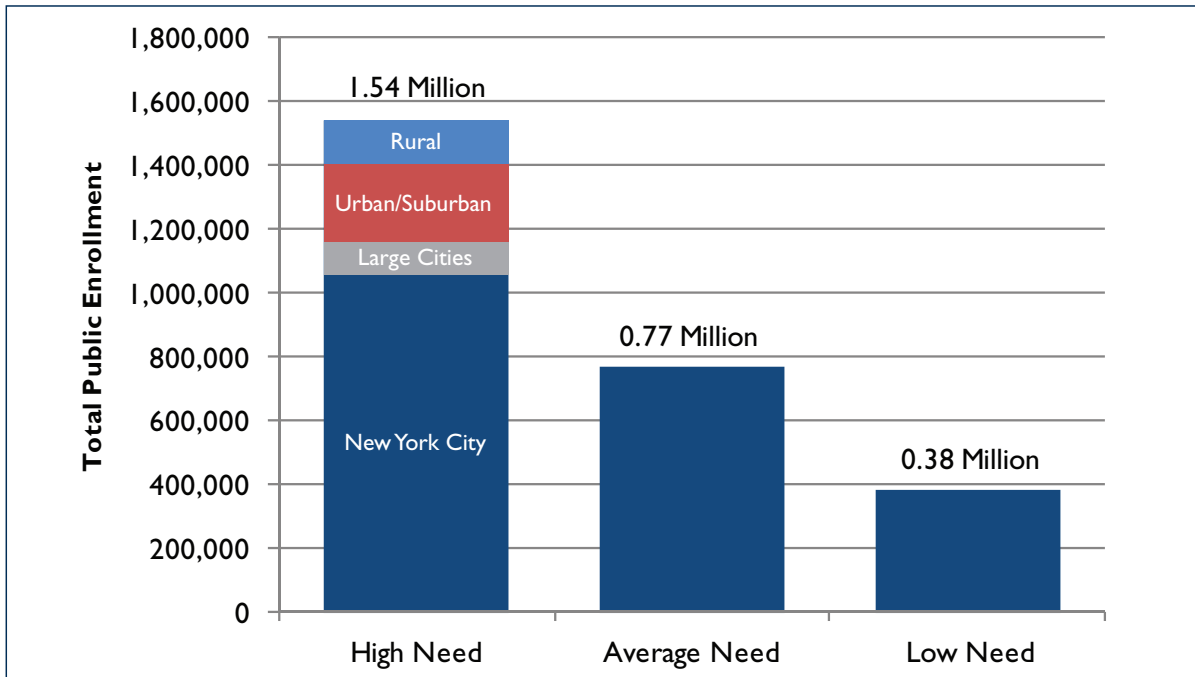
To consolidate these measurements, the New York State Education Department (SED) classifies school districts into three broad categories of need (high, average, and low) based on an index that measures of local fiscal capacity and student need. SED ranks school districts based on this measurement and classifies the highest 30 percent as “high-need” districts, the lowest 20 percent as “low-need” districts, and the resulting middle as “average-need” districts. Additionally, high-need districts are assigned to subcategories (large cities, urban/suburban, or rural) depending on their population density. Below are charts that reflect the number of school districts in each category and represent the distribution of statewide student enrollment by need resource categories.

³⁰ Data from the State Education Department School Aid Database titled “CL002-N”; November 2013.

Chart 3.8. Districts by Resource Category

Needs/Resource Category	Number of Districts
High Need – New York City	1
High Need – Large City	4
High Need – Urban Suburban	46
High Need – Rural	154
Average Need	336
Low Need	133
Total	674

Chart 3.9. School Enrollment by Need³¹



³¹ Data from the State Education Department School Aid Database titled "CL002-N"; November 2013.

As shown on the previous page, less than one-third of the state's districts are categorized as high-need, yet these districts account for nearly 60 percent of students in New York. By contrast, low- and average-need districts comprise an appreciably larger share of districts than students in New York.

Funding for public higher education differs from that of K-12 because of the addition of tuition as a funding source. As a result, higher education funding comes from three sources: federal government, state government, and tuition. New York has one of the most affordable college tuition structures in the country. Tuition for SUNY four-year schools is \$5,870 plus an average fee of \$1,350; for SUNY community colleges it is \$3,960 plus an average fee of \$547; and for graduate programs it is \$9,870 plus an average fee of \$998.³² For CUNY, the average tuition for four-year programs is \$5,130 plus an average fee of \$386 and for community colleges the average tuition is \$3,600 plus an average fee of \$343.³³

³² The State University of New York. (2013). Tuition and Fees. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from https://www.suny.edu/student/paying_tuition.cfm.

³³ The City University of New York. (2013). The CUNY Value. Retrieved November 1, 2013, from <http://www.cuny.edu/about/resources/value/affordable.html/>.

IV. New NY Education Commission's Final Action Plan



The New NY Education Reform Commission has worked to find solutions to break down barriers to a quality education. The Commission fundamentally believes the state must ensure a seamless P-16 system extending from cradle to career, encompassing early learning and pre-kindergarten through college or a career upon graduation from secondary school. As a result, the Commission presents comprehensive recommendations that build upon our Preliminary Action Plan to address the needs of students as they travel the entire education pipeline.

Every one of these recommendations is underscored by the Commission's ongoing commitment to a community-based, collaborative approach to improving education in New York State by investing in what works. A community-based approach is essential because the environmental circumstances that students face outside of the classroom factor into their ability to learn. For example, students suffering from anxiety, social or emotional disturbances, or depression cannot perform at their highest potential and their growth is greatly hindered. Chronic health problems and nutrition deficiencies interfere with student attendance and cause interruptions to learning. Financial concerns can prohibit students from participating in valuable life-enhancing activities and can even be a deterrent to proper college preparation and planning.

These barriers to educational achievement translate into poor performance in school for affected students and are more likely to afflict students from high-need communities than those from more stable households and communities. Public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaborations have proven in many cases to be an effective solution to overcoming the environmental barriers that some students face. Efforts to increase public-private partnerships should focus on those high-need communities where interventions can have the greatest impact.

As important, a synthesis of research over more than a decade shows that regardless of family background, students with more involved parents have better academic outcomes—everything from higher grades to better attendance, improved behavior, and higher graduation rates. Parents are a child's very first—and many times most important—teachers. As the Governor and Legislature seek to enact the recommendations included in the Commission's report, success will be dependent upon authentically engaging families and communities in the design and implementation of new initiatives.

We understand that communities across New York are as diverse as the students within them, and although best practices exist, there is no single practice that can be recommended to work in each and every situation. Nevertheless, the Commission stresses that the involvement of families be included as an important component in any community engagement strategy. Breaking down silos and bringing all stakeholders together in a collective effort toward the common goal of improving student outcomes is the best way for the state to address the complex challenges of the education pipeline.

Investing in What Works

Through submissions and testimony from the public and national experts on education policy, the Commission heard various examples of community partnerships through which diverse organizations from varying sectors have effectively collaborated to lower barriers to student success:

- *The Harlem Children's Zone Asthma Initiative* has used prevention methods to effectively lower school absences among participants from 29.7 percent to 6.8 percent over a 14 day period. The Harlem Children's Zone and other actors across the state have proven that by bringing in non-academic supports to counter environmental obstacles to learning, student achievement can greatly improve.ⁱ
- *Say Yes to Education* has sought to counter the damage that outside circumstances have on a student's school day through its work in the Syracuse and Buffalo City School Districts with the goal of increasing high school graduation rates and college attendance.ⁱⁱ
- In Queens, *Zone 126 Promise Neighborhood: A Cradle 2 Career Project* mobilizes a wide variety of stakeholders to deliver high-quality services, including healthy eating and mental health programs targeted to high-risk students.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In response to the vast need for proper eyewear for school children in the Bronx, the United Federation of Teachers entered into an agreement to set up community-based eye clinics in New York City schools.^{iv}
- The *Reconnecting McDowell* effort in West Virginia brought together business, foundations, government, nonprofit agencies, and labor groups in McDowell County, West Virginia to develop a comprehensive, long-term school and community revitalization effort. It has also shown promising results in improving one of the most challenging school systems and communities in the nation.^v
- In the city of Albany, a collective impact effort called *The Albany Promise* has focused efforts on three of the city's most economically challenged neighborhoods to develop a cradle-to-career education vision, mission, and goals. Partners meet frequently to tackle some of the most pressing challenges and to take advantage of some of its biggest opportunities, such as aligning and leveraging existing resources.^{vi}
- *PENCIL*, a NYC-based non-profit that works to improve student achievement by bringing private sector expertise into public schools, has successfully paired leaders from the business world with school administrators to develop career preparedness programs for students as well as expand leadership capacity, which has resulted in greatly improved learning environments.^{vii}

Footnotes:

ⁱ Harlem Children's Zone. (2013). Our results. Retrieved November 15, 2013, from <http://www.hcz.org/index.php/our-results>.

ⁱⁱ Say Yes to Education. (2013). Our Mission. Retrieved November 15, 2013, from <http://www.sayyestoeducation.org/our-mission>.

ⁱⁱⁱ America's Promise Alliance. (2013). Grad Nation Community Spotlight: Zone 126 Promise Neighborhood. Retrieved November 15, 2013, from <http://www.americaspromise.org/News-and-Events/News-and-Features/APB-2011/Vol-33/GNC.aspx>.

^{iv} About ¼ of school-aged children have an untreated vision problem, according to the American Optometric Association. See: Jennifer Cunningham, "South Bronx school to get eye clinic; partnership between Education Dept. and teachers' union," New York Daily News, May 7, 2013.

^v Reconnecting McDowell. (2013). About and Partners. Retrieved November 18, 2013, from <http://www.reconnectingmcdowell.org/>.

^{vi} The Albany Promise. (2013). Retrieved November 18, 2013, from <http://www.albanypromise.org/>.

^{vii} PENCIL. (2013). About us. Retrieved November 18, 2013, from <http://www.pencil.org/about-us/>.

Recommendation 1. Expand early education because it is critical for getting students on a path to success.

The Commission recommends the state build upon, and bring to scale, the success of the first-ever state-funded full-day pre-kindergarten program and commit to developing a clear plan to expand access to high-quality full-day pre-k, starting with New York's highest highest-need students.

One of the most effective ways to set students on the right path early is ensuring that they have access to quality early childhood education programs. Studies have repeatedly found that access to quality early education results in students entering kindergarten better prepared to learn and performing better on reading and math tests in subsequent years.³⁴ Skill development in the early years is an early indicator of academic success throughout a child's entire educational career. Further, research has proven that providing the right opportunities and environment for children early in their development is far more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age through remediation.³⁵

The Commission believes that providing this strong educational foundation is particularly critical to academic success for the state's highest-need communities, and should be a focal point for the expansion of state efforts. Study after study finds that early education plays a vital role in providing a foundation for a student to be successful throughout his/her education and career.³⁶ In many middle- and upper-income communities, a range of high-quality early childhood education providers are already in place to support learning from birth into preparation for kindergarten. However, these options for high-quality early education providers are not as prevalent in high-need communities. The Commission believes that maximizing access to high-quality early education opportunities for the highest-need students can narrow the achievement gap between poor and affluent students. Focusing on high-need students provides a strong foundation for low-income students and counters the need for remediation and other interventions in the future.

There is untapped potential to increase access to pre-kindergarten in high-need communities through public charter schools, which serve many high-need students. However, current law does not authorize charter schools to offer state supported pre-kindergarten programs, thereby preventing children from accessing potentially high-quality providers.³⁷ Therefore, the Commission recommends authorizing existing public charter schools to be considered and included by the state in the expansion of early education on behalf of the high-need populations they serve.³⁸ The focus should be on increasing access for high-need students wherever they are in the education system.

³⁴ Frede, E., Jung, K., Barnett, S., and Figueras, A. (2009). The APPLES blossom: Abbott preschool program longitudinal effects study (APPLES), preliminary results through 2nd grade. Interim Report and Reynolds, A.J., Temple, J.A., Robertson, D. L., and Mann, E. A. (2001). Long term effects of an early childhood intervention on educational achievement and juvenile arrest. A 15 year follow-up of low income children in public schools. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 285(18).

³⁵ For an excellent reference of the importance of early education in the development of the child see the Harvard Center on the Developing Child website located at <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/activities/council/>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ See: New York Education Law § 2854(2)(c).

³⁸ Some members of the Commission also wanted to ensure at the same time that the current law requiring charters to meet enrollment targets for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program is being effectuated.



New York State has been a leader in early education, with a significant state commitment to early education through the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program. The state invests \$385 million in the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) program and services to children with special needs through the preschool special education program. The UPK program serves over 100,000 students with over 90 percent of the state's high-need school districts offering UPK. UPK includes classroom seats directly provided by school districts, as well as those by a network of community-based providers who partner with schools to provide UPK

services in community settings. In its Preliminary Action Plan, this Commission reviewed existing pre-k services in New York and recommended that the state expand its investment to sponsor a full-day model.

In response, the Governor broadened the annual state investment of \$385 million for UPK and provided an additional \$25 million to begin the first state-funded full-day pre-kindergarten program. After legislative adoption, the state implemented a competitive program with grants to school districts proposing to either expand existing half-day programming into full-day programming or establish new full-day programming targeted to our neediest students. The Commission is proud to have been a part of such a significant achievement: the state received over 88 applications requesting a total amount of \$58.3 million for full-day high-quality pre-kindergarten programs—more than double the amount available. The Commission urges the state to ensure that these programs are of high quality so students get the best educational opportunities available.

The Commission recommends that the state builds upon this prior investment by making a further commitment to full-day high-quality pre-k. The state should commit to expanded opportunities to access high-quality pre-k with a focus on high-need communities. The impediments to expanding the state's commitment are numerous—most notably an inadequate supply of certified teachers and effective providers, a lack of systems of accountability to ensure the quality of programs, the need for capital and infrastructure enhancements to accommodate such programs, and the economic reality of funding a statewide program in times of fiscal constraints. But the benefits of quality early education are too great not to embark on this task, particularly in our high-need, low-income communities. The Commission recommends that policymakers work towards prioritizing and expanding universal, full-day pre-k.³⁹

Many early education needs can be addressed through the cross-sector collaborations. An effective early learning system must be a priority not just for the state, but supported by parents, communities, and multiple levels of government to further increase quality in early childhood education. Many high-quality early education programs provided by community organizations across the state coordinate with districts to help children regulate their behavior and emotions and build a foundation for developing social skills. Communities that use data and evidence-based practices to identify barriers to learning and mobilize cross-sector resources to address those barriers are best prepared to solve problems where they start. Through cross-sector collaboration, communities can maximize the resources brought to bear by the state. In addition, the Commission recognizes that parental engagement is a critical factor in children's educational success, especially in pre-k. Therefore, we recommend that parental engagement be an integral component in the expansion of early childhood education in the state.

The Commission recommends that the state builds upon its prior investment by making a further commitment to full-day high-quality pre-k.

³⁹ In this expanded pre-k, the state must ensure that learning standards utilized in such programs are developmentally appropriate. Some members of the Commission believe that the current grades K-2 standards are developmentally inappropriate and in need of revision for young children. Thus, they believe the standards for pre-kindergarten through second grade should be reviewed and revised by early childhood educators with an eye to what is developmentally appropriate.

The need for certified and well-trained early childhood education professionals cannot be underestimated nor overstated. Districts should look to implement professional development opportunities where early education providers and primary school teachers can collaborate on strategies to prepare students for success. Systems of accountability and quality can be put in place for providers that work with children before entering pre-k. In order to ensure that these early education programs remain high-quality, they must be connected, coordinated, and accountable to the education system. These factors should all be considered when developing a long-term state commitment to early education, and should be prioritized by the multiple levels of government and communities that contribute to early learning. Early education requires a community-wide focus and cannot remain the responsibility of school districts alone.

The Commission recognizes the importance of a strong foundation for all learners and knows that an increased investment in early learning will strengthen student achievement throughout the education pipeline. Communities must organize and act collectively and in concert with state efforts in order to increase capacity and provide high-quality pre-kindergarten in a fiscally responsible way. The state should continue working toward an ultimate goal of ensuring that all low-income and otherwise at-risk children in the state have access to high-quality, voluntary, full-day pre-k programs that prepare them to succeed in school.

Recommendation 2. Expand the use of technology in our schools, especially those highest-need schools that have not been able to keep pace.

The Commission recommends the state provide incentives and enact a program to improve access to technology in schools, especially our highest-need schools, as a way to help complement teaching and academic programs in order to improve student achievement.

Technology in our schools can improve achievement by helping schools meet the needs of all students. It can create individualized learning experiences to match the skills and readiness of each child. It can promote equity and access in education by bringing new opportunities to socioeconomically and geographically diverse pupils. It allows students to develop the skills necessary for success in higher education and the workforce. Simply put, technology can bring learning to students wherever they are.

Although technology plays an ever-increasing role in our daily lives, most classrooms in New York function the same way that classrooms did over a century ago. Most students progress through grades at the same rate, regardless of the pace at which they can master learning material. Furthermore, many students and parents still lack sufficient course choices and learning resources, despite their widespread availability through the internet. Digital learning has the potential to leverage technology to transform our educational system to provide students, parents, and educators more flexibility over the time, place, path, and pace of learning. In other words, technology—coupled with innovative learning models—can individualize each student's educational experience and shift the teacher's role from being the source of information to being a guide alongside students. The best technological approaches are thoroughly interwoven, or blended, into student learning, not a stand-alone tool separate and apart from how a student learns.

Technology can individualize each student's educational experience and shift the teacher's role from being the source of information to being a guide alongside students.

Many schools and homes don't have access to high-speed internet access, which in many ways renders electronic devices ineffective.

The classroom of yesterday is not equipped to educate today's students and they deserve better. Many students do not have access to computers, tablets, and other electronic devices that unlock new online curricula and other educational material and resources.⁴⁰

The Commission therefore recommends that the Governor and the Legislature invest in access to technology—from computers to

high-speed broadband deployment—as a way to complement teaching and academic programs. This will allow school districts to leverage the power of technology to democratize education and educate New York's students in 21st-century classrooms.

Through its work, the Commission found that technology could significantly improve student performance. For example, a recent study found that in the Hamilton County school district in Tennessee, technology helped improve student success with graduation rates increasing by eight percent and math scores by ten percent.⁴¹

There already exist a number of programs, both in New York and around the nation, that focus on expanding technology in education. In New York, the successful Virtual Advanced Placement program has awarded \$17 million in grants to 17 school districts and consortia with the purpose of improving access to online and blended Advanced Placement (AP) courses for low-income students. In 2012, New York State had 64,946 students who have taken at least one AP exam before leaving high school, amounting to 42.7% of all graduates in 2012. Unfortunately, access is not universal and low-income and rural students do not always have opportunities to take AP courses, which are crucial for admission to and success in college. This program opens the door to virtual classrooms that lets students take courses on their own schedule and learn at their own pace and ensure that every student will be ready for college and careers, not just those who live in districts that can afford to offer AP classes.

There is no shortage of innovative approaches nationally that New York could replicate with regard to introducing technology into schools. For example:

- The Quakertown Community School District in Pennsylvania started a blended learning program in 2008 through which students can take courses online, in-person, or both to provide personalized, flexible academic opportunities. Since the start of the program, the graduation rate has improved from 88 to 95 percent and the most students in the school's history scored proficient on state exams.⁴²
- The Dysart Unified School District in Arizona's collaborative process to develop a plan to improve student learning led to the development of strategies that used technology and digital learning. Their plan included the introduction of "innovation ambassadors," or technology specialists who receive specialized training to assist teachers by piloting new and innovative instruction that utilizes technology. The use of innovation ambassadors to help integrate technology into schools promotes a collaborative team experience that prevents individual teachers from struggling in isolated efforts to incorporate technology

⁴⁰ Schools across New York are looking to expand technology in their schools. See: Goot, M. (2014). Area schools embrace cloud-based technology. Post Standard. Retrieved January 1, 2014, from http://m.poststar.com/news/local/article_9bf12b66-7315-11e3-a6d8-0019bb2963f4.html/.

⁴¹ IBM Corporation. (2011). Hamilton County department of education: Deeper student insights leave a deep impact. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from http://www.ibm.com/smarterplanet/us/en/leadership/hamiltoncounty/assets/pdf/IBM_Hamilton_County.pdf.

⁴² The Alliance for Excellent Education. (2013). Quakertown Community School District: A systematic approach to blended learning that focuses on district leadership, staffing, and cost-effectiveness. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Quakertown.pdf>.

in lessons. Dysart also uses a technology test drive process through which it purchases a limited amount of a new technology and monitors its impact before expanding it district-wide in order to avoid wasting resources. As a result of Dysart’s plan, state test scores have improved every year with gains larger than the state average.⁴³

- The Cajon Valley Middle School (CVMS) in California developed a transformation strategy focused on changing the school’s culture, emphasizing 21st century skills and access to 21st century technology, and shifting students from consumers to creators of content. The Cajon Valley USD has a goal of reaching a 1:1 student-to-device ratio by 2014 to support digital strategies including blended learning, mobile learning, social learning platforms, and electronic response capabilities for exams. By empowering students through the use of technology, CVMS has seen a dramatic decrease in school fights, improved attendance rates, and increases in overall student performance.⁴⁴
- A number of small districts, have had successful tablet deployments—including Eanes ISD (TX),⁴⁵ which deployed approximately 1,600 devices and Coast USD (CA), a 750-student district that features iPad rollout advice and site visit information on its website.⁴⁶

Another example of innovative use of technology in educating students is being pioneered by Classroom, Inc (CI). CI has developed a unique learning program, which uses online game-based learning to improve literacy, critical thinking, and non-cognitive skills while addressing and assessing grade-specific Common Core State Standards in reading and writing.⁴⁷ CI has also seen positive results through their summer programming, when students typically suffer a learning loss. Students in New York City, Chicago, Memphis, and Newark gained an average of three months in reading and seven months in math knowledge after just four to five weeks of Classroom, Inc’s technology-based summer curriculum.⁴⁸

Investments in computers and other technology can be used to close the achievement gap by bringing the technology of today and tomorrow into the classroom.

In our Preliminary Action Plan, we recommended that the state create Innovation Zones to invest in transformative technology to improve student achievement. Providing open access to instructional material and curricula on the internet “cloud” using the latest hardware technology—tablet computers, interactive software, and online learning—can make a real difference in educating our children. More importantly, these technologies can provide individually-tailored instruction to students. Teachers will be able to collect real-time data about the progress of their students and adjust their lesson plans accordingly; while this can happen currently with the use of class “exit tickets,”⁴⁹ the integration of technology into that strategy brings the effectiveness of the practice to a whole new level.

⁴³ The Alliance for Excellent Education. (2013). Dysart Unified School District: How one school district used collaborative planning to improve outcomes for all students. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Dysart.pdf>.

⁴⁴ The Alliance for Excellent Education. (2013). Cajon Valley Union School District: Changing the culture of learning to empower students. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/CajonValley.pdf>.

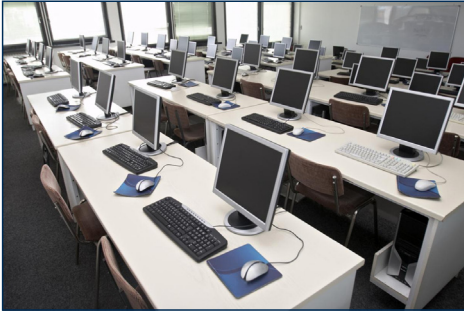
⁴⁵ Morales, C. (2013). Texas Schools Putting iPads in Students’ Hands. KUT News and ReportingTexas.com. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://legacy.kut.org/2012/03/texas-schools-putting-ipads-in-students-hands/>.

⁴⁶ Coast Unified School District. (2013). CUSD IPADS. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://www.coastusd.org/index.php/district/technology/cusd-ipads>.

⁴⁷ Classroom Inc. (2013). Classroom, Inc. Awarded Gates Foundation Literacy Courseware Challenge Grant [Press release]. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://classroominc.org/classroom-inc-awarded-gates-foundation-grant>.

⁴⁸ Classroom, Inc. (2013). Student Achievement: 2011-12. Retrieved November 10, 2013, from <http://classroominc.org/results/classroom-inc-student-achievement-2011-2012>.

⁴⁹ “Exit tickets” are tools for teachers to, in a real time, day-to-day basis, assess the progress of their students. See: Brown University. (2013). Entrance and exit tickets. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from <http://brown.edu/about/administration/sheridan-center/teaching-learning/effective-classroom-practices/entrance-exit-tickets>.



Many of our schools do not have the capacity to use technology in a transformative way. The state must therefore improve the technology capability of our schools. To succeed, schools need more interactive whiteboards, not chalkboards. To succeed, students need tablets, not notepads. And we must connect students by investing in our schools and our homes so high-speed broadband wiring can be installed, allowing for wireless schools and other technological improvements to better engage students. Investments in computers and other technology can be used to close the achievement gap by bringing the technology of today and tomorrow into the classroom.

Many school districts across the country have instituted “bring your own device” (BYOD) policies.⁵⁰ Instead of cutting students off from mobile devices while they are in school, these policies establish specific expectations for when and how devices may be used. This enables teachers to incorporate smart devices and the internet into their lesson plans. In many cases, BYOD programs are supplemented by device loaner programs through the school or district library. Such programs enable school districts to save money by leveraging student-owned devices for learning. Students can adapt their personal devices to their educational needs, while schools reap the benefits of utilizing technology in the classroom. Engaging parents in the development of BYOD initiatives can help build awareness of how digital learning opportunities can be maximized both in and out of the classroom.

Families that are not connected to the internet at home are in danger of falling on the wrong side of the “digital divide.” Although technology, through a wide platform of technological devices, has increased access to the internet and broken down traditional age, race, income, education, and gender gaps, many families are still unable to use the internet as a tool for exploration and learning. Increased access to technology during the school day helps counter this trend, but the divide still exists for too many families after the school day ends. Technological enhancements that increase connectivity for students should continue from the school day into the home when possible, allowing both students and their families to expand their use of the internet as an important tool for learning.

The Commission believes that smart integration of technology into the classroom can improve student performance. “Wireless schools” with high-speed broadband wiring can provide students with access to the newest learning tools and innovations. Students who are experienced with interfacing with current technology are more engaged in the classroom and students without access to technology at home gain the opportunity to develop that skillset, thereby leveling the playing field.

Each of these components of modernizing learning would make a difference for our students. Although school infrastructure is in need of updates across the state, these initiatives must be undertaken thoughtfully. Specific technologies are not “one-size-fits-all” solutions. We must ensure that the technologies used in classrooms in New York City and in the Adirondacks are similar where appropriate, but distinct where required in order to meet the differing needs of their students and communities. We recommend that the Governor and the Legislature explore innovative, effective methods to help districts invest wisely in technology.

It is critical that any state and local resources devoted to school renovation be used intelligently—a smart use of public dollars and a move towards using more technology in our schools. As with all of the Commission’s recommendations, bringing technology into our schools will require input from parents, educators, administrators, and the support of community partners. In addition, we must remain accountable and evaluate the results of these programs as we look for ways to replicate and expand best practices throughout the state.

⁵⁰ Devaney, L. (2013). How to make BYOD work for your schools. eSchool News. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2012/10/29/how-to-make-byod-work-for-your-schools/3/>.

Recommendation 3. Reward the best and brightest educators, especially in our struggling schools.

A quality teacher is perhaps the best thing a student can have to be successful in life. The Commission recommends creating a Teacher Excellence Fund to reward teacher excellence and attract and keep talented educators in the classroom, particularly in our lowest-performing schools.⁵¹

The Commission understands that teachers are the most important influence on our students' success throughout the education pipeline. As we noted in our Preliminary Action Plan, teachers account for one-third of a school's total impact on student achievement.⁵² Therefore it is vital that we keep highly effective teachers in the classroom, in the profession, and in New York State. The state has already taken steps to address the Commission's recommendation to raise the bar for admission to teacher and principal preparation programs. In fact, a recent New York Times article lamenting the mediocre standards of teacher preparation in the United States signaled the new SUNY admission standards as a step in the right direction.⁵³

It has been estimated that the cost of replacing public school teachers who have dropped out of the profession is \$2.2 billion a year nationally. The cost rises to \$4.9 billion nationally if the cost of replacing public school teachers who transfer between schools is added.⁵⁴ In 2005 alone, the cost of teacher turnover in New York was estimated to be greater than \$360 million.⁵⁵ Additionally, high teacher turnover has a negative impact on teacher quality and student achievement, which is difficult to quantify. Thus, there is a pressing need to retain our best teachers and to recruit highly-qualified individuals to join the ranks of our teaching force, particularly in our lower- and lowest-performing districts/schools, where the turnover rates are greater than in their higher-performing counterparts.

For many years, the state has funded the Teachers of Tomorrow program. The purpose of this program is to provide a variety of incentives that will encourage both experienced and prospective teachers to teach in school districts with teacher or subject shortages, especially in low-performing schools. Grant funds may be used in six categories, including the Master Teacher Program, tuition reimbursement, and teacher recruitment.⁵⁶

On a national level, the U.S. Department of Education awards Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) Grants to support efforts to develop and implement performance-based teacher and principal compensation systems in high-need schools.⁵⁷ Federal grant funds can be used to design performance pay systems that include differentiated levels of compensation for teachers and principals based on effectiveness. Although grantees determine the specifics of their bonus programs, the grant notice states that the bonuses should be substantial and awarded based on challenging criteria. The program also specifies that educator effectiveness must be based on student achievement growth and classroom or principal observations, a criterion met by the use of New York's APPR standards. Grantees may provide additional pay for educators who assume leadership roles and take on additional responsibilities. In addition, grantees may also offer a variety of other performance-based compensation incentives, such as additional pay to teach a hard-to-staff subject or in a high-need school. A

⁵¹ Commissioners have also recommended that performance incentive funds be expanded to include principals and other school leaders.

⁵² 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.

⁵³ The New York Times. (2013). Why other countries teach better. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/18/opinion/why-students-do-better-overseas.html>.

⁵⁴ The Alliance for Excellent Education. (2013). Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation, and to the states. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from <http://www.all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/TeacherAttrition.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ New York State Education Department. (2013). Teachers of tomorrow. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/tot.html>.

⁵⁷ U. S. Department of Education. (2013). Teacher incentive fund. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherincentive/index.html>.

highly successful example of this career ladder compensation system is the New American Academy, which provides its teachers on average 38 percent more in salaries than comparable New York City Department of Education teachers for their increased responsibilities.⁵⁸

The State Education Department has already begun piloting incentive funds in high-need schools throughout New York State through the TIF Grant Program. In September 2010, the State Education Department was awarded a five-year grant to create a performance-based compensation system in a number of its high-need schools.⁵⁹ As a result of this partnership, SED has developed a performance-based compensation system aligned to the state's Teacher and Principal Career Development Continua that will reward, at differentiated levels, those teachers and principals who demonstrate effectiveness by improving student achievement and assuming leadership responsibilities.⁶⁰

There are other innovative systems that could guide the state in implementing a Teacher Excellence Fund, such as that taking place in the Baltimore Public School District in Maryland. Utilizing funds received from Race to the Top program, the school system is paying bonuses to teachers and administrators who have found ways to improve achievement and reduce truancy among students attending struggling schools. Baltimore City has also received \$52.7 million dollars over four years to develop a system to incorporate student achievement in teacher evaluations.⁶¹ Similarly, the process established in the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)—New York's teacher and principal evaluation system—states that the results of a teacher's review "shall be a significant factor for employment decisions including but not limited to, promotion, retention, tenure determination, termination, and supplemental compensation..." could be a vehicle for implementing the Teacher Excellence Fund in New York.⁶²

Furthermore, in 2012, New York City was awarded a TIF Grant totaling nearly \$53 million over five years. This funding is being used to implement a performance-based compensation system (PBCS) via a teacher career lattice in high-need middle schools in order to improve educator effectiveness and increase student achievement. The lattice increases classroom leadership capacity through professional development of teachers while providing peer leadership opportunities to teachers who are interested in new professional challenges and have demonstrated effectiveness. The compensation system provides for increases in base salary for Teacher Leaders who take on additional responsibilities and who earn a rating of effective or highly effective.⁶³ With these initiatives in mind, the Commission recommends that the state look into further options for providing supplemental compensation to our best and brightest teachers, in addition to seeking ways to incentivize educators to work in our lower- and lowest-performing schools.⁶⁴

⁵⁸The New American Academy. (2013). Mastery-based career ladder. Retrieved December 21, 2013, from <http://www.thenewamericanacademy.org/index.php/home/our-model/mastery-based-career-ladder>.

⁵⁹ Twenty-five million dollars was provided for 20 schools in the Rochester City School District and 20 schools in the Syracuse City School District to take part in this pilot. For information on developments in Syracuse. See Nolan, M. (2012). Syracuse school district poised to experiment with bonus pay for teachers. Post-Standard. Retrieved November 13, 2013, from http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2012/10/syracuse_school_district_poise.html.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of Education. (2013). Application for new grants under the teacher incentive fund. Retrieved November 25, 2013, from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherincentive/apps/a100126.pdf>.

⁶¹ U.S. Department of Education's Reform Support Network. (2012). Baltimore's Career Pathways Initiative for Teachers. Retrieved November 25, 2013, from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/baltimore-model-pathway.pdf>.

⁶² Chapter 21 of the Laws of 2012.

⁶³ NYC Department of Education. (2013). Teacher Incentive Fund: Cultivating Teacher Leadership. Retrieved November 25, 2013, from <http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/leadershippathways/Opportunities/teacherleadership/teacherincentivefund.htm>.

⁶⁴ The Commission recognizes the importance of pairing compensation for excellence in teaching with professional development and other career ladder opportunities for New York's highly effective educators.

In addition to encouraging outstanding teachers to work in chronically low-performing schools, we must recognize the importance of proper teacher training and leadership to turn around struggling schools. High-performing, prepared teachers and leaders are critical to real educational reform.⁶⁵ As a strategy, the Commission highly recommends utilizing teams or individuals who have had the opportunity to train under experienced and mentor principals to help turn around struggling schools. Districts have a responsibility to differentiate support for low-performing schools; it is critical for the state to invest and provide incentives for the recruitment of principals and teachers who have been trained to lead and teach in struggling schools.

Investing in What Works

Through its work, the Commission heard various examples of successful mentorship and leadership training programs that focus on building the capacity for school leaders to transform struggling schools.

- The *Charlotte-Mecklenburg District* in North Carolina successfully implemented a Strategic Staffing Initiative, through which highly skilled teams of school leaders and teachers were assigned to underperforming schools. Within just one year, state test results for 13 of the 14 schools with strategically staffed principals showed substantial growth, ranging from five- to 23-point increases in student proficiency.ⁱ
- The New York City Department of Education works in partnerships with the *NYC Leadership Academy's Aspiring Principals Program (APP)*, which recruits, trains, places and coaches new building administrators. The APP provides prospective leaders with on the ground training under the guidance of mentor principals who have successfully turned around low-performing schools. The teaming of prospective principals and assistant principals to take over low-performing schools through the Academy's Targeted Intensive School Support Program has garnered attention from the U.S. Department of Education, which awarded the Academy a \$3M Investing in Innovation (I3) Development Grant.ⁱⁱ
- *New Leaders* is a national organization that develops transformational school leaders to implement effective leadership practices for school systems. Since 2001, New Leaders has recruited and trained approximately 125 school leaders that have worked to improve K-8 student achievement in New York City. In 2011, New Leaders' schools made an average proficiency gain of 9 percentage points in math and reading combined, compared to only 4 percentage points among all New York City students.ⁱⁱⁱ
- State university systems have also taken a role in strengthening the teacher pipeline. For example, the University of Virginia (UVA) has developed a two-year *School Turnaround Specialist* program, which helps district and school leadership and staff to build the capacity to sustain effective turnarounds. Florida is expanding its efforts under the federal Race to the Top program to develop a "leadership pipeline" for administrators that aspire to lead successful school turnarounds. The program is based on UVA's model and seeks to recruit and train a minimum of 80 aspiring principals and assistant principals each year.^{iv}

Footnotes:

ⁱ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. (2009). Strategic Staffing. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/superintendent/White%20Papers/Strategic%20Staffing.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ NYC Leadership Academy. (2013). Aspiring Principals Program. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www.nycleadershipacademy.org/aspiring-principals-program>.

ⁱⁱⁱ New Leaders. (2013). Fact Sheet. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www.newleaders.org/locations/new-york-city-newark/fact-sheet/>.

^{iv} U.S. Department of Education's Reform Support Network. (2012). Turnaround Leadership: How to Identify Successful School Leaders. Retrieved November 28, 2013, from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/turnaround-leadership.pdf>.

⁶⁵ Leadership has been found to be second only to teaching in its impact on student achievement when turning around struggling schools. Principals are the most important determinant in the recruitment and retention of teachers and every high-quality principal develops high-quality teachers who in turn provide high-quality learning experiences to our children. Leadership therefore creates a multiplier effect: one effective principal influences dozens of teachers, who influence hundreds of students. Investing in training the right individuals to become principals give students a quality education over time, rather than just for one year. This helps address achievement gaps over the long-term in our struggling schools and underserved communities.

In its Preliminary Action Plan, the Commission highlighted the need for principal and teacher preparation programs to have a strong clinical practice component. The state should build upon the successes of teacher preparation programs with strong mentorship components to collaboratively supply districts with leadership teams. Turnaround models should rely on specially prepared leadership teams to effectively connect the teacher preparation pipeline to the educational system.

Recommendation 4. Replicate programs that connect high school to college in order to create greater college opportunities, especially for underrepresented students.



The Commission recommends that the state provide incentives such as college scholarships and other financial assistance to cover the cost of college for high-performing students, especially underrepresented students, as well as expand innovative programs, such as Early College High Schools, so at-risk students have a chance to attain both a high school diploma and a college degree at no cost to the student.

The Commission recommends the state provide more opportunities for students to have access to college, especially high-performing and underrepresented students. Given the growing need for higher levels of education in today's economy, attaining a college degree is more important than ever. Studies estimate that New York's economy will need an additional 1 million degree-holders by 2025.⁶⁶ However, for a multitude of reasons, many students do not make it to college—and it is not simply because of cost. New York has among the lowest tuition in the nation, yet due to other environmental factors, students are not afforded to opportunity to attain a college degree.

Therefore, the Commission recommends a two-pronged approach:

First, the Commission recommends building on the success of Early College High Schools, such as P-TECH, by expanding the program and bringing it to scale in New York.⁶⁷ Under these programs, underrepresented students are able to receive a high school diploma as well as a college degree for free.⁶⁸ These students undergo mentoring programs and are taught industry-aligned curricula that provide them with real career ladders for jobs that exist.

Studies estimate that New York's economy will need an additional 1 million degree-holders by 2025.

⁶⁶ SUNY projections based on 2020 projections from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce report located at <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/New%20York2020.pdf>.

⁶⁷For example, New York has the Smart Scholars Early College High School (ECHS) Program which is a network of partnerships between institutions of higher education and public school districts to create ECHS programs that provide students with the opportunity and preparation to earn a minimum of 20 but up to 60 transferable college credits while completing high school. The students earn the college credits at no cost to their families. This program is targeted to students who are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education. Students receive additional academic support from the school/college partnerships to ensure they are at grade level and ready to participate in rigorous high school and collegiate courses. This "dual or concurrent enrollment" program serves to increase high school graduation and college completion rates, while reducing student tuition costs as a result of the compressed time needed to complete a college degree. The first cohort of 11 Smart Scholars ECHS school/college partnerships was initiated in December 2009 with private funding from the Gates Foundation. In December 2010, NYSED released a Request for Proposal (RFP) to create a second cohort of ECHS partnerships in 2011 with state funding. Twelve new Smart Scholars ECHS partnerships resulted from the second round of funding. In addition, four partnerships from the first cohort received funding to expand their projects. The second cohort of Smart Scholars ECHS programs began their planning phase in May 2011 and opened in September 2011. More information available on NYSED's website: http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/SmartScholarsEarlyCollegeHighSchool_000.htm.

National data show that Early College High Schools can improve student achievement:

- 93 percent of students enrolled in Early College High Schools graduate high school, as opposed to the 75 percent nationwide average.⁶⁸
- 76 percent of Early College High School students immediately enroll in college as opposed to the 68 percent nationwide average.⁶⁹
- 94 percent of Early College High School graduates earn some college credit for free. The average graduate earns 36 college credits, saving 60 percent off an associate's degree and 30 percent off a bachelor's degree.⁷⁰

Upon recommendation of this Commission, Governor Cuomo utilized a competitive process to expand this model to each region of the state, sparking additional partnerships and industry collaborations with districts and SUNY higher education institutions. As a result, communities all across the state have engaged in cross-sector partnerships to expand educational opportunities for children. Through this expansion of Early College High Schools, thousands more students who would never make it to college—and maybe not even receive a high school diploma—have a chance to receive a college degree and have job opportunities that would otherwise be out of their reach.

There are other innovative examples members of the Commission believe the state should look into replicating:

- **Career and Technical Education programs (CTEs)**, like Aviation High School, exist across the state and show students how to apply their talents, interests, and learning directly into the workplace. The state should look to support programming that helps students transition into college and career.
- **The Performance Standards Consortium** is a coalition of 39 diverse New York secondary schools focused on providing students the in-depth learning and critical thinking skills necessary to succeed in college and in life. These schools have developed their own “performance assessments,” which are derived directly from the curriculum and contribute to the learning process. These assessments ask students to demonstrate analytic thinking, use of evidence, and problem-solving skills—skills the Common Core Standards also aim to produce.⁷¹
- **Project-based learning** is a promising approach to education through which students explore real-world problems and challenges. This furthers learning by enabling students to develop important workplace-based skills even before graduating high school. Project-based learning has been proven to increase content retention and improve students' attitudes towards learning.

⁶⁸ Jobs for the Future: Education for Economic Opportunity. (2013). Early college movement stronger than ever. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www.jff.org/media/news-releases/2013/early-college-movement-stronger-ever/1516>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Jobs for the Future: Education for Economic Opportunity. (2013). Early college fact sheet. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/u3/ECHS_get_results_022513.pdf.

⁷¹ Successes of the Consortium include: Although Consortium students begin school with lower academic achievement, higher rates of poverty, and a larger percentage of minority students than the overall New York City public school population, they graduate and attend college at higher percentages; Consortium schools graduate twice as many special education students than the larger school system and 40% more English Language Learners; and Consortium graduates persist into their second year of college at both 4-year and 2-year institutions at rates (93.3% and 83.9%, respectively) that exceed New York State and national rates.

Second, the Commission recommends the state invest in scholarships or other financial incentives to give more students a path to college. However, the financial incentives should be focused on high-performing students and in academic disciplines in great demand, like science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, where the economy is growing.⁷² For example, as will be discussed in Recommendation 5, New York has great demand for an educated workforce, especially in key fields. By 2018, the demand for jobs in STEM fields in the state's workforce will increase ten percent.⁷³ By providing financial assistance, like covering tuition, we can produce a win-win that helps students afford college as well as increases the number of skilled workers entering these key fields.

Finally, in addition to increasing access to college, one of the most important factors in bridging the gap between high school and college is providing remedial support to students who may not be college ready. Though 74 percent of students in New York graduate high school in four years, only 34.7 percent of those students are college and career ready.⁷⁴ The percentage sharply declines for non-white populations: less than 15 percent of Black and Hispanic students and less than 7 percent of English Language Learners are college and career ready when they graduate high school.

In 2010, over 50 percent of students attending community colleges in New York took at least one remedial course. Between CUNY and SUNY, community colleges spend over \$100 million in remedial classes each year. Remediating students before they graduate high school or even reach senior year is a more efficient, less costly way to put them on a path toward success. The Commission's recommendations to improve low-performing schools can help address these issues, as well as the expansion of Early College High Schools, such as P-TECH. The state should also explore ways to provide early intervention options for students who are not college or career ready.⁷⁵

⁷² There are some great initiatives in New York geared towards getting students interested in STEM. For instance, in Rochester, a new organization called Girls4STEM was recently started to get young women interested and involved in the STEM field.

⁷³ New York is projected to have nearly 500,000 STEM jobs, ranking us third in the nation. See: Georgetown University. (2013). Educational distribution of STEM jobs in New York: 2018. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/stemnewyork1.pdf>.

⁷⁴ SED considers students graduating with at least a score of 75 on Regents English and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first-year college courses, as college and career ready. See "Our Challenge: Graduating Students College & Career Ready" located at <http://usny.nysed.gov/docs/lirache-1-31-13.pdf>.

⁷⁵ Some Commission Members have suggested the development of a new college and career readiness assessment for secondary school students. If students do not meet readiness benchmarks, they would begin remediation coursework during their final year of high school.

Recommendation 5. Strategically invest in higher education to successfully connect students to the workforce.

The Commission recommends expanding the state's strategic investment in public higher education to further incentivize providing access to all students and setting them up for success in their careers, including incentivizing paid internships, expanding academic programming, and increasing access to college degree programs through innovative methods, like online learning.

As was recommended above, we must do more to expand access to college, but, as importantly, we must make sure students have economic opportunity upon graduating from college. Higher education plays a critical role in educating and preparing students for careers. Colleges and universities serve as a vital connection between educational training and the workforce, even more so for adult learners, English Language Learners, and career-focused students that may have been underserved earlier in their educational career. Now, more than ever, higher education has become a critical junction that connects students to the workforce through internships and other experiential learning opportunities. A recent report by the Partnership for New York found that by 2020 in New York City alone, there will be an additional need for 284,000 jobs that require a bachelor's degree and 201,000 jobs that require a master's degree.⁷⁶

Now, more than ever, higher education has become a critical junction that connects students to the workforce through internships and other experiential learning opportunities..

New York has already begun implementing outcome-based models for higher education through the NYSUNY 2020, NYCUNY 2020, and Job Linkage programs which provided targeted funding to programs that, among other things, link students to the workplace.

In addition, through the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP), New York City has begun to provide direct supports to community college students that are geared towards helping them stay on course and complete their programs. ASAP provides intensive counseling support along with incentives such as transportation support and tuition remission for students who stay in the program. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), in a recent evaluation, called ASAP an unparalleled success. MDRC found that students in ASAP have almost double the rate of on-time completion in community college as students in a control group.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Partnership for New York City. (2013). NYC jobs blueprint. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from <http://www.nycjobsblueprint.org/report/?report=1>.

⁷⁷ Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. (2013). Evaluation of accelerated study in associate programs (ASAP) for developmental education students. Retrieved November 20, 2013, from http://www.mdrc.org/project/evaluation-accelerated-study-associate-programs-asap-developmental-education-students#featured_content.

A Model For Success: The Next Generation NY Job Linkage Program

Enacted by Governor Cuomo to leverage the unique ability of community colleges to directly connect academic programs to actual career opportunities, the Job Linkage program realigns all workforce degrees and certificates to the needs of industry partners and rewards community colleges that partner with employers to provide students with a path to meaningful employment.

Funding is awarded to community colleges based on factors including: student employment and wage gains; on-time degree completion; transfers to four-year institutions; the number of at-risk students who complete degree and certificate programs; and student participation in experiential learning. In order to reward continuous improvement and not just completion benchmarks, awards are also based on the number of students making adequate progress towards completion. This model encourages community colleges to focus not only on students' academic achievements, but to build partnerships with businesses and other community stakeholders to make sure students have the skills to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

Preliminary data from the Job Linkage program underscores the importance of postsecondary degrees in the workforce: 57 percent of employed community college graduates saw an increase of ten percent in their wages between the two quarters before starting college and the two quarters following graduation. Collecting and analyzing workforce data is an important step to further incentivize and reward community colleges to "train to the career" and demonstrate an ability to provide students with a path to meaningful employment. This data will be instrumental in enabling SUNY and CUNY community colleges to work with employers to fine tune vocational programs to be of the most value to employers and students.

The Commission recommends expanding this incentive structure by investing in higher education in order to successfully connect students to the workforce. Successful programs such as Job Linkage and ASAP should be expanded and given additional support. Moreover, strategic state investments should be made in innovative solutions, like online learning, to provide more access to degree-granting programs, as well as expanding paid internships and other experiential learning as ways to better link students to careers.

At least 16 states are already implementing strategic investments for higher education in at least one sector and ten more have similar programs under development.⁷⁸ In the spirit of the Commission's ongoing commitment to investing in what works, we recommend the state invest in programs with scalable successes that can be replicated on other campuses. Further, the Commission recommends that criteria for strategic investments give consideration to underserved populations in order to avoid creating disincentives in accepting these students into programs, as in the Job Linkage program. These would include further initiatives to support non-traditional students, incorporation of online learning, and efforts to increase investment in core academic functions.

⁷⁸ Jones, D. P. (2013). Outcomes-based funding The wave of implementation. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Experiential Learning: Models of Success

SUNY Oswego, Stony Brook and the Fashion Institute of Technology are leading highly successful co-op/paid internship programs. Partnering with companies such as Chevron, Motorola, 1050 AM New York ESPN Radio, Bank of America, Late Show with David Letterman, Marie Claire Magazine, MTV Networks, National Grid, NBC Universal, New York Mets, Time Warner Cable Sports, United Way, Utica Observer Dispatch, Viacom, Walt Disney World, and Welch Allyn, these internship programs result in many successful student job placements after graduation. The importance of experiential learning cannot be underestimated: 95 percent of co-op students nationally find jobs immediately upon graduation and more than 60 percent of co-op students nationally accept permanent jobs from their co-op employers.⁷⁹

The state should reward institutions that demonstrate a commitment to improving academics through accessibility, improved investment in instruction and student support, student outcomes, and career readiness and success.

Recommendation 6. Focus on efficiencies to reinvest administrative savings into the classroom.

The Commission recommends that the state expand opportunities for shared services, reduce obstacles to the school district merger process, and provide mechanisms for the creation of regional high schools.

In order to ensure that every dollar spent on education is contributing to improving the educational attainment of our students, the education system must operate as efficiently as possible.

The best way to ensure efficient use of funding is to create economies of scale and provide incentives and mechanisms for increased shared services with respect to school and school district operations. There are 700 school districts in New York State. Does that mean we must have 700 different business offices? Seven hundred purchasing offices? Seven hundred transportation directors? Seven hundred food service operations? Seven hundred different health insurance plans? The answer to these questions is undoubtedly no. Though many districts already engage in some shared services arrangements, there is certainly much more that can be done.

The Commission recognizes that there is a strong will among administrators, educators, and boards of education to enact efficiencies in the education system. At the same time, there appears to be a disconnect between this desire and actions to implement meaningful changes that will transfer resources from operations and administration to improving student learning. The state should expand opportunities for shared services and—where necessary—eliminate barriers that prevent innovative and creative school district leaders from making the operational changes they know can drive more resources to their classrooms.

In our Preliminary Action Plan, the Commission called for the simplification of the consolidation process, a review of the existing incentives to shared services, and the expansion of regional education services through Regional High Schools and other models. Currently, there are limited options for school districts to create collaborative secondary schools. New options could provide greater educational services to help ensure that students graduate high school ready to succeed in college and careers, such as high-quality science, technology,

⁷⁹ For more information on SUNY Works, see: <http://www.suny.edu/educationpipeline/sunyworks/>.

engineering, and mathematics programs, through more cost-effective and efficient operational delivery. Regional high schools can produce benefits such as improved instructional quality and expanded educational opportunities for students. They help districts pool and leverage educational resources to provide greater operational flexibility and cost savings, while also delivering high-quality educational programming. The Commission will continue to work with policymakers to develop these programs.



The Commission examined some specific areas where schools are currently sharing services. One of the most important areas is health insurance; many schools participate in regional consortia to help leverage greater economies of scale and larger risk pools. Among 26 BOCES surveyed, 76 percent of school districts participate in a regional health insurance consortium. However, participation in these consortia was not universal throughout the state. Pockets of limited participation exist downstate, in Long Island, Westchester, and Putnam Counties, and in a few other areas upstate. In the Western Suffolk BOCES, school districts participate in the NYSHIP plan through which they successfully share services.

The Commission is encouraged by districts that have already made great strides in sharing services, but recognizes that there are immediate and specific actions that could be taken to expand opportunities for shared services, including:

- **Career and Technical Education.** The state should examine ways to expand access to CTE programs. Due to CTE programs having potentially high startup costs, districts may have difficulty developing programs on their own. The state should find ways to encourage cooperative development of these programs to ensure that these alternative pathways to college and career readiness are accessible to more students throughout the state.
- **Shared Business Offices.** The state should find ways to encourage regional shared services including: regional adoption of district financial software to ease transition to shared services; creation of central business offices; and cooperative purchases of instructional materials.
- **Healthcare.** The state should explore ways to reduce healthcare costs including expanding the use of health insurance consortia that can be replicated elsewhere in the state and authorizing prescription drug purchases through state contracts or Medicaid.
- **Transportation.** The state should encourage regional transportation services and eliminate disincentives to sharing services in law. This could be achieved by allowing piggybacking on existing contracts and creating means to allow the state and districts to share in the savings to encourage more inter-district partnerships and shared garages.

Students, teachers, administrators, school districts, and other educational entities would benefit from a more integrated education system that creates efficiencies while providing world-class educational opportunities. Expanding the scope of regional ties will open up educational opportunities to more students and allow districts and other educational service providers to tap into the economies of scale that come with a regional approach to education. By allowing for more cost-effective operations and being able to dedicate greater resources for teaching and learning opportunities, school districts for which regional secondary schools is an appropriate service delivery model will be able to better ensure that their students graduate high school ready for college and careers.

V. Further Reflections

Throughout its work, the Commission heard testimony and received input on a number of issues that were clearly relevant to the effective and equitable delivery of public education in our state, but which were beyond the scope of our ability to tackle, given the constraints of time and limited resources, or on which we simply could not come to a consensus. We have included a brief description and analysis of these issues below, which we encourage policymakers and educators at all levels to focus on as they continue to address ways to strengthen New York's public education system.

Financing Education

Perhaps the most consistent and persistent issue raised during the course of our work was the level and method of financing of public education in our state. At public hearings and forums across the state, the Commission heard from parents, teachers, administrators, students, school advocates, and taxpayers about education funding. Concerns were raised about the perceived inadequacies, inequities, and inefficiencies of the current system of finance. Are we spending enough; are we spending too much; are we spending wisely and efficiently; are we spending equitably, targeting the most resources to those with the greatest need?

These are all good questions, which we were unable to wrestle to the ground given their complexity, the wide variety of views surrounding them, and the limitations of time and resources. We did, however, reach some conclusions that point the way to better, more effective, and more equitable approaches to funding public education:

1. The Commission recognizes and embraces the constitutional right of all of New York's children to have the opportunity for a sound, basic education. However, much work remains to be done to understand the interplay among the teacher in the classroom, the school administration, the curriculum, and the level of resources available to support educational programs before we can ensure that all students are being afforded the educational opportunities they deserve. Simply throwing more money at the problem is not the answer.
2. It almost goes without saying that we are not spending every dollar of the \$75 billion we spend annually on public education in this state as efficiently as we could. In our Preliminary Action Plan and in this final report, we have identified a number of steps that should be taken to make current expenditures more effective. But, more work remains to be done. It seems clear that further consolidation and/or regionalization can lead to cost reductions without reductions in program or service offerings (or, put alternatively, to expanded programs and services without increased costs). The Governor and the Legislature should explore ways to create meaningful incentives to local school districts to vigorously explore these options.
3. Whether we are spending too little or too much on public education in New York, the Commission believes the state should ensure that education funding is distributed in the most equitable manner possible. Simply put, the Commission believes state funding should be driven to the highest-need districts—those students and communities that need it the most. The state must ensure that this equalizing principle is addressed within the current funding formulas. We call upon the Governor and the Legislature to promptly review and address these issues and remedy remaining imbalances in the allocation of state funding of public education.

The Common Core Standards

The Commission supports the Common Core. However, in the recent controversy over Common Core, it is easy to lose sight of why New York joined with 45 other states in adopting these new, rigorous standards.⁸⁰ In our competitive, fast-changing global economy, if students do not have higher-order capabilities like critical thinking and problem solving, mastery of essential knowledge, and the skill and will to persist, they will be left behind.

Instruction in many wealthier public and private schools is routinely aligned to such skills, often through project-based and hands-on learning. But students in low-income communities have less access to the well-rounded, rigorous education they deserve. Without standards aligned to what children need to succeed in college, career, and life, and ample supports to help them get there, that chasm will grow even wider.

That is what the Common Core is about, and that is why ensuring proper implementation of Common Core was, is, and will continue to be critically important to the vitality of New York. But implementation of new standards—especially these standards that are more challenging and complex than any that have come before—means there will be trial and error to get it right. There are a number of different views on the part of individual commissioners regarding what constitutes “getting it right.” On balance, however, the view of the Commission as a whole is that prescribing the precise way in which these standards should be implemented is beyond both our scope and competence. Therefore, the Commission recommends that policymakers work with and listen to educators and parents to make sure the Common Core is implemented properly and equitably to achieve desired results.

Special Education

New York makes significant investments in preschool special education and early intervention services; the state actually spends more on these services than it does on pre-k programs for all other children in the state. In the 2010-11 school year, over 450,000 three to 21-year-old children were served under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), representing more than 16 percent of the total student population in New York State. This year, overall federal IDEA allocations for public school districts in New York State amounted to approximately \$720 million.⁸¹ In addition to the services mandated and partially funded at the federal level, New York State has a role to play in providing and supporting special education as a civil rights imperative.

The Commission recommends that the state consider a task force to review the needs of students with disabilities in New York and make recommendations for improving special education services and educational outcomes.



⁸⁰ For an overview of the Common Core, see <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

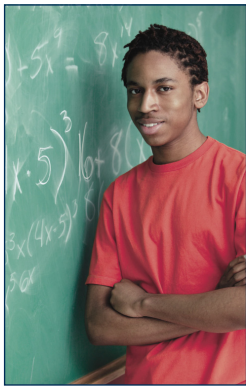
⁸¹ IDEA is a federal statute focused on providing the necessary services to more than six million eligible children and youth with disabilities across the country.

English Language Learners

In the 2010-11 school year, over 200,000 public school students participated in programs for English Language Learners (ELLs). The number has been steadily growing over the last several years. While ELLs represent diverse language cultures, the majority (approximately two-thirds) of New York's ELL population speaks Spanish.

Unfortunately, many ELLs are not receiving the supports they need to succeed. As an example, only 12 percent of ELLs in New York City met English language arts standards and only 35 percent met math standards in 2010. Given the changing demographics, New York State must do more to ensure students who are learning English are also able to master grade-level content standards and are ready for college and careers at the time of high school graduation.

Grounded in our guiding principles of access and accountability, the Commission believes New York can do more to ensure ELLs receive equitable education opportunities. Again, this is an issue on which the state should conduct a more in-depth review on how to better align services and create more educational opportunities.



Minority Youth

A recent study by the Schott Foundation for Public Education found that New York State has the lowest four-year high school graduation rate for Black and Latino males in the nation.⁸² Researchers also found that only 37 percent of Black and Latino male students are graduating in four years as compared to 78 percent of White males. High school graduates earn approximately \$630,000 more over their lifetime than their peers who dropout.

The Commission has found that there is a disturbing trend in relation to the achievement rates regarding minority youth. For both moral and economic reasons, it is an alarming point that deserves additional focus and attention. The education system should take a systematic look at how this population of young men may be underserved and make changes to rectify this problem. The Commission feels strongly that this area of concern needs additional focus and attention.

⁸² 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 December 1, 2013, from <http://blackboysreport.org/urgency-of-now.pdf>.

VI. Conclusion

The education pipeline is long and complex, and the work of this Commission has been similarly involved and challenging. Over the past 19 months, the Commission has found that while there are a number of important reforms that can—and have—been made, there is still much work to be done. We look forward to the proposals within this Final Action Plan being adopted by the Governor, and hope that all state policymakers will take our suggestions under serious consideration.

At the outset of this scope of work, as well as this Final Action Plan, the Commission developed a series of guiding principles that must drive the reforms and improvements we seek:

- Access to high-quality educational programs for all students.
- Accountability of the entire education pipeline to ensure that the system is properly developing students while at the same time finding ways to identify systematic weaknesses and needed improvements.
- Collective impact that utilizes the resources and expertise of local governments, the private sector, community organizations, families, teachers, and students as agents of change.
- Investing in what works by replicating and bringing to scale those programs that improve student performance.



We believe that these recommendations, coupled with those from our Preliminary Action Plan, do just that. With all of our recommendations: students will have greater access to high-quality pre-k programming, as well as expanded learning time and health services; the education pipeline will be strengthened to ensure information is collected in ways that will lead to system improvements; partners from all across the spectrum—public and private—will be fully engaged in the process of improving New York’s academic performance; and the state will focus on those programs that provide demonstrable gains and work to replicate and expand them throughout the state.

Of course, within a Commission as diverse as ours, there were many different voices and perspectives to take into consideration. Not everyone felt we went far enough or were prescriptive enough to satisfy their particular points of view. We have given those Commission Members an opportunity to append brief supplemental remarks to this report. The overwhelming majority of Commission Members felt, however, that it was not our job to re-design the entire education delivery system, to specify funding levels, or to weigh in on every controversy surrounding the implementation of current law. Rather, we felt our charge was to recommend a set of tangible actions the Governor and Legislature could undertake to improve the current system of public education in New York so as to produce better outcomes for our children.

In the end, the recommendations set forth in this Final Action Plan enjoy the support of virtually all of the members of the Commission. There was a broad consensus among us that these recommendations, if adopted, will greatly strengthen the education pipeline and enhance opportunities for all children in New York to get the high-quality education they deserve and that taxpayers expect.

APPENDIX A
List and Biographies of 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 Emeritus Matthew Goldstein

Former 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 experienced a widely lauded transformation. The University 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.



Michael Horn

Co-founder and Executive Director, Education, Clayton Christensen Institute

Michael Horn is the co-founder and executive director of the Clayton Christensen 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.



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 (AACCC) 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).

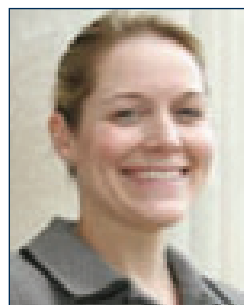
José Luis Rodríguez is Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network, Inc. (HITN), which was established in 1983 as a non-profit organization with the purpose of advancing the educational, cultural, and socio-economic aspirations of the Hispanic community.

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* - respects 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

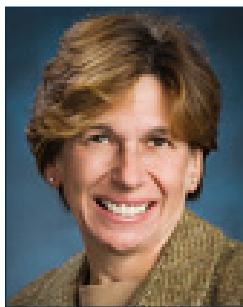
Former CEO & Chairman, Citigroup

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 AFTs 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 L. 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 B
Executive Order Establishing the Commission

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.

G I V E N 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

APPENDIX C
Summary of Commission Symposia on Education Issues

Summary of Commission Symposia on Education Issues

The first symposium, “Innovative Solutions for Restructuring Public School Systems,” brought together education experts from across the country to discuss inventive, successful approaches to reorganizing public school systems to best meet the needs of students. The presenters were: Elliot Smalley, Chief of Staff of the Tennessee Achievement School District; Michael Griffith, Senior School Finance Analyst for the Education Commission of the States; Jerry Weast, former Superintendent of the Montgomery County Public Schools; and Daniel White, District Superintendent of the Monroe BOCES. Mr. Smalley discussed efforts underway to turnaround the lowest performing schools in Tennessee, particularly focusing on the Achievement School District model. Mr. Griffith presented on successful state strategies in restructuring their school systems, providing an overview of state takeovers, mayoral takeovers, and recovery school districts. Dr. Weast focused on reforming school district management at the county level based on his experience with Montgomery County Public Schools. Lastly, Mr. White discussed the role and importance of Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in providing increased academic opportunities for students and financial efficiencies for school districts.

At the second symposium, “All Children Ready to Learn, All Teachers Ready to Teach: Building the Foundation, Raising the Bar,” education experts shared their experiences with creating environments in which educators and students can achieve success. The presenters were: Joel Rose, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of New Classrooms Innovation Partners; Melanie Mullan, VP for Programs at Turnaround for Children; Julie Doppler, Coordinator of the Community Learning Center of Cincinnati Public Schools; Norman Atkins, Co-founder of the Relay Graduate School of Education; and David Steiner, Dean of Hunter College School of Education. Mr. Rose discussed the ways technological advances allow educators to cater to students’ unique academic needs and learning styles, specifically focusing on the School of One middle school math program. Ms. Mullan addressed the challenges educators face in confronting the effects of poverty and detailed successful methods for dealing with them. Her presentation focused on the Turnaround for Children model and the work they do with P.S. 85 in the Bronx. Ms. Doppler discussed Cincinnati’s achievements in providing multiple services to students and families within schools and communities through the adoption of a Community Learning Centers model. Mr. Atkins spoke about innovative teacher training in traditional district and charter schools, specifically addressing the Relay Graduate School of Education’s approach to preparing individuals to be effective teachers and teacher leaders. Finally, Dr. Steiner described how Hunter College’s School of Education has made strides in transforming teacher preparation and improving teacher quality.

The third symposium, “Maximizing Resources for Student and School Success,” tackled education finance. National and local education experts discussed how to make the best use of resources to ensure that all students and schools have the necessary tools to prosper. The presenters were: Marguerite Roza, Director of the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University and Senior Research Affiliate at the Center on Reinventing Public Education; John Yinger, Trustee Professor of Public Administration and Economics at The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University; Paolo DeMaria, Principal at Education First; and Bernard Pierorazio, Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools. Dr. Roza discussed the current finance system and put forth some options for the Commission to consider with regard to how the state should proceed in this era of constrained resources. Dr. Yinger presented his suggestions for reforming education finance in the state, offering an analysis of three major changes in education finance: state aid reduction; the tax cap; and the School Tax Relief (STAR) exemption. Mr. DeMaria discussed how funding should be designed to support the overall goals of the school system. Lastly, Mr. Pierorazio spoke of the merits of investing in public-private partnerships, specifically discussing Yonkers’ experience developing an educational facilities plan, a capital plan, and a local economic stimulus plan.

APPENDIX D
Supplemental Statements from Commission Members

Supplemental Statement of Commissioner Michael A. Rebell

I agree with most of the recommendations and much of the language in the commission's final report, and I very much respect the efforts that the other members of this commission have made to achieve a broad consensus on these recommendations. I do not believe, however, that this document fulfills the commission's charge or deals adequately with the major educational issues currently facing the State of New York. The basic purpose of this commission, according to the governor's charge, was to "comprehensively review and assess New York State's education system, including its structure, operation and processes..." In failing to deal at all with such major issues as funding, special education, the lack of appropriate supports for English language learners, as well as ignoring major current controversies such as implementation of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), and common core systems, the commission has ill-served students, parents, and the public at large. Indeed, the overwhelming proportion of the public testimony presented at the 12 public hearings that we conducted around the state, and the bulk of the written submissions we received, dealt with these core issues that were totally neglected in this final report.

I am particularly concerned that the commission has not even attempted to grapple with the serious education finance issues that have been undermining educational progress throughout the state since the Recession of 2008. The report does acknowledge "the Constitutional right of all of New York's children to have the opportunity for a sound basic education." But then it ignores this constitutional right by failing to even examine the extent to which students are currently being denied a sound basic education, the impact of the extensive budget cuts on the schools' ability to comply with constitutional requirements, and whether, in particular, schools in high need school districts that serve large numbers of children from low-income households, English language learners, and students with disabilities lack the resources they need to prepare their students for school success. In neglecting to deal with these issues, the commission has ignored our specific charges to "evaluat[e] education funding, distribution of State aid, and operating costs ...", and to "examin[e] the unique set of issues faced by high-need urban and rural school districts..."

I am also disappointed that in regard to most of the issues that the commission report does cover, our recommendations are phrased in broad, general terms that provide little guidance for policy makers and the public. I strongly support full day pre-kindergarten for all students, shared services, collective impact mechanisms for providing comprehensive services in high need areas, and many of the other concepts that the report endorses. But policy makers and the public expected us to say more than that progress toward these goals is desirable. The challenge for the commission was to spell out with some precision how these worthy goals could be met. What needs to be done, and how quickly and at what cost, to provide high quality pre-kindergarten services to all students in the state? How can the state overcome past impediments to school district consolidation, regional transportation, regional high schools and other shared service goals? What policies or incentives does the state need to adopt to encourage local communities to implement effective collective impact systems? These are the types of questions that this report should have answered but clearly does not.

I understand that it is difficult to achieve consensus on controversial issues and to craft concrete policy recommendations. But confronting such challenges is precisely the purpose of a commission such as ours. If there were easy solutions to these problems, the governor, the legislature, the regents and the state education department would have solved them long ago. That is precisely why commissions are created. Although our commission, like the legislature, and the regents, has a diverse membership, the fact that we are an independent, non-political body means that we are in the best position to examine and research the issues objectively and to make a good faith attempt to develop a meaningful consensus or majority position on critical substantive issues. I think we should have tried harder to do so.

Supplemental Statement of Commissioner Randi Weingarten

It has been my honor to participate in the New York Education Reform Commission and to support the commission's recommendations. They will help New York's children be better prepared for life, citizenship, college and career—the purposes, after all, of public education. I also appreciate that the commission has recognized the hard work and dedication of the state's educators and that New York has some of the best schools and highest-performing school districts in the nation.

While no education panel can ever address every issue, there are two issues—the need for greater investment and the transition to the Common Core standards—that call for more attention.

Investment

The governor and the state Legislature made education a priority in the 2013 state budget, including important targeted investments in preK-12 education following the release of the commission's first report. But two dynamics lead to a call for more.

The first is disinvestment. I share Michael Rebell's concerns about the equity and the corrosive impact of budget cuts. After adjusting for inflation, New York is spending 5.1 percent less per pupil on K-12 education than it did at the start of the recession. These cuts have increased the inequities in school funding. At the same time, the property tax cap has limited the ability of communities to fill the gap and has further added to inequality.

In higher education, the state has reduced aid to CUNY, SUNY and community colleges by \$1.7 billion since 2008 and there are 6,400 fewer full-time faculty lines thus reducing the state's wherewithal to provide students with the courses and support they need.

The second is increased poverty. New York state's child poverty rate was 18.9 percent in 2006, growing to 24.4 percent in 2012. We know children in poverty face a daunting array of challenges. We also know that targeted investments in smaller classes, enrichment, health and other supports matter. The commission's recommendations for investments in programs such as community schools and early childhood education are essential in this regard.

New York's education institutions confront increased poverty and decreased funding at the same time the state is dramatically changing its preK-12 instructional standards and CUNY and SUNY performance standards. Continuing to ask our school systems to do more with less is not the answer.

To remedy this, there is a need to increase state aid to preK-12 education beyond the state cap, to provide greater support to SUNY, CUNY and the community colleges, and to modify the property tax cap. This would help fund programs like the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) that already have a track record in helping at-risk and nontraditional students succeed in community college and would increase funding for core academic services.

As professor John Yinger testified, the tax cap, particularly in impoverished communities, simply adds to inequality. It needs to be modified to allow for greater support for poorer school districts. In addition, the requirement of 60 percent voter support before a school district can override its tax cap is simply undemocratic.

Common Core Implementation

The final report discusses the importance of the Common Core State Standards to the success of New York's children. States that adopted the standards in 2010, agreed to fully implement them by 2014 because it was clear that districts, educators and children needed time. Teachers, in particular, need genuine, peer-based professional development to prepare and learn about the new standards, and they need the autonomy and flexibility to configure lessons embodying the standards' emphasis on critical thinking and applied learning, along with the time to reflect on and refine their new lessons. They need the opportunity to provide feedback on curriculum development and other resources aligned to the new standards as well.

But last school year, New York rushed assessments, which had not even been field tested on students, before students, their parents, teachers and districts were ready. In many places, there was no aligned curriculum to the new standards, nor had educators received appropriate professional development. And the state adopted a student data system, inBloom, which has raised serious questions about the confidentiality of students' and teachers' personal information. And this school year, as Sen. John Flanagan's and Commissioner John King's hearings have more than amply suggested, there is little confidence that the State Education Department is getting implementation right. Teachers are demoralized, districts are immobilized, kids are frightened, and parents are very angry.

Ironically, instead of providing richer and deeper instruction as the standards intend, we are seeing a reversion to the most simplistic rote "curriculum." Fifth-grade teachers in Long Island, for example, have been told to follow a new, scripted 500-page curriculum pretty much to the letter. Other examples abound of poorly thought out mandates: kindergartners in New York City taking bubble tests, the absence of flexibility and of instructional or curricular tools provided to students with disabilities and English language learners, and serious concerns from early childhood educators about whether the preK-2 standards are developmentally inappropriate.

Restoring confidence in New York's public schools is critical. Sen. Flanagan offered recommendations as have NYSUT, UFT and many others. I urge the New York State Education Department and the Legislature to carefully consider these.

In the meantime, a three-year moratorium on the use of state assessments for high-stakes consequences for students and teachers is necessary during this transitional period to, in the commission's own words, "make sure the Common Core is implemented properly and equitably [and] achieves [its] desired results without unfairly affecting students and teachers." This would not be a moratorium on the standards or testing, although we believe tests should be piloted before being broadly administered. It is absolutely essential to reduce the deep anxiety and growing distrust from teachers and parents who feel that New York is more fixated on testing children and evaluating teachers based on those test scores than on helping children develop a love of learning and preparing them for their futures. Acting on these supplemental recommendations, as well as the main recommendations of the report, will go a long way to reviving parents' and educators' trust.

Thank you for your consideration of my supplemental views.

Final Action Plan
New NY Education Reform Commission