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Joint statement of Robert Reidy Jr., Executive Director of the New York State Council of School Superintendents and Timothy Kremer, Executive Director of the New York State School Boards Association regarding announced details of a new teacher evaluation law within the New York State Budget:

“The well-known definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. Since 2010, legislation to change the teacher evaluation system in New York has been passed three times. The proposals currently under consideration as a part of state budget negotiation will be the fourth attempt in five years.

In 2012, the Governor and the Legislature passed changes to the evaluation system and tied the annual increase in school funding to adoption of local, collectively bargained plans by a deadline. Many of the deficiencies of the current system which the Governor cites are the direct result of that linkage, which forced districts to bargain APPR plans with the threat of losing state aid hanging over their heads. Now policymakers are considering the same thing again hoping for a different outcome.

Also under consideration is the mandated use of independent evaluators. According to school leaders, the current observation measure, done by actual supervisors, is the one positive element of the present system. The conversations about how to improve instruction are what lead directly to improved learning for students. Introducing an unaffiliated “independent” evaluator to this practice would undermine the one successful piece of the current evaluation law.

Together these proposals represent yet another costly unfunded mandate on local school districts, while jeopardizing their ability to access needed state aid.

The current teacher evaluation system is not perfect, and changes are certainly warranted, but this proposal would double down on the system’s deficiencies and undermine its current successes.

We urge all decision makers to stand strong and reject these misguided proposals.”

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