

February 2011 Board of Regents Information

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To view who the current Board of Regent members are and to see who represents your area, go to:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/members/>.

The Board of Regents has Webcasts available each month. If you cannot attend in person, you can participate via webcast. Simply click on the webcast. You can participate live or view archival webcasts of previous meetings. Go to: <http://usny.nysed.gov/webcasts.html>.

Webcast 02/08/11

http://pointers.audiovideoweb.com/stcasx/va91win1520/SED_02072011edit.wmv/play.aspx

Webcast 02/09/11

http://pointers.audiovideoweb.com/stcasx/va91win1520/SED_02082011edit.wmv/play.aspx

For a complete listing of the reports and materials for the February Board of Regents Meeting, go to:

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2011Meetings/February2011/211monthmat.html>

Most of the first day's meeting was a discussion of the Governor's proposed budget. Here are some highlights and concerns:

- \$2.85B reduction in education spending overall.
- \$1.5B cut in aid to local school districts – four times the cut received this year (2010-11).
- 10% (\$4.3M) cut in general funding to SED, on top of the ~30% cuts over the last three years.
- 10% (\$170.1M) cut to SUNY/CUNY.
- TAP (Tuition Assistance Plan) cut from 2010-11 remains, no additional cut.
- 10% cut to libraries/library programs.
- Regents budget priorities **not** included in the proposed budget:
 - \$15M for Regents exams
 - \$7.5M for teacher tenure hearing to reduce the backlog
 - \$700K for GED program
 - \$800K for Summer School for the Arts
- The Gap Elimination Adjustment formula proposed for 2011-12 is similar to that for 2010-11.
- There is \$500M in grant funding proposed – no details yet.
- Pre-K funding is frozen.
- The Board is looking into charging fees for the GED exams.
- Staffing at SED is down by 400 in the last three years. In order to meet the budget reductions, more layoffs may be required in 2011-12.
- There is a proposal to cap future increases in spending at the cost of income growth (currently 4%).

- SED is examining all programs and may reduce or eliminate some.
- Museum hours of operation are being reduced.
- The Board continues to look at options for the Regents exams including district charge backs or exam elimination.
- It was noted that SED is 15 months behind in paying its bills for teacher tenure hearings. The backlog will grow even more since the proposed “flat” funding is not enough to met each year’s obligation, let alone deal with the backlog. Some hearing officers are refusing new hearings until they are paid.

Other Topics/Actions

- The Regents adopted regulations that will allow individuals with advanced degrees and post secondary teaching experience in the STEM areas to obtain certification to teach math and science at the middle and high school levels.
- The Regents discussed new ways to gather data about graduation rates.
- The Regents had a panel discussion with members of the higher education community related to college and career readiness.
- The Regents discussed draft mandate relief options intended to increase flexibility and reduce requirements in ways that do not adversely impact the health and safety of students and essential elements of education reform. Many of the draft mandate relief options relate to the requirements for special education, but there are also suggestions for mandate relief in the areas of school operations, facilities, pupil transportation, curriculum and instruction, and teacher certification. No final decisions or recommendations were made. Please see the [Regents item on Mandate Relief and Flexibility](#) for more information. *Note that NYS PTA is watching the discussion about mandate relief very closely and will issue Advocacy Alerts as needed.*

As always, please continue to advocate for what is best for all students in NYS at your local school district Board of Education meetings and to your legislators.