



LEGISLATIVE BRIEFS...

June 2010

State Ed Proposes Race to the Top Reform

The New York State Education Department proposed legislation to enrich methods of evaluating New York's teachers and enhance the state's Race to the Top application. If the Governor and State Legislature agree, New York's chances of qualifying for up to \$700 million in federal funding in Round 2 of the Race to the Top competition will be greatly improved.

The proposal would establish a comprehensive evaluation system for teachers and principals based on multiple measures. Student standardized test scores would initially be limited to 20 percent of the teacher evaluation, while other measures of student achievement would count for an additional 20 percent of the rating. Provisions to streamline the discipline procedures, while preserving due process, are also included.

"The proposed evaluation system will help ensure that we have an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school," said New York State Education Commissioner David M. Steiner.

Under the proposed system, teachers and principals would receive one of four ratings: "highly effective," "effective," "developing," or "ineffective." The evaluations would play a significant role in a wide array of employment decisions, including professional development, tenure determinations, selection for leadership opportunities, supplemental compensation based on a career ladder, and termination.

Under the proposed system, those rated "developing" and "ineffective" would receive additional support through a customized improvement plan.

40 percent of the evaluation score would be based on student achievement measures. The remaining 60 percent of the evaluation score would be based on locally negotiated processes. School districts that sign on to the state's Race to the Top plan can use their share of the \$700 million to reward effective educators and to target professional development to those whose skills need improvement.

Phase 2 applications are due June 1, 2010. We anticipate that States invited to participate in Tier 2 will be notified on or around July 26, 2010. Finalists will present their applications in Washington, D.C. the week of August 9, 2010. Winners will be announced in late August or early September.

For more information, go to:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>

<http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/>

Senate Passes Legislation to Increase Number of Charter Schools in New York State

The New York State Senate passed legislation to increase the cap on the number of charter schools allowed in the state from 200 to 460. The bill (S.7678/A.10928) is also intended to enhance accountability of charters while enabling them to serve students with special needs.

The Senate bill increases oversight of the schools' financial, operational and management programs. It requires all charter board members to meet the same conflict-of-interest and ethical obligations which currently apply to public school board members and compels charter school boards to conduct public meetings on-site.

The legislation also enables BOCES to contract with education management companies to strengthen access for students at charters to special educational programs while boosting BOCES resources.

The Senate proposal, which is also intended to enhance New York's Race to the Top application, must be passed by the Assembly and signed by the Governor to become law in New York State.

For more information on the Senate bill and the latest on charter schools go to:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/press-release/strengthening-nys-educational-system-senate-passes-legislation-increase-number-charter>
<http://open.nysenate.gov/legislation/bill/S7678>
http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/education/2010/05/07/2010-05-07_albany_charter_cash_cow_big_banks_making_a_bundle_on_new_construction_as_schools.html
<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=927691&category=&BCCode=&newsdate=5/4/2010>

State Legislature Considers Anti-Bullying Measures

The New York State Legislature is considering several measures to reduce acts of bullying, including cyberbullying and hazing. These acts have serious, detrimental impacts on the education, social development and self-esteem of young people.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, 41 states now have laws against bullying. Research shows that about one-third of Americans have been the victims of bullying at some point in their lives.

PTA has long opposed bullying in schools. NYS PTA supports policies that educate students, teachers and school communities about the possible dangers of bullying.

For more information please go to:

<http://www.nysenate.gov/news/gannett-ny-lawmakers-push-anti-bullying-legislation>
<http://www.kidpower.org/who-we-serve/how-to-stop-bullying.html?qclid=CKLO4ZWG4aECFYd-5Qod4y1gLQ>
http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-04-04-bullying_N.htm

PTA's Family Engagement in Education Act Introduced in Congress

On May 5, Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) and Congressman Todd Russell Platts (R-PA) introduced the bipartisan Family Engagement in Education Act. They are asking other Representatives to join them in support of this bill by becoming cosponsors.

The bipartisan Family Engagement in Education Act strengthens parent engagement in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which Congressional leaders have stated they want to reauthorize this year. It provides guidance and incentives to schools, districts, and states on how to use research-based strategies to engage families. This bill also strengthens and safeguards the sole federal parent engagement program, the Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs). Contact your congressional representatives and ask that they sign on! To learn more:

<http://www.pta.org/4135.asp>