

Betty A. Rosa, New York State Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York

January 4, 2023 Presentation to the Association of American Law Schools (AALS)

Following are descriptions of programs, information, and resources referenced in Commissioner Rosa's presentation at the "Governance and Politicization of Primary and Secondary Public Schools" session of the AALS Annual Meeting.

Guiding Principles of the NYS Board of Regents and the NYS Education Department (NYSED)

The Board of Regents and NYSED have advanced three guiding principles to build and support our statewide strategy for all students:

- Fostering lifelong learning, academic success, and improved outcomes.
- Promoting equity, excellence, and access.
- Strengthening NYSED's capacity to serve the public.

We work to advance these guiding principles by always striving to improve the services we provide to the field and supporting all of New York's school districts as they implement local policies and practices to ensure equity, excellence, and access in their schools.

The following policies, programs, and initiatives are part and parcel of our unified approach to incorporate the Guiding Principles into all aspects of the Department's work:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Board of Regents and NYSED have launched an initiative to promote policies and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in all NYS schools. Details about this initiative are available at <http://www.nysed.gov/diversity-equity-inclusion>, including resources to foster Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education and digital equity.

NYSED and the Educational Opportunity Project (EOP) at Stanford University are partnering to study New York's progress toward educational equity. The project is driven by the Regents' priority to remove inequities that stand in the way of success for students, with the goal of improving educational opportunities and attainment for all children. See more information about this ongoing study at <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2022/state-education-department-partners-stanford-education-research-team-study-and-improve>

As well, NYSED has produced a powerful video about the importance of DEI in our schools. The video is presented from the students' point of view and captures their voices in an authentic and moving way; the video is available at <http://www.nysed.gov/video/equity-excellence-and-access>

Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures

The Board of Regents and NYSED have begun the exceptionally challenging work of rethinking what a New York State high school diploma should mean and what it ought to signify. To help guide this work, we appointed a Blue Ribbon Commission, whose 64 members represent an incredibly diverse and inclusive cross-section of stakeholders from every part of the State. Over the next two years, the Commission will present recommendations to the Board of Regents regarding measures of learning and achievement that may better serve New York's diverse student population. Specifically, they will consider graduation measures that will more accurately reflect students' knowledge and their readiness for college, careers, and civic engagement. Information about these efforts is available at <http://www.nysed.gov/grad-measures>

State Assessments

Logic dictates that a single examination, administered by pencil and paper on a single day, simply cannot capture the kinds of deeper and more meaningful learning that we are seeking to provide all students. A generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation will enable New York to study existing assessment strategies that have been shown to help students in significant ways. The Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Networks (PLAN) Pilot aims to help New York explore the conditions and supports schools need to transition to a research-based comprehensive assessment strategy. The initiative seeks to match promising models for high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment strategies with participating pilot schools interested in multiple ways for students to demonstrate their mastery of learning standards. More information about the PLAN Pilot is available at <http://www.nysed.gov/plan-pilot/program-description>

Accountability

Accountability is a two-way street. To be effective, the system must focus on continuous improvement through a sustainable partnership between the Department and schools and districts. Our work to reimagine New York's accountability system in the long-term is not simply about schools "doing better" to get off a list of "failing" schools. Rather, we envision a system where schools, districts, and communities work together with the Department to ensure that all students receive the supports, services, and opportunities they need to thrive. Information about our plans to reframe New York's accountability system is available at <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/school-and-district-accountability>

Funding and Legislative Priorities

The Board of Regents recently announced its 2023-2024 budget and legislative priorities, which focus on supporting lifelong learning opportunities, providing a P-20 educational continuum, and creating equitable opportunities for all students. Specific proposals include phasing-in Universal Pre-K for three and four-year-olds; providing access to Career and Technical Education for all interested students; fostering student health and wellness; and enhancing teacher/leader preparation and development, with an emphasis on recruiting, training, and retaining teachers and school leaders of color.

More information about our budget and legislative initiatives is available at <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2022/board-regents-advances-budget-and-legislative-priorities-2023-24-school-year>

Indigenous/Native American Names, Mascots, and Logos

NYSED has consistently opposed the use of Indigenous names and mascots by local schools and school districts. Over the years, many districts have heeded our admonitions and have ceased using these offensive vestiges, but some have resisted. In a recent decision, the Commissioner held that a district's retention of its "Indians" logo inhibited the creation of a safe and supportive environment for all students. This ruling was upheld in its entirety by a NYS Court. The Department is now proposing a regulation to prohibit the use of Indigenous names, mascots, and logos by public schools. Arguments that community members support the use of such imagery or that it is "respectful" to Indigenous persons are no longer tenable. For more information about these efforts, please visit <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/1222p12d2.pdf>