



NYS Allies for Public Education 2016-2017 Legislative Agenda

NYS Allies for Public Education is a coalition of over fifty grassroots groups throughout the state, established in the summer of 2013. We have quickly become the leading statewide voice on issues related to testing, the Common Core and student privacy. This year, we have broadened our agenda to include funding fairness and ethics reform as well.

Our legislative priorities for the 2016-2017 year are as follows:

✓ ***Approve a new law allowing parents to opt out of the NY state 3-8th grade exams***

The amended federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), forbids the federal government from withholding funding or penalizing in any way states or districts that do not have 95% participation in 3-8th grade state exams if the state allows parental opt out. NY State should enable this parental right, as do other states like California and Oregon currently.

✓ ***Repeal the Education Transformation Act of 2015***

- Completely decouple student test scores from teacher evaluations.
- Create state exams developed by NYS educators, with a drastic reduction in their length and full transparency required, with entire tests released soon after they are scored as occurred in the past.
- Eliminate receivership, as state takeovers have never worked to improve schools.
- Instead, allow struggling schools to use additional state funds for reducing class size as well as other evidence-based reforms.
- Replace the Common Core standards with appropriate standards, developed through input from classroom teachers.
- Provide an alternative pathway for high school graduation, especially for students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

✓ ***Increase foundation aid and phase-in the 2007 formula***

NYC and other high needs districts are still underfunded by billions of dollars. Since 2008, according to the NYS Association of School Business Officers, school districts have lost 12% of their professional staff, with more than 4,000 fewer teachers in NYC alone. As a result, class sizes have increased sharply throughout most of the state, especially in the high need districts. As a first step, foundation aid should be increased by \$2.9 billion, and the rest of the formula phased in over the next three years.

✓ ***Fully restore the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA)***

In the previous five state budgets, New York's schools have lost more than \$8.80 billion cumulatively to the GEA. As of 2014-2015, the total amount schools lost stood at about \$1.04 billion.

✓ ***Strengthen the accountability provisions in the Contracts for Excellence law***

NYC should be obligated to reduce class size with these funds and no C4E funds should be dispersed before districts have responded to public comment and have a state- approved C4E plan.

✓ ***Strengthen and fully enforce the student privacy law***

The state privacy law passed in 2014 should be strengthened and enforced, so that there is an enhanced Parent Bill of Rights created with parent input, including the parental right of consent before schools and districts disclose sensitive personal data to vendors, and a permanent Chief Privacy Officer with expertise in privacy rights and civil liberties law.

✓ ***Create a citizen oversight board for the state's longitudinal student data***

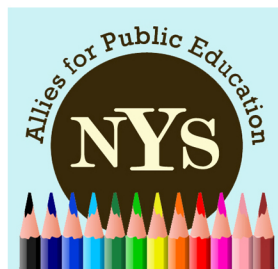
There needs to be a citizen oversight board including parents and other stakeholders to ensure proper restrictions on third party access to personally identifiable student information, as well as a date certain when the data will be destroyed.

✓ ***Oppose the Education Tax Credit and impose rigorous accountability on charter schools***

We strongly urge the Legislature not to implement the ETC, which would drain more funds from public schools and put them in private hands. The charter law also needs to be strengthened to ensure full accountability and transparency, so that taxpayer funds are not wasted, charter schools enroll and retain their fair share of high needs students, and do not suspend and expel students at the sky-high rates that many currently do.

✓ ***Ethics reform***

Outside income for legislators should be limited, the LLC loophole closed, and full transparency for campaign contributions required.



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