



Education Report

from the New York State Board of Regents



Regents Propose Major New Initiatives to Close Achievement Gap

The Board of Regents has for years worked with people across the State to change the way we fund our schools. And last year New York State made a historic commitment to link school funding with accountability and close the achievement gap. On November 19, **Contracts for Excellence** were approved for 55 school districts that promise to use new funds on proven programs for students who need help the most. The State Education Department will monitor and help districts carry out their Contracts.

Now we face a new year, with a new State budget to further education reform. The Board of Regents is proposing major new initiatives to help close the achievement gap. These proposals come from the **P-16 Action Plan** adopted in December 2006. The plan itself grew out of the **New York State Education Summit**, held a year earlier, at which 750 education, business, community and political leaders from across the State discussed what should be the *next stage of reform in education*.

Here are highlights from the Regents Budget Proposals for the next stage of reform:

1. Improve achievement for students in greatest need.

1A. Increase State Aid by \$1.94 billion; extend the Foundation Aid reforms.

Extend the historic transformation in State Aid adopted by the Governor

and Legislature last year. To help close the achievement gap and give adequate support to the students who need it most, the Regents propose that 73 percent of these funds go to high need schools next year, up from 65 percent this year. **Foundation Aid** would be increased by \$1.8 billion.

Career and Technical Education

Increase the number of proven Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs through \$6 million in challenge grants. The goal: enroll 20,000 more students. CTE programs enable students to earn a Regents Diploma AND get an industry-approved credential.

Universal Prekindergarten

Expand Universal Pre-K by \$104 million to \$539 million. Make funding more flexible to support full-day pre-K.

Improve Instruction for English Language Learners

Expand support for English Language Learners by increasing the weight given to ELL students in the foundation formula. Districts will be required to set targets for improvement and use proven programs.

1B. Create Regional Education Alliances; expand Literacy Zones statewide.

Build on the proven success of education partnerships across the State to raise student achievement by creating PreK-16 **Regional Education Alliances** in high need communities with \$20 million in State and federal funds. The alliances would support

existing **Literacy Zones** in the Big 5 School Districts and establish Literacy Zones in other high need neighborhoods. They would closely link school districts with colleges and universities, libraries, museums, and other service and community organizations.

Literacy Zones, partly supported through SED, currently operate in the following 8 locations: **Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Onondaga County, Schenectady County, Bedford-Stuyvesant (Brooklyn), the Bronx, and Long Island City/Western Queens**. They enable children, adults, and families to access key educational, health, financial, and other community services. Funding: \$15 million in new State funds; \$5 million in available federal funds from SED.

1C. Create a Smart Scholars program to ensure 12,000 at risk high school students go to college with college credits.

Create a new **Smart Scholars** program that would transform the traditional 4-year high school to college model. This \$100 million initiative would provide at least 12,000 disadvantaged students the support to graduate from high school on time with as much as 30 college credits and graduate from college in three years.

This "dual enrollment" program will provide targeted grants to colleges partnering with school districts, BOCES and community-based organizations to help students beginning in the 9th grade, and enabling 11th and 12th graders to take early college courses. By high school graduation,

these students will have completed the coursework needed to enter a bachelor's program as a sophomore, resulting in increased high school graduation and early college graduation.

1D. Extend Parent and Family Outreach.

Direct \$6.5 million in funds to high need areas to involve parents and families in their children's education. Regional Education Alliances and Literacy Zones would be eligible to receive the competitive grants. The funding would link family service agencies with schools and school districts and help parents understand the State standards and their children's curriculum and participate more actively in their education. Funding would also revise annual school report cards to hold schools accountable for creating effective parent engagement programs.

1E. Plant the Seed; ensure students get the counseling that will propel them to college.

Certified teachers and members of the 750,000-strong professions licensed by the Board of Regents will mentor at risk students. In addition, a single website will provide key information about career options, educational requirements, and links to college programs, financial aid, and grants. Funding: \$1 million.

1F. Increase investment in Four Critical and Proven Programs that use intensive instruction and counseling to help disadvantaged students complete high school and then college each year: **Liberty Partnerships, Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), and The Higher Education**

Opportunity Programs (HEOP). All these programs have high success rates. Additional funding proposed: \$12.6 million.

2. Reduce and then eliminate the inequitable distribution of teaching talent.

Prepare 1,000 new teachers for high need schools in shortage-area subjects through a new, three-year, \$25 million program. Eight challenge grants to partnering schools and colleges will prepare 125 new teachers over a three-year period, for a minimum of 1,000 new teachers. Participating teachers must work in high need schools at least 4 years.

3. Implement Year 2 of P-16 Accountability.

3A. Create a P-16 data system.

The Regents have created a partnership with the public schools and universities to design a P-16 data system as a major tool to improve instruction and student achievement. The Regents propose \$2 million in 2008-09 funding to implement the first part of the system design.

3B. Digital education: Use technology to advance teaching and learning.

Make New York State a national leader in the use and integration of technologies to improve student achievement in schools. With new funding of \$7 million, the Regents will identify, implement, and fund best practices; establish standards and expectations for the creation of digital content in the State's cultural organizations, and expand web and standards-based digital content on public television.

4. Improve achievement by increasing access to museums, cultural institutions, and online library services.

4A. Bring museum resources to schoolchildren.

Art, science and natural history museums, and other cultural organizations teach in ways that complement traditional classroom study. But they do not receive state support to create curricula or deliver instruction that aligns with the State Learning Standards. New York needs a **Cultural and Museum Education Act** to help these institutions provide K-12 educational programs aligned to the state learning standards. Funding proposed: \$30 million the first year.

4B. Create a Permanent Statewide Internet Library.

Invest in the New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVELNY) pilot project to fuel a comprehensive **Statewide Internet Library** to serve higher education, research and development, the business community, and students and educators in K-12. This would create free statewide access to vital but expensive databases and other resources that will give the State a competitive edge. New funding proposed: \$10 million.

5. Enable more individuals with disabilities to live and work independently.

The Regents propose \$5 million to expand existing Independent Living Centers and also to create four more Independent Living Centers that would enable 7,500 more individuals with disabilities to live and work independently. This will provide an estimated savings of \$25 million.

For more information, go to www.nysed.gov



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