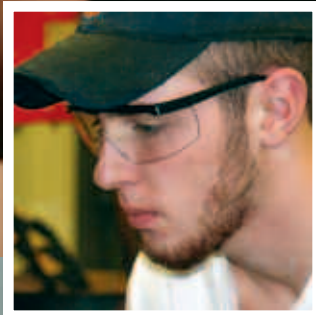


# REGENTS 2008 BOARD REPORT



“Our task is clear – we must prepare New Yorkers to reach ever higher levels of achievement so they can succeed in today’s fiercely competitive global environment.”

Robert M. Bennett, Chancellor



Chancellor’s Message	1
Vice Chancellor’s Message	2
USNY/Board of Regents	3
EMSC	5
Higher Education	10
State Aid	11
Audits	13
VESID	14
The Professions	16
Cultural Education	17
Commissioner’s Message	19
FAQs	20

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR



**Robert M. Bennett**  
Chancellor



WEB INFO <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/members/bios/bennett.html>

Our task is clear – we must prepare New Yorkers to reach ever higher levels of achievement so they can succeed in today’s fiercely competitive global environment. Guided by their parents and teachers, New York’s children are meeting this challenge. Year after year, our students are making steady and consistent progress – scores on the grade 3-8 tests continue to rise; the gaps in achievement are slowly starting to close; and more students than ever are graduating with Regents diplomas. The members of the State Legislature have been our partners in this drive to raise achievement for all and we thank them for their unwavering commitment to New York’s children.

But much more remains to be done. We must greatly accelerate the pace of our improvements. And we simply cannot allow the gaps in achievement that separate us on the basis of race, disability, poverty, and ability to speak and read English to persist. We will not advance as a society unless and until these gaps are eliminated once and for all.

And we must do all of this in the face of an unprecedented economic crisis. But we will do it. We are grateful for the generous support we have received from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and The Wallace Foundation, enabling us to explore new solutions. The Board is intent on leading the way with regard to containing costs, both for the Department and school districts. We’ll do it by delivering services to districts in a more timely and efficient way and by enhancing the tools we provide to them. We’ll work with districts to show them how to achieve savings by making better use of their local BOCES. We’ll look to the guidance provided by the Suozzi and Lundine Commissions. And we will promote the use of best practices. Strategies like Response to Intervention (RtI), which saves money by preventing unnecessary special education referrals, must be widely used. In short, all options – including mergers, consolidations, and greater use of charter schools – must be on the table as we look to do more with less in these troubling economic times.

On behalf of the Board of Regents, I’d like to thank you for taking the time to look through our Report and learning more about the work we are doing and the challenges that lie ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R M Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

# MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR



**Merryl H. Tisch**  
Vice Chancellor



WEB INFO <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/members/bios/tisch.html>

How can New York raise achievement among all our students? This is a huge task in any economic climate, but even more difficult now. To help accomplish it, the Board of Regents is moving ahead with new policies and major actions that are designed to meet the challenges.

New York must keep pace with international competition, raising our learning standards and helping students to meet them. So we have embarked on a multi-year effort to revise our decade-old standards in every subject, beginning with English. But that is only the first step; we are committed to helping students and schools meet those standards.

To help increase academic performance, we are also improving the accountability system. We will provide greater flexibility to schools and districts, increase support to struggling schools, streamline regulatory processes, and reduce the number of “lists” of schools in need of improvement. Similarly, we are revising our testing system to calculate growth for all students. We plan to show how well our students are performing in school even after they reach proficiency on the State tests; we will measure excellence.

We are also improving the P-12 data system so that next year it will be easier to use, more accurate, and much faster. And finally, we are working with our colleges and universities to create a P-16 data system that will show how well students perform from pre-kindergarten through college. Having complete and accurate data will enable us all – parents, schools, and colleges – to make the best decisions for our students’ education.

New York brings huge advantages to all of this work. We have excellent colleges and universities, schools and BOCES, libraries, museums, archives, public broadcasting, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and the professions. Together, we will vigorously pursue the actions needed, and we will succeed.

*Merryl H. Tisch*



# USNY

## The Board of Regents and The University of the State of New York



“Through the unique network of USNY, New York State has the ability to transform the uses of educational technology for every resident in the state no matter the education level or age. In the future, users will no longer be bound by the borders of a classroom. Educational technology innovations provide unlimited potential.”

**Regent Joseph E. Bowman, Jr.**



“Technology is a pathway for students to advance farther in education than they ever imagined. It not only enhances learning, but also helps measure it.”

**Regent Charles R. Bendit**

### THE BOARD OF REGENTS

Established by the New York State Legislature on May 1, 1784, the Regents of The University of the State of New York (USNY) form the oldest, continuous state education entity in America. The Regents are responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State, presiding over USNY and the New York State Education Department. The Regents are organized into standing committees and subcommittees whose members and chairs are appointed by the Chancellor.

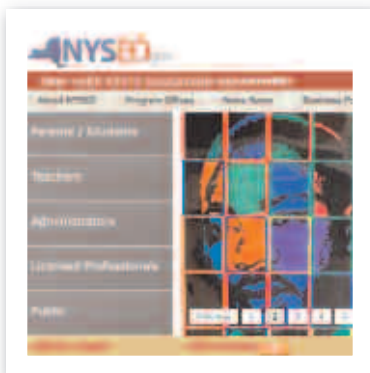
The Board of Regents includes 16 members elected by the State Legislature for five-year terms (there will be 17 members beginning in April of 2009). Twelve (13 in April of 2009) of the Regents represent the State’s judicial districts, one from each district, and four are at-large. They serve without salary.

### WHAT WE ENVISION

The Board of Regents envisions a New York in which all people are prepared for citizenship, work and continued learning throughout their lives. We foresee a New York in which gaps in achievement have closed, and the overall level of knowledge and skill among the people matches or exceeds the best in the world. In spite of progress over the last decade, we are far from achieving that vision. And the Board understands that the vision must be dynamic because policy leaders, educators, and other people around the globe are moving as fast as they can to achieve their own version of this vision.

**The Board continues to work towards our vision, first articulated at the Education Summit in November 2005, which validated these aims:**

- 1) Every child will get a good start.
- 2) Every child will read by the second grade.
- 3) Everyone will complete middle level education ready for high school.
- 4) Everyone will graduate from high school ready for work, higher education, and citizenship.
- 5) People who begin higher education will complete their programs.
- 6) People of all ages who seek more knowledge and skill will have the fullest opportunity to continue their education.



For more information  
please visit [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov).

## THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK (USNY)

The University of the State of New York is the nation's most comprehensive and unified educational system. It consists of all elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions, libraries, museums, public broadcasting, archives, professions, Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, and other institutions. The University of the State of New York is a broad concept encompassing all the institutions, both public and private, offering education in the State. Unlike any other state, all of these areas are under the care of one board, the Regents. This system gives us a spectacular advantage, providing New Yorkers with the knowledge and skills that are the currency of today's global economy. We must continue to take full advantage of the opportunities this unique system gives us.

### Specifically, USNY includes:

- More than 7,000 public and private elementary and secondary schools;
- 248 public and private colleges and universities;
- 251 proprietary (for-profit) schools;
- Nearly 7,000 libraries including the New York State Library;
- 750 Museums including the State Museum;
- The State Archives;
- Vocational rehabilitation and other services for adults with disabilities;
- Special education services for pre-school and school-age children and teenagers;
- A School for the Blind;
- A School for the Deaf;
- 25 public broadcasting facilities, including nine public television stations;
- Over 100 chartered Psychoanalytical/Psychotherapy Institutes;
- More than 750,000 professionals practicing in 48 licensed professions; and
- 240,000 certified public school teachers, counselors, and administrators.

# EMSC

## Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education



“Through the EMSC Committee, the Regents act on the critical issues facing our school children – issues such as standards, assessments, and accountability. The Committee also acts on matters relating to early childhood education, charter schools, non-public schools, and so much more. We are focused with great intensity on strategies to accelerate the pace of our improvements, to close the achievement gap, and to get more students – particularly young men of color – to graduate.”

**Regent Anthony S. Bottar**  
Chair, EMSC Committee

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

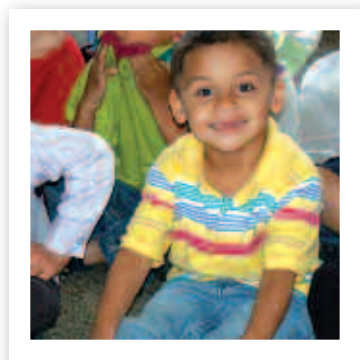
It is a simple proposition: if we invest in our children’s education early and get them off to a good start, the field will be level for all of them as they enter elementary school. And that means less money and effort will have to be spent down the road trying to bring some children up to speed with their peers.

Consistent with Regents policy, Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) and Full-Day Kindergarten opportunities for children across New York were greatly expanded in 2008.

- 448 districts of the 677 eligible districts are now implementing high quality UPK, an increase of 53 districts over the previous year.
- 106,800 eligible 4-year olds are being served (88% of the total 121,120), up from 93,000 the previous year.
- 15 counties are implementing UPK in every school district in the county.
- 636 districts now operate full-day kindergarten. 45 districts have applied for planning grants to implement full-day kindergarten, or to implement or expand UPK.

### Early Childhood Education Goals for 2009

Despite the fiscal challenges facing the State, the Regents understand that it is critical to continue funding to increase access to UPK and full-day K for all eligible children. The importance of early childhood education cannot be overstated; yet, somehow, there are still over 14,000 eligible 4-year olds who are not being served in UPK programs. And there are still a handful of districts that do not offer full-day K. This is unacceptable. We must continue to expand early childhood education opportunities for all New Yorkers. Universal Pre-Kindergarten must become truly universal.






### GRADE 3-8 ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement in grade 3-8 Mathematics and English improved overall in 2008. But too many students remain in the gap. Here are the details:

- 81% of students across grades 3-8 achieved the math standards, compared with 73% the year before.
- 69% of students achieved the English standards, compared with 63% the year before.
- The achievement gap narrowed in both math and English.
  - Across grades 3-8, the number of black students achieving the English standards increased from 45% in 2007 to 53% in 2008. The number of Hispanic students achieving the English standards increased from 46% in the previous year to 53% in 2008.
  - Across grades 3-8, the number of black students achieving the mathematics standards increased from 55% in 2007 to 66% in 2008. The number of Hispanic students achieving the math standards increased from 61% in the previous year to 71% in 2008.
  - Results for students with disabilities also improved overall and there was a significant drop in the number of students showing serious academic difficulties in both English and math.

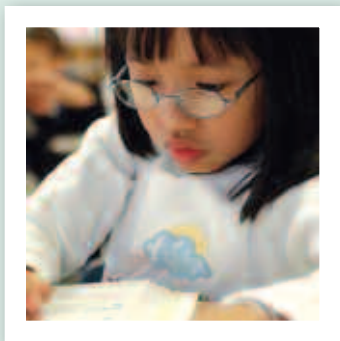
In addition to raising the overall level of performance and accelerating the rate at which we close the achievement gap, the Regents aim to improve the cycle time for grading and reporting on 3-8 achievement in 2009.





DATA <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/press-release/20080623/home.htm>

NEWS RELEASE <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/press-release/20080623/Math-ELA-Grades3-8testresultsFINAL.html>



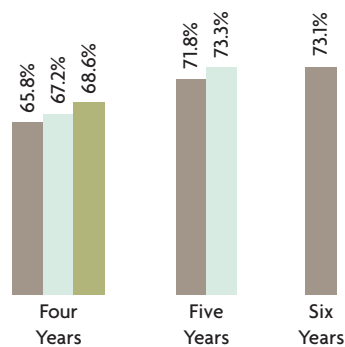




“Persistence pays off.”

**More students statewide graduate after 5 and 6 years**

Percentage of Students Graduating with Regents or Local Diploma After 4, 5 and 6 Years (results through June).



- 2001 Cohort – Membership 212,272
- 2002 Cohort – Membership 214,729
- 2003 Cohort – Membership 220,332

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES**

Graduation rates are improving for most groups of students, and yet far too many students still do not graduate from high school. However, we can build upon the encouraging gains to get even better results.

Here are some of the encouraging gains. Results improve in each successive cohort. Persistence pays off. Many students, particularly students of color, graduate after a fifth and even a sixth year of high school. School leaders have devised practices that are enabling more to graduate, and in the gains from June to August, we can see that their efforts during summer school appear to be working. More students are graduating with a Regents diploma. And there has been some narrowing of the gap. Here are the details:

- Statewide, almost 69% of students who started 9th grade in 2003 had graduated after 4 years, by June 2007. This is almost 3 percentage points higher than for students two years before. 71% of students who started 9th grade in 2003 had graduated by August 2007.
- The four-year graduation rate for black students increased from 45% to 51% between 2005 and 2007. More black students are staying in school.
- The four-year graduation rate for Hispanic students increased from 42% to 47% between 2005 and 2007. More Hispanic students are staying in school.
- The number of students with disabilities who took and passed each Regents exam required for graduation increased.



DATA <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/press-release/20080811/home.htm>  
 NEWS RELEASE <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/press-release/20080811/GradMemo.html>



## EMSC (continued)



“While graduation rates have improved slightly overall, they need to improve much faster, particularly for young black and Hispanic men. The Governor is right when he says that we need to find ways to engage all students, so that dropping out is never an option for them.”

**Regent Lester W. Young, Jr.**



“The numbers tell the story: only 25% of ELLs graduate after four years and a staggering 29% drop out. This crisis demands an urgent response. The Regents will consider every option to bring about change in the outcomes for these students.”

**Regent Betty A. Rosa**

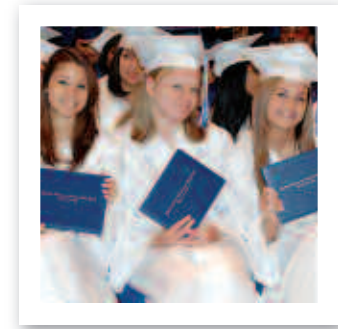
### “Dropping out is never an option...”

Major challenges appear in ever clearer terms in these new data. Graduation rates for English Language Learners (ELL) are very low and actually declining. While graduation rates for black and Hispanic males are improving year by year, in some cases faster than for other groups of students, the overall rates are dangerously low and demand attention. Children with disabilities do better by the fifth year of high school, but the graduation rates are too low. And in the Big Five school districts, disproportionately more children of color graduate with a local diploma, not a Regents diploma.

We know the practices that work at the district level. They include pre-kindergarten, 9th grade bridge programs, rigorous and engaging curriculum such as Career Technical Education (CTE) and hands-on science, use of leading indicators of potential failure, support services such as guidance and attendance reporting, high school literacy programs, and encouraging fifth and sixth year persistence.

We also know state policies boost graduation. The Regents have led the way with some of these policies, including world-class academic standards, Universal Pre-Kindergarten, Foundation Aid focused on the highest-need districts, rigorous accountability, demanding teacher standards, higher education opportunity programs, the USNY Summit and the resulting P-16 strategies. But even by the sixth year, graduation rates are only 73%. That represents progress but we want to be arguing about improvements from a base of 90%. The overarching question for the Board: How will we help districts get schools to 90%, and beyond?





“The standards represent the core of what all students should know, understand and be able to demonstrate. Meeting the standards should ensure that students are prepared for college, work and citizenship.”

**Regent Saul B. Cohen**



Year after year, *Education Week*, in its **Quality Counts** survey, places New York at or near the very top of all states in terms of its standards, assessments and accountability. In 2008, New York again received a grade of “A” in these categories, a full grade above the national average.

## RENEWING THE LEARNING STANDARDS

In 2008 Chancellor Bennett asked the Board to lead an effort to review New York’s Learning Standards, beginning with the standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and English as a Second Language (ESL). The Regents adopted the current standards in 1996. They cover the major subjects including:

- English Language Arts,
- Mathematics, science, and technology,
- Social Studies,
- The arts,
- Languages other than English,
- Career development and occupational studies, and
- Health, physical education and family consumer sciences.

In conducting their review of the standards, the Regents are seeking recommendations from teachers, school administrators, members of the higher education community, business and community leaders, parents, and other state and national experts in each of the content areas. We have organized focus groups throughout the State that are open to the public.

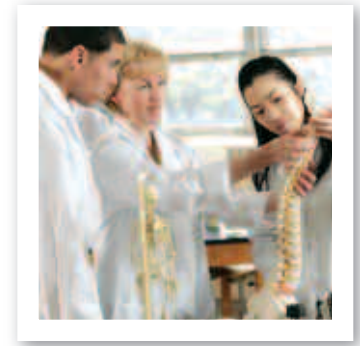
## TEACHER QUALITY

New York raised the percentage of core classes taught by “highly qualified teachers” in all subjects in 2008. And the State narrowed the gap between high and low poverty schools. Overall in New York, 95.7% of classes in core academic subjects were taught by highly qualified teachers, an increase of 3.6% since 2005.



NEWS RELEASE <http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/HQT2008-final.htm>

# HIGHER EDUCATION



“Only 75% of students at four-year colleges graduate within six years. The numbers are far worse at community colleges. The Regents and New York’s higher education community are committed to improving student performance in college?”

**Regent Milton L. Cofield**  
Co-Chair, Higher Education Committee



“The Regents oversee teacher certification requirements; establish standards; protect students’ educational and financial interests; and oversee grants that provide access to higher education for students in need.”

**Regent Arnold B. Gardner**

## SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS IN HIGH QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION

To prepare more students for college, the first thing we must do is to improve the instruction they receive in middle and high school. This is the base on which success is built. The Regents took an important step by adopting new mathematics standards for high schools in 2005. The comprehensive standards review now underway will go even further in preparing students for the rigors of higher education.

### Here are some of the State’s 2008 higher education accomplishments:

- College graduation rates have improved for students enrolled in Bachelor’s Degree programs. In 2004, the percentage of students who received a Bachelor’s Degree in 6 years was 70.3%; in 2007 that number increased to 75.3%.
- To protect students and ensure effective use of Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) funding, we eliminated the use of Ability to Benefit (ATB) Tests that did not adequately assess students’ ability to complete college level work.
- We increased high school students’ early exposure to the college environment and expectations for college study. In 2008-09, more than 70,000 New York State students are engaged in college study while still in high school.

### In 2009 we must:

- Continue to advocate for adequate funding for TAP, STEP and CSTEP, Liberty Partnerships, Bundy Aid, and other programs to ensure that higher education is accessible for New Yorkers.
- Improve the college graduation rates for students in Associate’s Degree programs. In 2007, the percentage of students who received an Associate’s Degree in 3 years was 38.5%, down from 40.9% in 2004.
- Continue to review and revise the State Learning Standards; strengthen the alignment between expectations and knowledge and skills needed for high school graduation as well as for college level work.
- Reduce the number of first-year college students who need remedial instruction.

# STATE AID

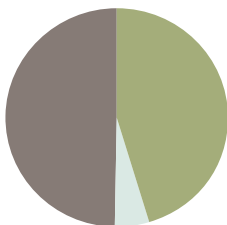


“The Regents are keenly aware of the fiscal realities facing our State. But we also know that now, more than ever, all students must be taught to high standards and that districts must have adequate resources to make that possible. We must sustain our commitment to children with the greatest needs.”

**Regent James R. Tallon, Jr.**  
Chair, State Aid Committee

## 2007-08 Revenues for Elementary and Secondary Education

Total Revenues = \$51.9 billion




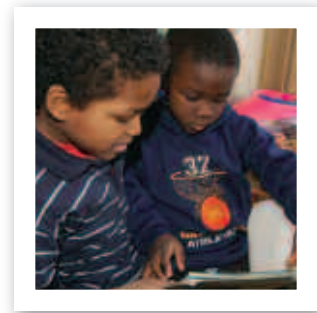
- \$25.7 billion (49.5%) Local Sources
- \$23.6 billion (45.5%) State Sources
- \$2.6 billion (5%) Federal Sources

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2008-09 STATE BUDGET

The 2008-09 enacted budget for State Aid to public schools was consistent with the goals advocated in the Regents State Aid Proposal. Record increases in aid were directed primarily to districts with the greatest needs through the Foundation Aid Formula. Increased spending was linked to greater accountability through the Contracts for Excellence.

- General Support for Public Schools (GSPS) was \$21.37 billion, an increase of \$1.73 billion or 8.8% over the 2007-08 school year.
- The phase-in of the Foundation Aid Formula and of Universal Pre-Kindergarten was continued. The enacted budget maintained the existing minimum increase of 3% in Foundation Aid. Foundation Aid increased from \$13.7 billion to \$14.9 billion, an increase of 8.8% or \$1.2 billion. The phase-in of Foundation Aid was slowed down, so that districts received 37.5% of their final increase, rather than 42.5%.
- Most districts shared in the overall increase. The increase for the median district was 8.3%, with the High Need Urban/Suburban Districts' and Low Need Districts' median increase in excess of 10%.
- Overall, the Computerized Aids continued to be focused on high need school districts, although not to the extent recommended by the Regents or the Executive. Approximately 67% of the increase was directed to high need districts.
- The Budget continued support for Contracts for Excellence, requiring certain districts – those that have at least one school in need of improvement and received an increase above a threshold – to spend a portion of their increase on programs and activities shown to improve student achievement.

 NYSED.gov	2008-09 STATE AID TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS <a href="http://stateaid.nysed.gov/">http://stateaid.nysed.gov/</a>
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## STATE AID GOALS FOR 2009-10

Clearly, this is a challenging time – both in terms of the depth and the expected duration of our economic downturn. In December 2008, the Regents presented a responsible State Aid proposal that balances the needs of our children with the State’s fiscal realities. The Board’s proposal demonstrates a commitment to closing the achievement gap by providing more aid to children in greatest need. At the same time, it recommends a \$1 billion reduction in the scheduled increase. The proposal recommends mandate relief, continued cost savings through shared services, and approaches to slow the growth of special education costs.

The Executive Budget proposal similarly attempts to strike a balance between the needs of our children and the State’s serious fiscal constraints. However, the proposal to reduce State Aid in 2009-10 – not only beyond the amount previously agreed to, but by an additional \$700 million – is disappointing.

It is encouraging that the Executive’s proposal continues its long-term commitment to education funding, in particular by preserving the Foundation Aid Formula and Universal Pre-K. And it is encouraging that the proposal recommends cost-savings measures and regulatory relief, similar to the Regents proposal.

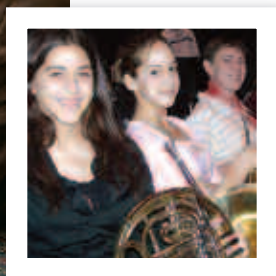
Children in need are at an even greater disadvantage during an economic downturn. It is especially in such times that we must sustain our commitment to them. The State’s investment in our children has yielded significant results and we simply cannot afford to lose the momentum we have gained over the past two years.

The Governor has offered a serious opening response to New York’s deep challenges. We will continue to advocate vigorously for a level of state aid that adequately addresses our children’s need for a quality education.



2009 STATE AID PROPOSAL <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/2008Meetings/December2008/1208SpecialStateAiditem.doc>

NEWS RELEASE [http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/stateaid\\_2009.htm](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/stateaid_2009.htm)



# AUDITS



“New Yorkers are eager for school districts to find ways to streamline and better manage their finances. Audit and review gives the Board an opportunity to analyze districts’ financial practices, which we believe will be a powerful lever for fiscal change.”

**Regent Geraldine D. Chapey**  
Chair, Audits Committee

## SAFEGUARDING TAXPAYERS’ INVESTMENTS

The Regents use timely feedback on the fiscal condition of school districts and the status of internal control systems to ensure the appropriate use of taxpayer funds. This information is critical to the Board in meeting its goal of ensuring that resources under our care will be used or maintained in the public interest. It is also an important tool for the Board to use in making policy decisions that impact district finances.

Even during the best of financial times, it is wise policy to closely monitor the ways in which the public’s money is spent – to ensure that their investment is protected against mismanagement, waste, fraud, and abuse. Several years ago – following a series of highly publicized acts in which taxpayer money was stolen by school district employees – new rules were enacted to require all school board members to be trained in financial oversight, accountability, and fiduciary responsibility. That was an important first step.

But in today’s economic climate, even more needs to be done. It’s no longer simply about rooting out inappropriate or illegal activity. Now, it’s also about doing our work more efficiently, effectively and economically. One way to do this is through the voluntary sharing of business office functions through BOCES. Appropriate safeguards would need to be established, but a reasonable solution could surely be found. The Board will continue to work with our partners to ensure that the Education Department and our schools always operate in ways that are open, transparent, and efficient.

# VESID

## Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities



“The VESID Committee advances the Regents commitment to educational achievement and employment for all individuals with disabilities. While we have made progress in both the expectations and access for individuals with disabilities, there is much work to be done to achieve full integration into our schools, businesses and society.”

**Regent Roger B. Tilles**  
**Chair, VESID Committee**

### SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Regents seek to raise the level of achievement for students with disabilities, get more students educated in settings with their nondisabled peers, get more to graduate with Regents diplomas and go on to higher education or meaningful employment, and reduce the number of students with disabilities that drop out of school. There have been slow improvements. On the grade 3-8 assessments, students with disabilities improved overall, with a significant drop in the number of students showing serious difficulties in both English and math. This trend is a predictor of better graduation outcomes for students with disabilities.

#### Here are some of the details:

- 41.3% of students with disabilities graduated with a regular high school diploma within four years, as of June 2008, an improvement of 2% over the previous year.
- 6.5% of school age students with disabilities (ages 6-21) were in educational settings without nondisabled children (the most restrictive setting).
- 92% of a representative sample of students with disabilities who left school during the 2005-06 school year were enrolled in post-secondary school or competitively employed or both during the year after leaving school.

For 2009 the Regents seek to increase the graduation rate for students with disabilities to 44% and to reduce to 5.5% the percentage of students with disabilities who are in educational settings that do not include any nondisabled children.

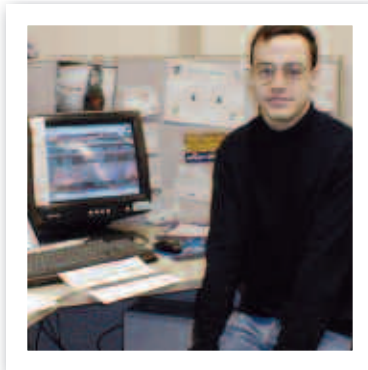
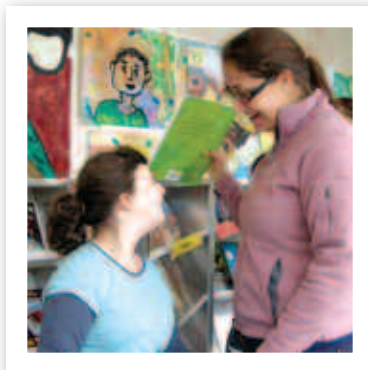
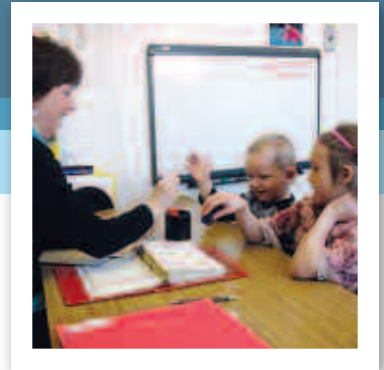
### IN-STATE SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS

VESID successfully collaborated with other state partners and service providers in 2008 to develop programs that allow students with significant disabilities to remain within New York and return students from out-of-state placements, as required by State law and Regents policy. Specifically, VESID achieved a reduction of nearly 15% in out-of-state placements, from 624 to 531.

### TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE

In 2008 VESID completed the second year of the Model Transition Program (MTP) statewide initiative. The MTP provides funding for 60 projects in more than 150 private and public high schools. The primary goal of the MTP is to facilitate future employment opportunities for students with disabilities in integrated settings.





Through the MTP initiative, over 3,000 students with disabilities have been referred to VESID for supports leading to competitive employment or post-secondary education and training.

Independent Living Services for School Age Youth with Disabilities projects also provide programs in partnership with local school districts. These projects use the peer model to engage students with disabilities and their families in transition planning and services that lead to quality outcomes in post-secondary education and employment. During the past year, 11 projects provided needed training to 2,583 students with disabilities, 1,471 parents, 1,016 school personnel and 783 community service providers.

### **EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

In 2008 VESID assisted 13,236 New Yorkers with disabilities in finding employment and supported 10,619 students at institutions of higher education. Through marketing strategies designed to communicate better with employers, VESID enhanced the value of qualified candidates with disabilities in the recruitment and hiring process.

The Linking Employment, Academics and Disability Services (LEADS) project in partnership with the City University of New York (CUNY) is operational on all 17 CUNY campuses. Comprehensive support and facilitated referral for VESID services is leading to success in college for students with disabilities.

### **COMMUNITY LIVING IN LEAST RESTRICTIVE SETTINGS**

Independent Living Centers are peer-driven, community-based resource centers that partner with State agencies such as the Department of Health, the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Office of Mental Health and the Office of Family and Children Services to leverage supports for New Yorkers with significant disabilities to live, learn and earn in their communities.

The statewide network of 39 VESID-funded Independent Living Centers served as a critical link to community-based supports in 2008. Independent Living Centers assisted approximately 1,500 New Yorkers with significant disabilities in choosing community living over an institutional placement. Centers assisted 250 New Yorkers with the transition from institutional settings to the community.

# THE PROFESSIONS



“Licensed professionals in New York diagnose and treat physical and mental conditions, fill prescriptions, ensure the structural safety of buildings, give nursing care to loved ones, and protect our financial investments – to name just a few of the many critical functions they perform. The consequences can be life-threatening when these activities are performed by unlicensed or unqualified individuals. And that’s why the Board, in overseeing the professions, continues to focus on two related areas – protecting the public while ensuring professional integrity.”

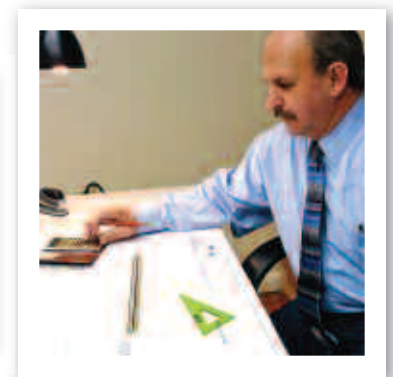
**Regent Harry Phillips, 3rd**  
**Co-Chair, Professional Practice**  
**Committee**

## PROTECTING THE PUBLIC

In 2008, the Regents continued its mission of protecting the public by fostering high standards of professional licensure, practice and discipline. Specifically, the Office of Professions (OP) licensed 50,000 new applicants, re-registered 250,000 professional licensees, investigated over 7,000 complaints of professional misconduct, and took disciplinary action where warranted.

### Here are details of 2008’s accomplishments:

- Online registration renewal is now available for 250,000 licensees each year.
- Process improvements, the integration of technology, increased use of scanning, and implementation of a web-based tools will enable OP to better provide information to the public and licensees in response to the hundreds of thousands of questions asked and answered each year.
- Fully implemented the licensed clinical laboratory technology professions. By the end of 2008, approximately 17,000 people were licensed, with additional licensees in restricted practice areas.
- Implemented new authority of pharmacists to administer influenza and pneumococcal immunizations.



Acupuncture • Midwifery • Psychology • **Athletic Training** • Dentistry • Certified Shorthand Reporting • Audiology  
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Mental Health Practitioners • Occupational Therapy • Respiratory Therapy • **Architecture** • Optometry • Pharmacy • **Engineering**  
Public Accountancy • **Social Work** • Medicine • Podiatry • **Clinical Laboratory Technology**

# CULTURAL EDUCATION



“The Regents oversee the Office of Cultural Education, comprised of the State Library, State Museum, State Archives and Public Broadcasting. We also distribute aid to libraries and library systems, local governments, and public broadcasting stations. These institutions provide powerful tools for increasing the knowledge and information resources of State and local governments, businesses, and individuals. It is imperative that our schools and our citizens take advantage of these rich resources.”

**Regent James C. Dawson  
Chair, Cultural Education  
Committee**

## NEW YORK’S RICH CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Education Department’s Office of Cultural Education (OCE) supports research, operates programs, and develops collections that service the long-term interests of New York.

### The New York State Library

The State Library works with more than 7,000 local libraries to bring vital services to millions of New Yorkers. In these challenging times libraries promote literacy and lifelong learning. Libraries:

- Level the playing field by providing the information to find a job, achieve a good education, and make smart consumer choices.
- Provide equal access to information for people with disabilities.
- Ensure that immigrants are prepared to join the workforce through language, computer, and literacy programs.

### The State Museum

The State Museum is a major research and educational institution that conducts systematic investigations into the geology, biology, anthropology and history of New York.

The State Museum hosted more than 750,000 visitors, making it one of the largest cultural attractions in the state. The Museum will complete design development and begin fabrication for two new galleries. *A Billion Years of the Natural History of NYS*, and *Empire State: America Begins in New York*. The galleries are scheduled to open in 2010, with 1.2 million visitors expected annually.

The Regents also oversee 1,900 museums and historical societies; among them are the leading art, history, and natural history institutions in the world.

- More than 50 million individuals, including 4.4 million school children, visited New York’s museums generating a return to the local economy exceeding \$1 billion.



WEB LINK <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/>

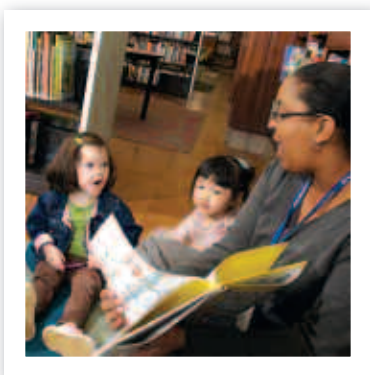


# CULTURAL EDUCATION (continued)



“Cultural institutions are an integral part of our education system. As such, the Regents oversee New York’s museums, historical societies, libraries, and public broadcasting – and are responsible for chartering and monitoring these institutions. Through this oversight authority, the Board acts to preserve and enhance the State’s collection of historic and cultural treasures.”

**Regent Karen Brooks Hopkins**



## The New York State Archives

The Archives cares for and provides access to more than 200 million documents from the seventeenth century to the present.

- The Archives celebrated the 350th anniversary of the *Flushing Remonstrance*, a document that represents the first expression of religious freedom in the New World. The *Remonstrance* was loaned for rare public exhibitions in Queens and was featured in programs, articles and special lectures throughout the state.
- *La Escuela Electrónica/The Electronic Schoolhouse*, a bilingual website about the Latino experience in New York, is an educational resource that brings historical records to students at all levels.



WEB LINK <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/projects/escuela/index.shtml>

## Educational Television and Public Broadcasting

New York’s public television and radio stations are chartered by the Regents. These stations inform and entertain; help individuals gain new skills and English language literacy; and provide a safe haven for parents and children who are challenged by the pervasive commercial television environment.

In 2008, the number of teachers using public broadcasting resources to enrich instruction increased by 23% over the previous year.

## STATEWIDE SUMMER READING PROGRAM

More than 1.5 million children participated in the Statewide Summer Reading Program through their local libraries in 2008. That represents a 15% increase in participation from 2007 to 2008 – over 300% in the past eight years. These summer readers build on the reading skills acquired during the school year and return to the classroom ready to learn in the Fall.



WEB LINK <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/>

## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

The Regents choose a Commissioner who heads the State Education Department and also serves as the President of USNY. The Regents set policy while the Commissioner has responsibility for carrying out policy.



**Richard P. Mills**  
President of The University and  
Commissioner of Education



WEB INFO <http://usny.nysed.gov/about/commissioner.html>

New York and the nation are in a difficult place with this economy. We work our way out of this situation, and also need to think our way out. For individuals, families, and the whole community of New York, that means we must use this crisis to improve our knowledge and skill. That is the Regents mission.

We need everyone now: to graduate from high school and complete some post-secondary education; to have the capability to work in a global economy, grapple with complex questions as a citizen, and contribute as family and community members; and to have access to the resources of schools, colleges, libraries, museums, vocational rehabilitation and other institutions that make up The University of the State of New York.

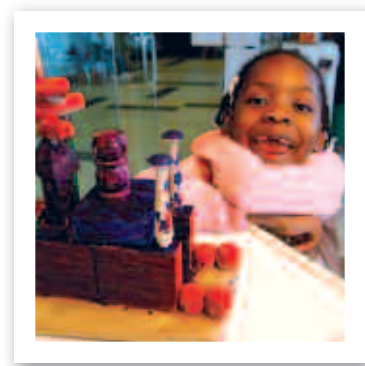
With all the performance gains of recent years, we are troubled that so many students do not graduate. For example, high school graduation rates for black and Hispanic males, children with disabilities and children just learning English are unacceptably low. The Regents are determined to help all of them and everyone else in New York secure a better future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard P. Mills".



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Following are answers to questions that Regents are often asked.



**Q: Why is testing so important?**

**A:** The grade 3-8 assessments and the required Regents exams have measured a significant improvement in student achievement. Without these measures, the public would have no way of knowing whether student achievement has improved and by how much. New York invests billions of dollars in education. The public deserves to know whether those investments result in a better education for students. The tests show more students can read and write and do math at high levels, and know history and science.

**Q: Does all that testing cause teachers to teach to the test?**

**A:** The New York State testing program is aligned to the State Learning Standards and core curricula. It is expected that school districts will follow these in designing and delivering instruction and student evaluations. The testing program is an extension of what is already happening in classrooms; it does not require that teachers change what they are doing to meet the demands of the assessments. We are proud of the fact that our teachers are involved in the design, development, item selection, and standard-setting for the State's testing program. They are an integral part of the process.

**Q: Are required exit exams, like the Regents, responsible for low graduation rates?**

**A:** No. In fact graduation rates have continued to slowly rise, year after year, even as the Regents exam requirements have been phased in over time. While the graduation rate is far too low, we know that more students are graduating – with meaningful diplomas – even as the testing requirements have become more rigorous. Remember, students must also earn at least 22 credits in order to graduate.

**Q: Why must all students pass Regents exams to graduate?**

**A:** More than a decade ago the public demanded a change in New York's education system – a system that offered two tracks leading to a high school diploma: one challenging; the other, not at all. That demand came from parents; it came from higher education; and it came from the business community. Employers said that too many graduates failed interviews – or worse, failed on the job – because they didn't know basic math, writing, and grammar. They couldn't solve problems. Higher education protested that too many students were unprepared for college work. The two-track system meant different standards for different children. For some it meant a good education. For too many others, it meant an 8th grade education disguised by a high school diploma. So the Regents responded by adopting high standards for all. These standards require all students to prove their mastery of math, science, English, and history by passing Regents exams in all of those subjects. Additionally, Regents policy requires students to complete a rigorous academic program that includes 4 years of English and history, and 3 years of science and mathematics, among other subjects. In passing these courses, students must earn at least 22 credits.

**Q: What are the Regents doing to raise the graduation rate?**

**A:** The Regents have taken many actions to improve our graduation rate. More students are graduating each year. And the graduation rate has been increasing, but far too slowly. We require that students get extra help if the tests show they need it. We have increased the number of highly qualified teachers. The State has invested more funds in high need schools and has required that schools invest the money in programs that are proven to work. That investment needs to continue.

## PHOTO CREDITS

All the photographs pictured in this report are of New York State students, teachers and professionals. Many thanks to these partners for providing the photos:

### Cover:

Albany City Schools  
New York State Summer School for the Arts  
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New York Public Library

**Table of Contents:** Albany City Schools

- Page 2:** Schenectady City Schools, Monticello City Schools, Albany City Schools  
**Page 3:** Office of Facilities and Business Services: Publications Group  
**Page 4:** Schenectady City Schools, Wells College, New York State Office of General Services (for artwork “Dream” by Smithtown Elementary School 5th Grade, for 2009 Dr. Martin Luther King Fine Arts and Essay Display)  
**Page 5:** Buffalo City Schools  
**Page 6:** Schenectady City Schools (2 photos), Monticello City Schools  
**Page 7:** Buffalo City Schools, Schenectady City Schools (2 photos)  
**Page 8:** Yonkers Public Schools  
**Page 9:** Yonkers Public Schools  
**Page 10:** St. John’s University  
**Page 12:** Buffalo City Schools, Albany City Schools (2 photos), Monticello City Schools  
**Page 14:** Albany City Schools  
**Page 15:** New York State School for the Deaf, Rockland BOCES, Orange-Ulster BOCES, Rochester District Office (VESID)  
**Page 16:** Office of the Professions (2 photos)  
**Page 17:** New York State Museum, Thirteen/WNET, WNED-TV  
**Page 18:** New York State Archives, New York State Summer Reading Posters: Collaborative Summer Library Program, New York Public Library  
**Page 19:** Buffalo City Schools  
**Page 20:** Buffalo City Schools  
**Page 21:** Buffalo City Schools  
**Back cover:** Regents Office



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The Regents always seek public input. We've taken many steps aimed at giving parents, educators, taxpayers, and all of New York's citizens a greater role in our work. We have a newly designed website that makes it simple to find information about all areas of the Department; a communications strategy that seeks two-way conversations between the Regents, the Department, our partners in education, and the public; and we are now webcasting full Board meetings. These are just a few of the ways we are reaching out to our partners and all New Yorkers.

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