

# SUPPORTS AND UPDATES FOR RELIGIOUS AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN NEW YORK STATE

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS  
MAY 2025

OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AND INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL SUPPORT (ORISS)



New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

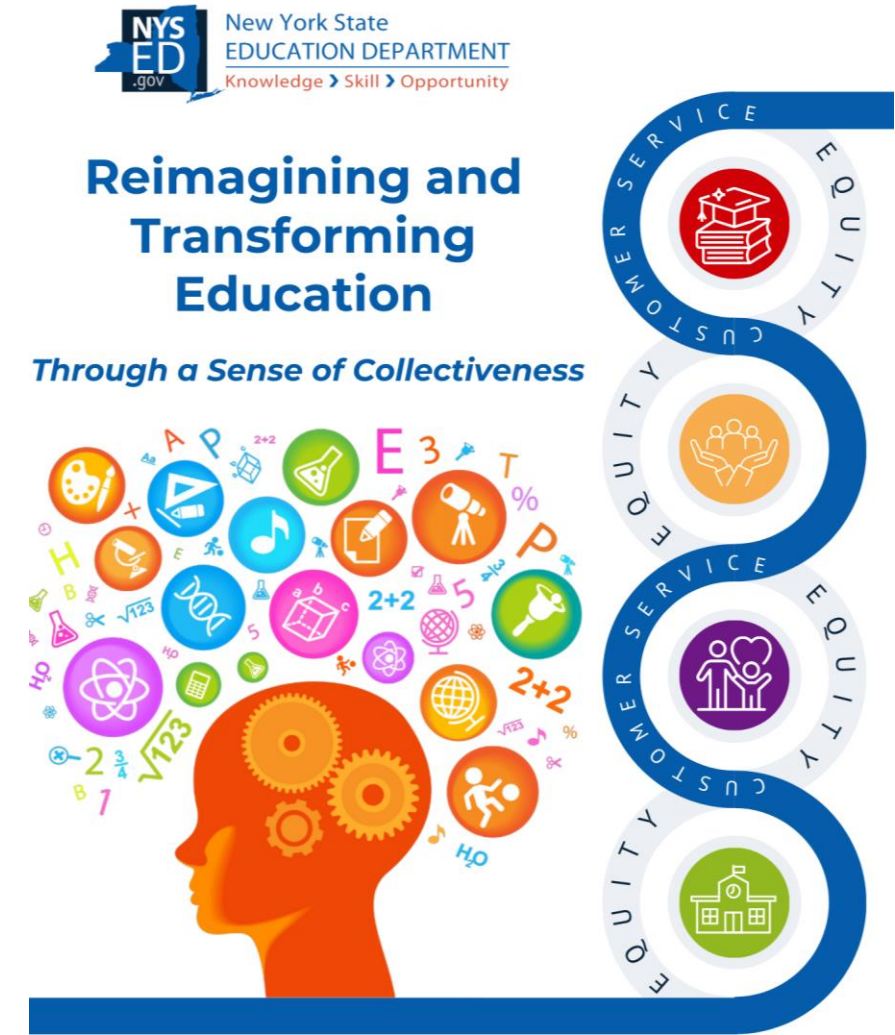
# HISTORY OF NEW YORK STATE NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- 1628: Dutch Reformed Church founded the Collegiate School - the oldest continually operated school in the U.S.
- NYS has a rich history of non-public schools.
- 1894: Substantial Equivalence law enacted.
- The first in the country mandated services law was enacted in 1974 in response to prior litigation and a requirement for NYSED to evaluate all schools.



# SORIS AND ORISS

- NYSED is responsible for implementing programs (funding and services) and to provide technical assistance for non-public schools.
- 1979: The NYSED Office of Non-Public Schools was created along with the Non-Public Commissioner's Advisory Council.
- 2016: With additional funding, the State Office for Religious and Independent Schools (SORIS) was created.
- 2023: The office transformed into the Office of Religious and Independent School Support (ORISS).



# OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SUPPORT (ORISS)

- Serves over **1,800 religious and independent schools** across New York State (BEDS and Non-BEDS Reporting Schools)
- Supports high school **registration and Regents exam** administration
- Offers **professional development** for school leaders and staff
- Provides **technical assistance** throughout the school life cycle
- Administers **seven key grants** supporting nonpublic school needs
- Oversees **State and Federal aid** distribution for eligible schools
- Organized into two units:
  - **Fiscal Oversight** – business and financial guidance
  - **Program Oversight** – curriculum, compliance, and instructional support
- Streamlined to ensure **exceptional customer service** and targeted support





## Active Non-Public School Counts by Affiliation 2024-2025 School Year

	# of Schools (BEDS)	Percentage of Total Schools	2023-24 Enrollment	Percentage of Total Enrollment	Average Enrollment per School
JEWISH	438	28%	170,043	44%	388
ROMAN CATHOLIC	384	25%	113,416	29%	295
INDEPENDENT	454	29%	76,786	20%	169
CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALIST	85	5%	7,825	2%	92
ISLAMIC	27	2%	5,652	1%	209
EPISCOPAL	11	1%	3,660	1%	333
QUAKERS	6	0%	2,667	1%	445
LUTHERAN	25	2%	2,388	1%	96
MENNONITES	69	4%	1,773	0%	26
CAMPUS SCHOOLS	1	0%	1,621	0%	1,621
BAPTIST	19	1%	1,307	0%	69
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST	19	1%	1,306	0%	69
GREEK ORTHODOX	5	0%	1,169	0%	234
PRESBYTERIAN	3	0%	383	0%	128



# NEW YORK STATE OF DIVERSITY



# PROGRAM SUPPORTS



BEDS Code  
Applications  
Processing



Substantial  
Equivalency



Health and  
Building  
Safety



High School  
Registration



School  
Incorporation  
(Petitions &  
Consents)



Professional  
Development

**41 ANNUAL  
RISE  
CONFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER  
12 & 13  
2025**

Albany Marriott Hotel  
189 Wolf Road  
Albany NY

The premier NYS  
Conference specifically  
for religious and  
independent school  
leaders!

**REGISTRATION OPENS  
AUGUST 1ST**



[www.NYSCIRS.com](http://www.NYSCIRS.com)

Check Here for  
updated Information



[NYS PDRC @ Fordham](#)

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**



# FISCAL SUPPORTS



Administer  
Programs &  
Facilitate Grant  
Application  
Process



Award Audit &  
Review



Resource  
Generation  
& Technical  
Support

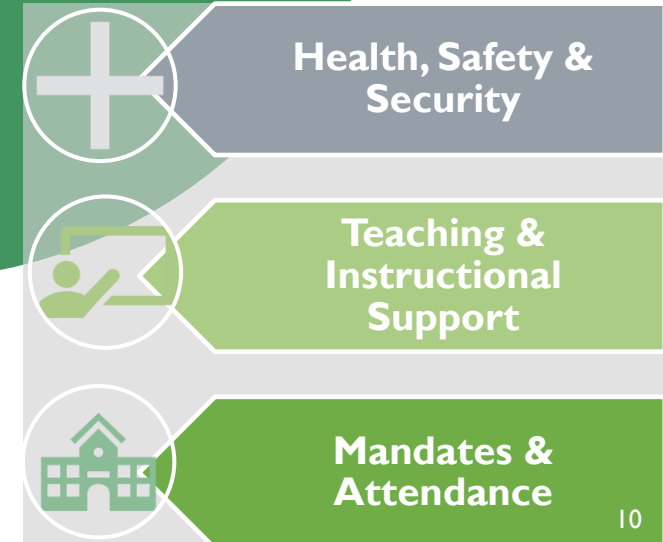
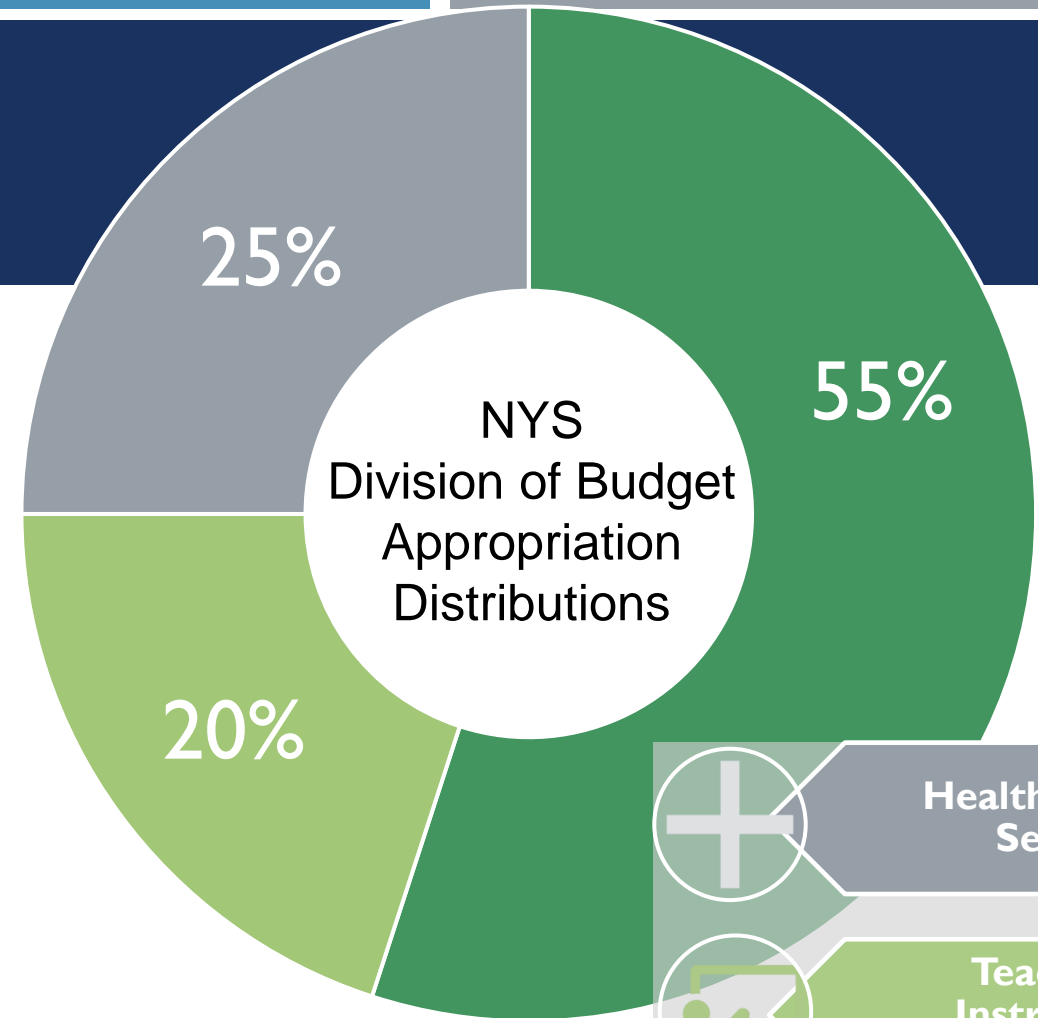
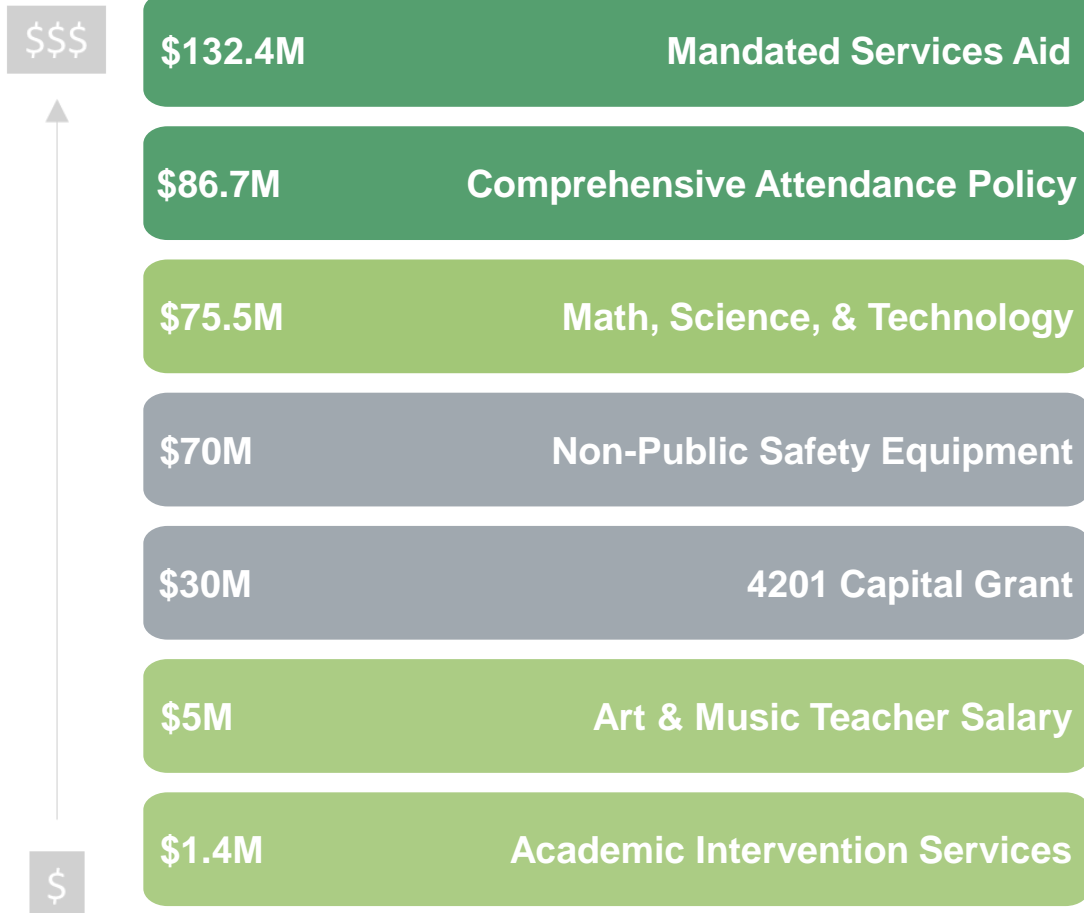


Compliance  
Standards &  
Internal  
Controls



Policy Review &  
Reporting

# 2024-2025 Grants & Funding Opportunities



# PART 130 REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

*ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS IN SEPTEMBER 2022*



Compulsory Education Law requires “full time instruction” (Education Law §3205) and that “instruction given to a minor elsewhere than at a public school shall be at least substantially equivalent” (Education Law §3204).



Goal: To ensure students attending religious and independent schools have access to instruction that is substantially equivalent to students attending public schools.



Fact: A majority of religious and independent schools across the state have already been deemed substantially equivalent.

*High School  
Registration*

**Pathway**

1

*State Approved  
Private Special  
Education School*

**Pathway**

2

*Accreditation*  
(11 approved  
accreditors to date)

**Pathway**

3

*International  
Baccalaureate (IB)  
Program*

**Pathway**

4

*Federally  
Approved School*

**Pathway**

5

*Assessments*  
(12 approved  
assessments to date)

**Pathway**

6

*Local Review*

**Pathway**

7



# TIMEFRAME AND REPORTING

## *Every September 1*

Local School Authorities (LSAs) must report all nonpublic schools within their geographical boundaries.

## *Every December 1*

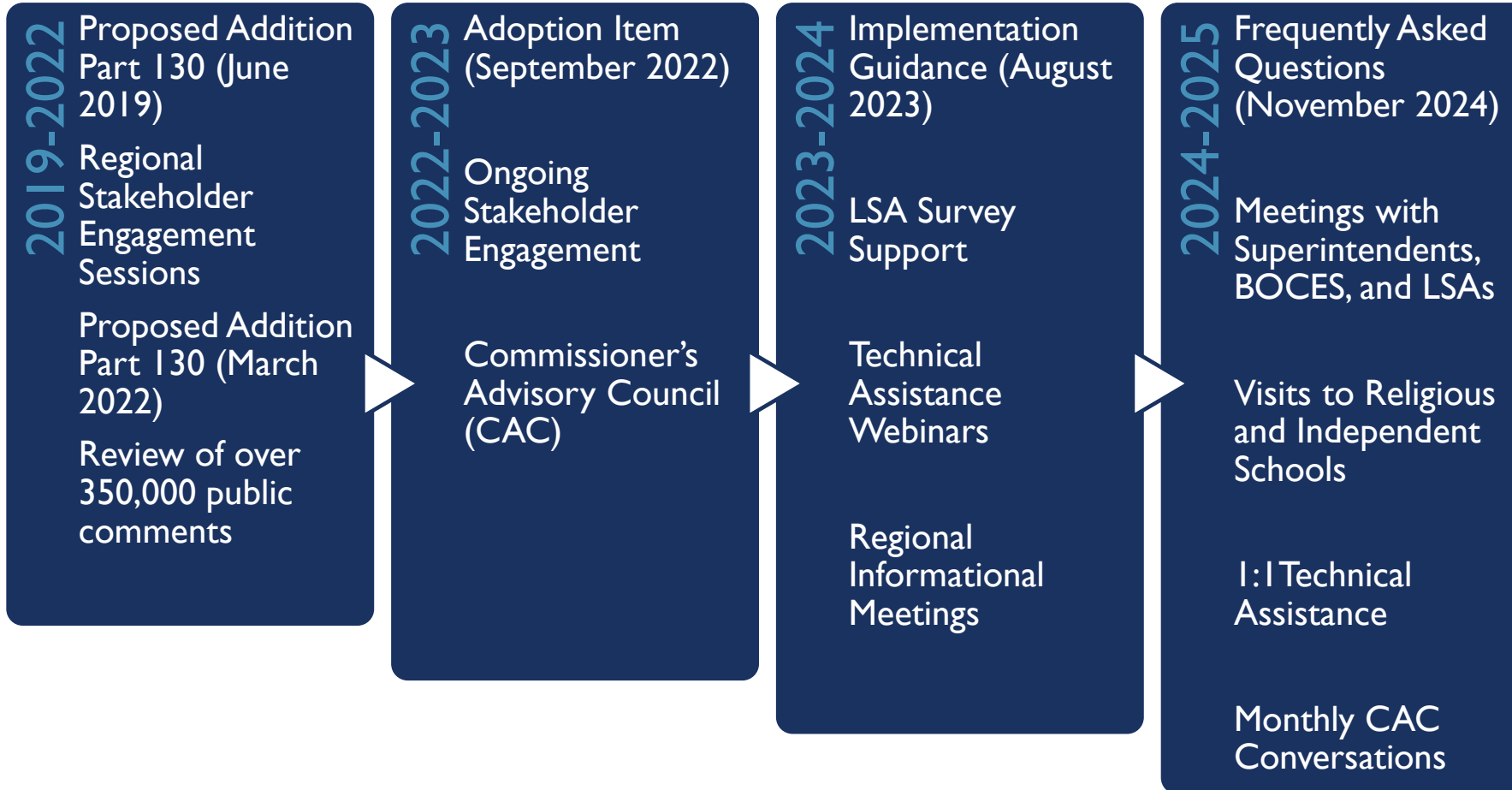
A list of nonpublic schools in the LSA's boundaries that:

- meet a substantial equivalency **Pathway 1-6**
- are subject to a **Pathway 7 review** by the LSA
- are subject to a **Commissioner's final determination**

## *By June 30, 2025*

LSAs shall **make substantial equivalency determinations, and recommendations for schools subject to a Commissioner's determination**, for existing nonpublic schools in their geographic boundaries (as of September 2022) by the end of the school year and every seven years thereafter.

# TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & ONGOING SUPPORTS





100%  
of LSAs reported

STATUS OF LSA SURVEY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2024



54%

of LSAs reported having  
non-public schools within  
geographic boundaries

STATUS OF LSA SURVEY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2024

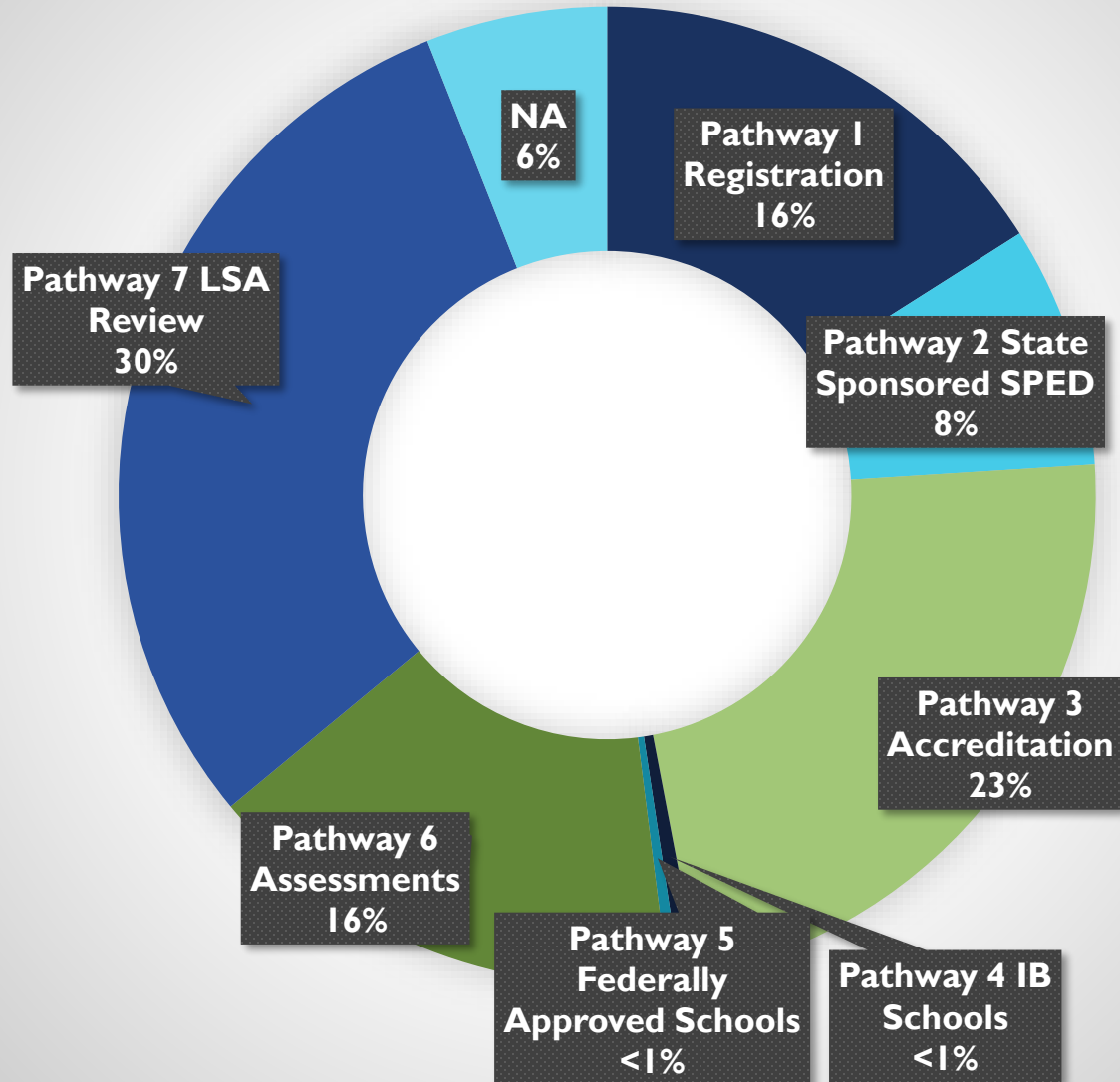




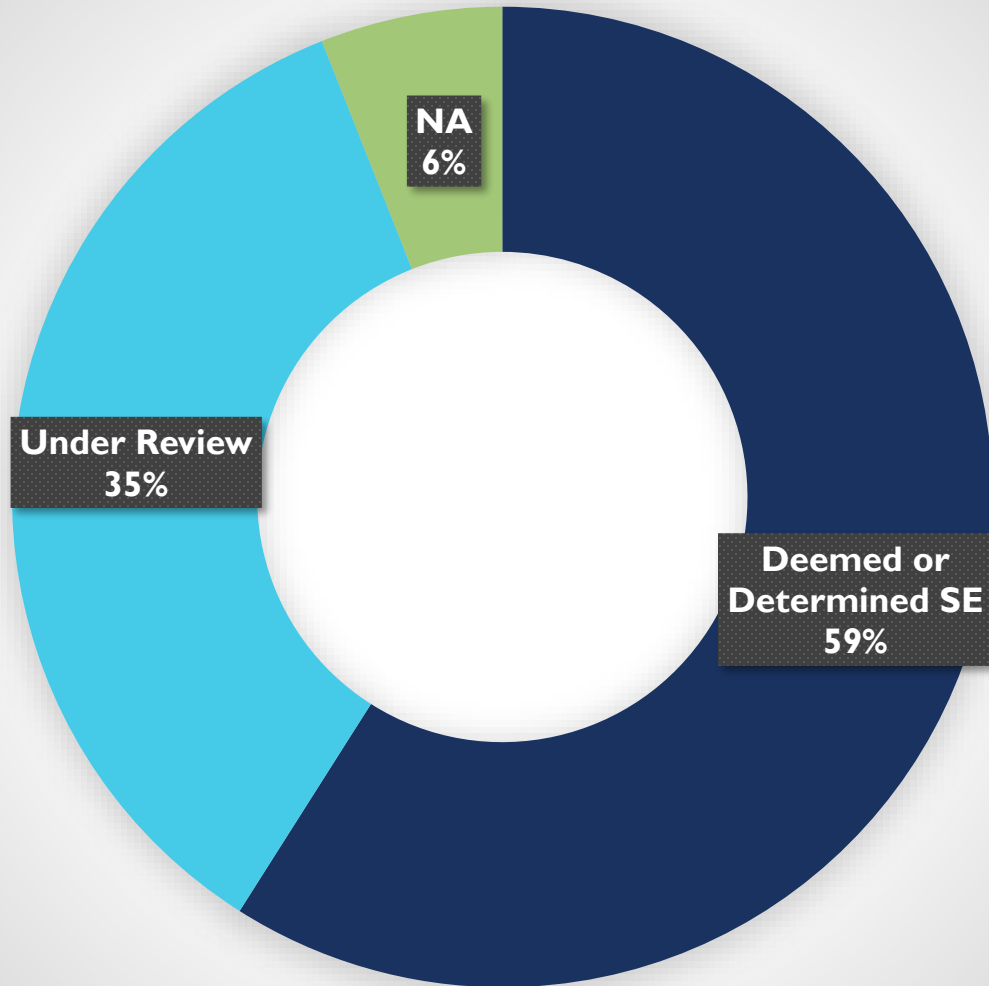
70%

of LSA with no additional  
reporting required by  
June 30, 2025

STATUS OF LSA SURVEY AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2024



# NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCE PATHWAYS AS OF DECEMBER 1, 2024



NON-PUBLIC  
SCHOOL  
SUBSTANTIAL  
EQUIVALENCE  
STATUS  
AS OF  
DECEMBER 1, 2024

## ADDITIONAL LSA REPORTING VIA BUSINESS PORTAL BY JUNE 30, 2025

### Pathway 1-6 Verification

- Nonpublic school deemed substantially equivalent through verification of documentation.

### Pathway 7 LSA Review

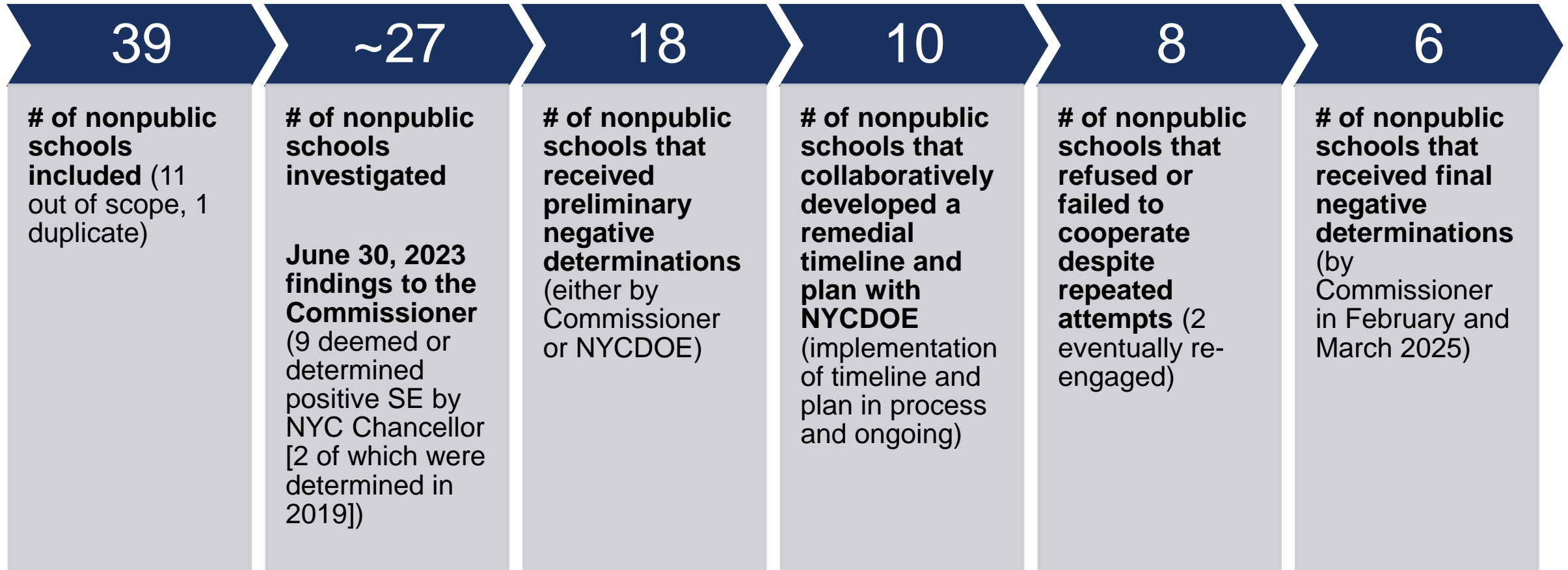
- LSA has rendered a final positive determination.
- LSA has rendered a preliminary negative determination.
- LSA has rendered a final negative determination
- LSA has rendered a recommendation for Commissioner's determination.

### Other

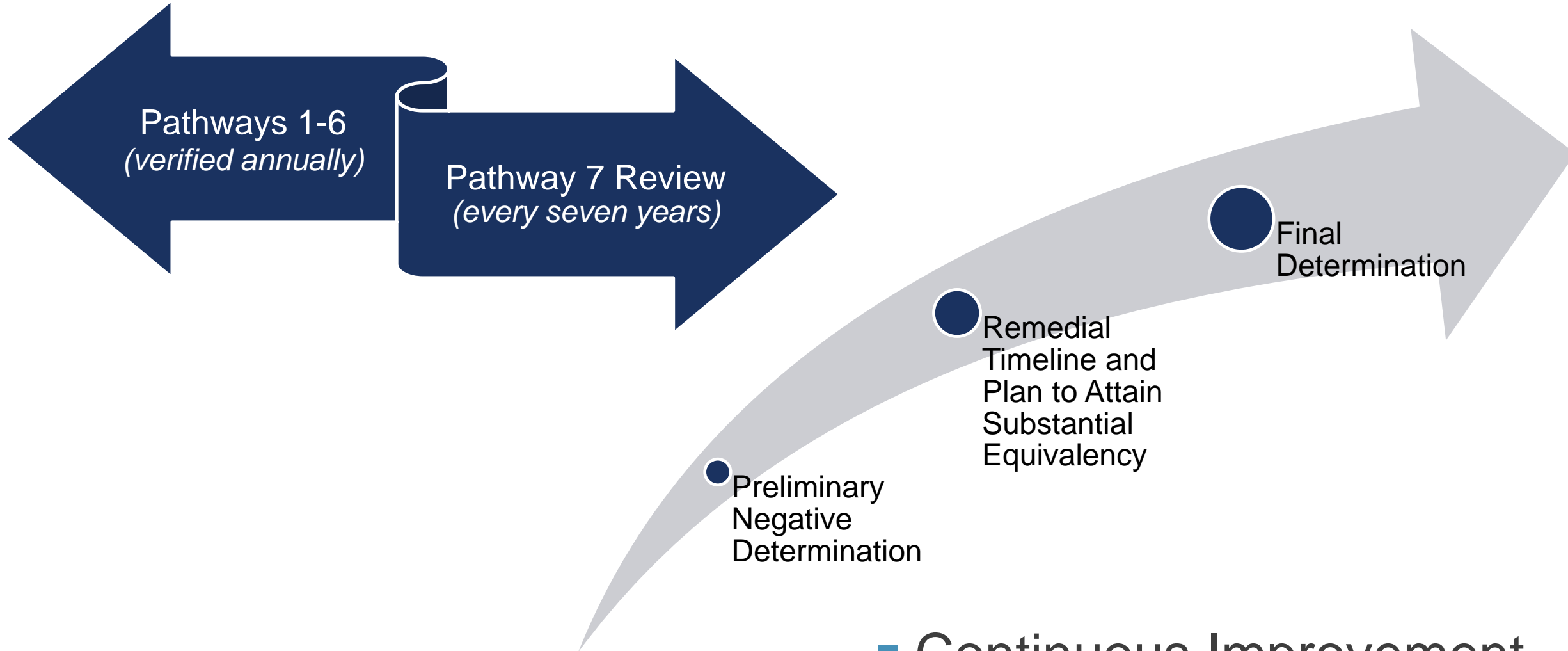
- Nonpublic school still under review due to extenuating circumstances.
- Nonpublic school has been unresponsive.
- Nonpublic school not required to report.



# BY THE NUMBERS: JULY 2015 SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCY COMPLAINT TO NYCDOE



## ■ Choice



## ■ Continuous Improvement

# NYS COURT OF APPEALS

IN JUNE 2024, THE APPELLATE DIVISION FULLY UPHELD THE REGULATIONS AND DECLARED THEM VALID IN THEIR ENTIRETY, NOTING:



Local public school officials are largely responsible for determining whether nonpublic schools within their boundaries are providing substantially equivalent instruction to their students.



Parents and guardians have a duty under the Education Law to ensure that the children in their care attend proper educational instruction and, therefore, cannot rely upon a nonpublic school that fails to meet the minimal standards.



The ability to determine that “the nonpublic school shall no longer be deemed a school which provides compulsory education fulfilling the requirements of the Education Law” is the direct application of the Commissioner’s statutory authority to enforce compliance with the standard.



Petitioners continue to argue Part 130 “impermissibly deny parents the right to educate their children through a combination of sources.”

# NEXT STEPS & ONGOING TAILORED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## Additional LSA Reporting by June 30, 2025

Review SE submissions

Process recommendations  
for Commissioner's  
Determination

Process Notice of Intent to  
Review for unresponsive  
nonpublic schools

## Summer 2025

Extension Consideration for  
Extenuating Circumstances

Publish on the  
Department's website a list  
of nonpublic schools  
deemed positive SE  
(Pathways 1-6) or  
determined positive SE  
(Pathway 7)

## 2025-2026 School Year

Launch September 1  
Geographical Boundaries  
Survey for annual reporting  
by LSA

Launch December 1  
Pathways Survey for annual  
reporting by LSA





# QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION