TO: The Honorable the Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Elizabeth R. Berlin

SUBJECT: Regents 2016 State Legislative Priorities

DATE: October 22, 2015

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The Board of Regents advances legislative priorities every year. At the October meeting, the relevant committees reviewed the proposals to be advanced in 2016.

Reason(s) for Consideration

Review and update of the 2016 Regents state legislative priorities.

Proposed Handling

The attached proposals will be review at the relevant committee meetings during the October meeting.

Recommendation

Affirm support for last year's proposals as well as consider and approve amended and new legislative proposal for the 2016 session.

Timetable for Implementation

The attachment summarizes the proposals that were priorities last year as well as amended and new priorities.

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2016 Regents State Legislative Priorities

Affirm Support for Previously Advanced Priorities**:**

- **Mandate Relief and Flexibility –** Legislation would enact a series of mandate relief measures to promote cost savings and provide relief from reporting requirements. (S.4216-Flanagan/A.5060-Nolan of 2015)
- **Create Regional Secondary Schools** – Legislation would enable 3 or more school districts to enter into a mutual contract to form a regional secondary school, affording students greater educational opportunities. (S.4218- Flanagan/A.5058-Nolan of 2015)
- **Tuition Rate Setting Methodology –** Legislation would create a statutory index for establishing the growth in annual tuition for Special Act School Districts and Approved Private Schools Serving Students with Disabilities (853 Schools) as well as authorize the creation of a general reserve fund.
- **Education Equity for DREAMers Act –** Legislation would give eligible undocumented immigrants the opportunity and access to higher education through financial assistance.
- **BOCES CTE Salary Cap and Special Services Aid Increase** – Modernize and incentivize creation of high quality CTE programs by updating reimbursement for BOCES aid for CTE programs and Special Services Aid.
- **Safe and Supportive Schools –** Improve support to school districts to better ensure that all students are able to attend school in a safe building with a positive learning environment.
- **Tenure and Seniority Protections for Bilingual and ESOL Teachers/TAs** – Require districts, in an event of the abolition of a position, to consider whether the retention of a less senior teacher/teaching assistant is necessary for the school to provide bilingual/ESOL instruction.
- **Professional Licensure for DACA Recipients** – Allow eligible DACA recipients to obtain professional licensure to ensure equal access to workplace opportunities.
- **Institutional Accreditation** – Provide an appropriation for fees related to accreditation services to provide much needed capacity to the Office of College and University Evaluation.
- **Museum Education Act** – Legislation would establish competitive grants to support cultural institutions that seek to establish or improve museum education programs.

Consider and Approve Amended and New Legislative Priorities**:**

- **Intervention in Schools with Chronic Mismanagement –** Legislation would authorize SED to provide districts with tools and supports to get them back on track.
- **Funding for Early College High Schools and PTECH Programs –** Legislation would codify and provide support to Early College High Schools and PTECH programs.
- **Authorization for the Commissioner to take Administrative Actions to Prevent Loss of State Aid to School Districts**– Legislation to streamline and simplify state aid claims as well as provide broader discretion for the Commissioner to grant 180 school day requirement waivers for school districts under certain circumstances.

For more information contact the
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Mandate Relief and Accountability

THE ISSUE:

Given the continuing constraints on revenue at the federal, state and local level, mandate relief becomes vital in order to preserve funding for critical priorities.

While many mandates were originally enacted to enhance the rights, protections and performance of students and the fiscal accountability of school districts, not all mandates have produced their intended results. In these fiscal times, it is imperative that a thoughtful and targeted series of changes be made to repeal outdated mandates that have grown too burdensome and costly and which are not essential to improving results for students.

The Regents have acted within the scope of their authority to make regulatory changes to help unburden school districts while maintaining appropriate safeguards and protections for students, parents and the general public, but statutory relief is also necessary.

THE SOLUTION:

Legislation proposed by the Department (S.4216-Flanagan/A.5060-Nolan of 2015) would eliminate or reduce a significant number of statutory mandates and provide greater flexibility relating to curriculum, transportation, educational management services and special education. The legislation includes provisions that would:

- Allow the awarding of transportation and cafeteria and restaurant contracts based on best value rather than solely on lowest price;
- Initiate a feasibility study to allow districts and BOCES to save on credit card costs;
- Exempt school districts from the Smart Growth regulations for reconstruction, renovation, and addition projects;
- Eliminate the requirement for back-lit school bus signs;
- Replace the mandate on Conservation Day with Earth Day academic instruction;
- Streamline the provision of special education services to parentally-placed students with disabilities;
- Reduce delays and due process costs by shortening the statute of limitations to request a special education due process hearing;
- Eliminate certain duplicative aging out reporting requirements; and
- Further align Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education membership with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

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Create Regional Secondary Schools

THE ISSUE:

In light of fiscal constraints, many school districts are at risk of not being able to meet their fiscal obligations and/or are facing educational insolvency due to cuts to critical personnel and programs. Much of the fiscal and educational pressure on districts is at the secondary education level.

Current state law has limited options for school districts to create and sustain high-quality collaborative secondary schools allowing only the creation of central high school districts, regional high schools in Suffolk County and Tech Valley High School in the Capital Region.

School districts across the state need a mechanism to build collaborative secondary school partnerships that will provide greater educational services to better ensure that students graduate high school ready to succeed in college and careers- such as high-quality science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs- through more cost-effective and efficient operational delivery.

THE SOLUTION:

Legislation proposed by the Department (S.4218- Flanagan/A.5058-Nolan of 2015) would allow three or more districts to contract together or with a BOCES to establish a regional secondary school. The legislation would:

- Improve instructional quality and students' educational opportunities by helping districts pool educational resources to allow them to provide the educational programming necessary to ensure that students are prepared to succeed in college and careers;
- Allow districts to leverage resources to provide greater operational flexibility and cost savings;
- Require boards of education to approve a resolution proposing establishment of a regional secondary school, to be followed by a referendum by voters in each school district;
- Require SED approval of proposed regional secondary school plans to ensure that the plan provides for increased educational opportunities for students;
- Provide state aid to incentivize districts that create a regional secondary school and to provide them with resources that may be required through the first five years of a transition; and
- Preserve rights of teachers during a transition to a regional high school in a manner similar to when a BOCES assumes operation of a school district program.

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Tuition Rate Setting Methodology for Special Act School Districts & 853 Schools

THE ISSUE:

Tuition reimbursement for Special Act school districts and approved private schools serving students with disabilities (853 Schools) is based on a rate methodology that is established by the Department and approved by the Division of Budget (DOB). Following four years of no growth in tuition reimbursement, the last three tuition years (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16) have included trend factors to increase funding for the schools. For the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, the Department used an average of state-wide total personal income growth as a basis for its recommendation. The administrative increases of the past three years provided welcomed financial relief, however many of the shortcomings of the current rate setting system exist.

Based on provider testimony at the Special Education Financial Advisory Workgroup meetings, and the Department's analysis of submitted cost data, a lack of predictable growth to fund increasing costs and the inability to utilize reserve funding for unplanned or emergency expenditures have endangered the Special Act School District and 853 School's capacity to operate essential special education programs for some of the most severely disabled school age children.

THE SOLUTION:

To correspond with administrative revision adopted for 2014-15 and 2015-16 to improve the existing tuition rate setting methodology for Special Act School Districts and 853 Schools, the following legislative proposals would seek to address the financial stability of the schools and better enable them to provide educational and related services to the students they serve:

- **Create a statutory index for establishing the growth in annual tuition rates**. The current growth in tuition rates is established administratively and is not based a predetermined statutory index. A statutory growth index based on an average of state personal income growth would establish predicable and timely tuition increases and allow for improved budget planning.

- **Authorize providers to establish a general reserve fund**. Special Act School Districts and 853 Schools have historically relied on lines of credit to pay for unplanned or emergency expenditures until tuition revenue is received. Authorizing these schools to accumulate a small percentage of tuition revenue in a general reserve fund would reduce the reliance on private borrowing and enable schools to better respond to unanticipated events. Administrative parameters would be developed by the Department to specify the amount that may be deposited and to identify the allowable uses for the funds in addition to corresponding reporting requirements to ensure appropriate oversight.

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Education Equity for DREAMers Act

THE ISSUE:

Thousands of public school students in New York are children of undocumented immigrants. The Office of the State Comptroller estimated, in a May 2013 report on the New York State DREAM Act, that 8,300 undocumented students were enrolled in our public institutions of higher education in the Fall 2012 semester, with most enrolled at CUNY (6,546 students).

New York's enlightened policy enables hundreds of thousands of undocumented students to receive education through the state's P-12 public school system; our state recognizes the value of an investment in career and college readiness for these students. It makes economic sense to help these young students become full participants in New York's economy. Yet their futures are undeniably circumscribed by current immigration law since these young people generally derive their immigration status from their parents. If their parents are undocumented, most students have no mechanism to obtain legal residency, even if they have lived most of their lives in the US.

Current state law, while providing undocumented immigrant students with in-state tuition rates at our public colleges and universities, prohibits these students from receiving state financial aid (i.e., general awards, academic performance awards and scholarships). Denying aid means outright denying many of these students access to higher education. Our society and our economic growth depend on a vibrant, well-educated workforce, but right now, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers may be denied the opportunity to the education they need to fully participate in our economy. Without access to higher education, these students are far too often forced into the shadows of our society and into economic uncertainty.

THE SOLUTION:

The Regents Education Equity for DREAMers Act would:

- Eliminate Education Law provisions requiring students to be a US citizen or permanent lawful resident to receive general awards, including TAP, academic performance awards, scholarships or other financial assistance.
- Allow certain non-residents, including undocumented immigrants, who graduate from New York high schools or obtain their high school equivalency degree to receive general awards, including TAP, academic performance awards, scholarships or other financial assistance.
- Authorize SUNY, CUNY and community colleges trustees to provide state-aid programs, scholarships or other financial assistance to undocumented aliens who graduate from New York high schools.
- Allow non-residents, including undocumented aliens, who graduate from New York State high schools to receive State funds in the higher education opportunity programs and the collegiate science and technology entry program (C-STEP).
- Allow undocumented immigrants and their families, who have a taxpayer identification number, to open a New York 529 family tuition savings account.

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Supporting Expansion of Career & Technical Education

THE ISSUE:

A 2011 report, entitled *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenges of Preparing Americans for the 21st Century*, warned that our nation's education system is failing to prepare students for economic success, because, in part, "we have focused too exclusively on a few narrow pathways to success."

Because new jobs increasingly demand advanced skills, it has never been more critical to ensure that students have opportunities that include rigorous career and technical education (CTE) so that, upon graduation from high school, they are prepared for college and career success. CTE has to be an integral part of our education and economic development strategy.

THE SOLUTION:

In addition to our commitment to provide students with Multiple Pathways to a high school diploma, the Department proposes supporting the expansion of high-quality CTE options as follows:

- **Enhance BOCES Aid for CTE Programs:** The existing BOCES Aid formula, set in 1990, only aids the first $30,000 of an instructor's salary, which results in shifting costs to local school district budgets. The Regents have recommended that the aidable salary for all CTE programs be increased over a period of 5 years, until the gap between current salaries and actual salaries is closed.

- **Modernize Special Services Aid:** The existing special services aids that supports CTE programming for school districts- that are not in a BOCES- assumes a base cost of $3,900 per student. This amount has not been adjusted for inflation and is far below the cost of providing high-quality CTE programming. In its 2015-16 State Aid Proposal, the Regents recommended increasing the reimbursement for these programs until the per pupil base costs reflects the actual cost of providing the programs.

The Regents approach to CTE expansion has been deliberative and includes a multi-faceted approach. In addition to the specific proposals to enhance BOCES Aid and modernize special services aid, other Regents priorities are intended – in part – to support expansion of high-quality CTE opportunities, including expanding access to P-TECH schools and establishing regional high schools.

In order to ensure that the Department is able to meet the anticipated demand of CTE program approvals to provide these opportunities, the Regents and the Department additionally request $303,000 in order to provide sufficient staff resources to review, approve, and monitor CTE programs throughout the state.

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Safe and Supportive Schools

THE ISSUE:

In January 2013, in response to the Newtown, CT school shooting tragedy, the Board of Regents re-established the Safe Schools Task Force with the purpose of bringing together stakeholders to make recommendations to improve and sustain safe school buildings and positive learning environments for students to learn.

Comprehensive school safety statute in New York dates to The Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act passed in 2000, the requirements of which included: promoting safe learning environments, development of district-wide safety plans, codes of conduct, and reporting of violent and disruptive incidents.

The Dignity for All Students Act passed in 2012 further addressed school climate by outlawing bullying, harassment and discrimination. In 2013, the law was amended to include cyberbullying.

While there are laws enacted to provide for safe and positive learning environments, the state does not have the capacity to provide technical assistance or promote expansion of best practices, particularly since federal funding through the Safe and Drug Free Schools program lapsed.

THE SOLUTION:

In order to better support school districts and to better ensure that all students are able to attend school in a safe building with a positive learning environment, the Department requests **$11 million** and seeks statutory changes to:

- **Enhance oversight through regular monitoring and audits:** The Department seeks funding to create capacity to closely review and analyze data from various school incident reporting mechanisms to identify districts with the greatest need of technical assistance and to conduct risk-based analysis where referral to the Department's Office of Audit Services for a full audit may be appropriate. In addition, the Department would support regular and meaningful professional development opportunities to school building and faculty leaders, school counselors and other pupil personnel, Dignity Act coordinators, school resource officers and others.
- **Provide support and ensure accountability:** The Department would seek to develop and implement a school climate index, establish regional school safety teams to help local schools and districts develop school climate improvement systems, develop and administer annual school climate surveys to students, parents and school personnel, and identify schools that require corrective action plans.
- **Modernize Data Collection and Reporting:** The Department would develop a single comprehensive data system for the collection and reporting of incidents that also has the capability of capturing new data elements specific to a positive school climate index.

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Tenure and Seniority Protections for Bilingual and ESOL Teachers/Teaching Assistants

THE ISSUE:

Due to the many fiscal challenges of the state, many districts have been forced to reduce their workforce. By statute, when the position of a teacher/teaching assistant is abolished, the teacher or teaching assistant having the least seniority in the system within the tenure area of the position abolished must be discontinued. An unintended consequence is that as districts hire new bilingual teachers and teaching assistants to serve expanding populations of English language learners (ELLs) and subsequent layoffs are made due to fiscal constraints, districts may be forced to lay off the more junior bilingual or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers or teaching assistants that they need.

For example, if a district with dual language elementary school programs (with bilingual students) has teachers who hold certification in the early childhood area and in bilingual education and they need to lay off a teacher in the elementary tenure area for budgetary reasons, they must lay off the teacher with the least seniority. Even though the district is required by law to provide bilingual education to its ELLs, the result may be that the qualified bilingual teacher must be laid off while their position is filled by an elementary teacher who may well not be certified to teach bilingual education. If the teacher who fills the position is not certified to teach that position, the only recourse the district has is to bring a section 3020-a proceeding to terminate the teacher for not being qualified.

If a single bilingual tenure area were established, which would require statutory change at the elementary level, abolition of a position in that tenure area could have a similar anomalous result. For example, the least senior teacher may be the only teacher available in the district who is fluent in Chinese, and the teacher retained may be a bilingual teacher fluent in another language. Further, if multiple language-specific tenure areas were established, which would also require statutory change at the elementary level, the result would be very narrow tenure areas with limited protection for teachers. Similar situations may arise in the case of teaching assistants.

THE SOLUTION:

The Regents propose enactment of legislation to require districts, in the event of an abolition of a position, to excess the teacher/teaching assistant with the least seniority in the tenure area of the position abolished, except where the retention of a less senior teacher/teaching assistant fluent in a specific language is necessary for the school district to provide required bilingual/ESOL instruction.

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Equal Opportunity Employment Opportunities for All Act

THE ISSUE:

In June 2012, the federal government announced and later implemented the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy which allows individuals who came to the US as children and meet established guidelines to request consideration of deferred action for a period of two years, subject to renewal.

The following general conditions must be met in order for an individual to receive deferred action:

- Be under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012 and have come to the US before turning 16;
- Have continuously resided in the US since June 15, 2007;
- Be currently enrolled in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a high school equivalency certificate, or be an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces; and
- Meet certain moral character requirements.

DACA recipients are young people who generally derive their immigration status from their parents. If their parents are undocumented, most of these individuals have no current mechanism to obtain legal residency, even if they have lived most of their lives in the US.

Even though a DACA recipient is authorized to work, qualified individuals are prohibited from obtaining licenses in certain professions, including but not limited to pharmacy, dentistry and engineering solely because of their immigration status.

THE SOLUTION:

The Regents propose to allow eligible DACA recipients to obtain a professional license, if they have met all other requirements for licensure except for their citizenship status, which will in turn give these individuals the opportunity to equal access to workplace opportunities by eliminating obstacles to receiving professional licensing.

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Ensuring the Future of New York State's National Institutional Accreditation Authority

THE ISSUE:

The Regents have been engaged in the evaluation of quality in higher education in New York since 1787. The federal government has recognized the Regents and the Commissioner as a national institutional accrediting agency since 1952. New York is the only state with this recognition. Currently, 23 New York colleges and universities hold institutional accreditation by the Regents.

Institutional accreditors must meet the federal government standards for accrediting agencies and ensure that accreditation and accreditation renewal processes and decisions are made consistent with those standards. These processes, which include review of voluminous documents and extensive site visits to the institutions, are time and resource intensive for the accrediting agencies.

Other institutional accrediting agencies in this region, (e.g., the Middle States Commission on Higher Education ("Middle States") and the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), support their functions by charging their participating institutions. For example, Middle States charges its participating institutions both annual dues, calculated on the institution's total educational and general expenditures, as well as fees for various accreditation-related activities (information session fees, application fees, site visit fees and expenses, etc.).

Currently the Department does not charge for institutional accreditation. While there are many benefits of this accreditation function carried out by the Office of Higher Education through its Office of College and University Evaluation, accreditation activities divert limited financial and staff resources from other important functions (e.g., program registration and institutional oversight).

THE SOLUTION:

The Regents propose enactment of an appropriation that allows the Department to spend the fees related to supporting accreditation services, which would include the addition of dedicated accreditation staff, and expenses incurred in order to support and enhance conducting accreditation of institutions of higher education.

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Expanding Access to Education Programs through Cultural Institutions

THE ISSUE:

Students from throughout the state must learn how to access, interpret, and analyze information to succeed in the increasingly complex, high-tech world of the 21st century. New York has world class cultural institutions that have the ability to engage students in unique ways which entertain and excite, helping them to learn critical higher-order thinking skills needed to meet such challenges.

In recent years, the cultural institutions overseen by the Department have expanded their missions to support our education reform efforts:

- The American Museum of Natural History is preparing a new generation of Earth Science teachers; and
- In August 2014, representatives from cultural institutions and archives participated in a two-day conference to provide professional development and best practice examples on how cultural institutions can support implementation of the Common Core.

The state should support this programming to better ensure that these unique learning opportunities can be expanded.

THE SOLUTION:

The Department supports enactment of legislation that would support the expansion of education programs in cultural institutions, such as the Museum Education Act.

The Museum Education Act would establish competitive grants to support cultural institutions that seek to establish or improve museum education programs designed to improve and support student learning opportunities, including supporting the development of local curricular aids.

Over 1,300 museums, historical societies, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums and cultural arts institutions currently provide relevant and engaging education programming to students and could benefit from such funding.

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Intervention in Schools with Chronic Mismanagement

THE ISSUE:

School boards and superintendents play a crucial role in our public schools. They represent our society's firm belief in the importance of local governance. The vast majority of school boards and superintendents are effective leaders that support staff, enhance instruction and promote student academic achievement. However, some school districts for various reasons have fallen into patterns of mismanagement or fiscal stress. These few districts are characterized by years, or even decades, of rampant fiscal instability or governance challenges, or both. Fiscally, these districts fail to exercise appropriate fiscal management by failing to take the actions necessary to keep the district's budget in balance and/or maintain appropriate and consistent fund balances.

Often the governance and fiscal challenges faced by these districts result in negative outcomes in the classroom. Governance of mismanaged school districts is often beset with difficult and even intractable, long-standing problems. Frequently, such districts lack sufficient mechanisms to hold boards of education accountable for their district's academic and/or fiscal underperformance.

THE SOLUTION:

The proposed legislation will authorize the Board of Regents and the Commissioner to put school districts into three levels of Fiscal Restructuring Status, with tools and supports to help them get on track and remove them from oversight. Such tools and supports would include:

- Requiring these districts to develop a plan with specific, measurable goals and removal from oversight status if plan goals are met for three consecutive school years.
- Giving more troubled districts the assistance of a Distinguished Educator and/or a Fiscal Administrator to review and monitor the district's operations, including school academic and fiscal systems, structures, projects, operations and facilities, and recommend measures to the board.
- Appointing an independent review team for the most troubled school districts to review the board of education's actions and/or omissions and make a recommendation to the Board of Regents.
- Upon a determination by the Board of Regents that governance problems are a substantial factor in a district's chronic underperformance, allowing the Regents to appoint a three-member Education Oversight Board with all the powers and duties of the board of education. Such a finding would result in the removal of the board of education and, upon recommendation of the Oversight Board, the superintendent as well. An education oversight board would report directly to the Regents and the Commissioner.

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Increasing Access to College and Reducing the Cost to Students - Support Early College High Schools & PTECH

THE ISSUE:

Traditionally underrepresented and academically at-risk students in postsecondary education need strong, innovative programs designed to increase engagement in their high school education and boost levels of participation in college while also reducing the need for remediation- programs that successfully support these goals remain a priority of the Regents and the Department.

Early College High Schools (ECHS) are partnerships between high schools and institutions of higher education that allows students to simultaneously obtain their high school diploma and earn up to 60 transferable college credits (and a minimum of 24 college credits) as part of an organized rigorous 4-year program toward a postsecondary degree or credential at no cost to the student or the student's family. There are currently 21 ECHS 4- year programs that the Department administers funding to. In the 2013-14 school year (SY), 87% of the (565) students who started with the first (2010) cohort of this program graduated high school on time with an average of 19 college credits earned. **Without additional funding, this grant program will end in August 2016.**

Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools (PTECH) are partnerships between high schools, institutions of higher education and businesses that create individual pathways for students to simultaneously obtain their high school diploma, earn an associate's degree, obtain workplace learning/experience as well as be first in line for a job with the program's STEM related industry partner. There are currently 26 PTECH 6-year programs that the Department administers funding with 7 new projects to be awarded and open in the 2016-17 SY. In the 2014-15 SY the first cohort of 16 PTECH schools completed their first year with approximately 800 students, of these programs: there are 51 degree/career pathways being pursued; 57% of students are free and reduced meals eligible; 56% are students of color; 7% are students with IEPs; there is a 93-97% attendance rate and minimal disciplinary actions taken against students in these programs.

The different models of ECHS and PTECH programs provide school districts with the flexibility in identifying a model that works best for their students and their unique regional needs- this is why both of these critical programs needed to be supported.

THE SOLUTION:

The Department supports establishing these programs in statute; providing a sustainable funding stream to support and scale up current programs- based upon key program components and performance; and providing additional funding for new programs.

ECHS: Provide $7 million or a $3.5 million increase over current funding levels.

PTECH: Provide $18 million or a $7 million increase over current funding levels.

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Authorize the Commissioner to take Administrative Actions to Prevent Loss of State Aid to School Districts

THE ISSUE:

There are several sections of state law that contain rigid timing, procedural or paperwork requirements that are tied to receipt of state aid. If school districts fail to strictly abide by these rigid processes, they are subject to losses or reductions in state aid. While many requirements are tied to essential health and safety issues, there are others that can be described as ministerial, but carry heavy fiscal consequences for districts.

THE SOLUTION:

The proposed legislation will authorize the Commissioner to exercise administrative discretion to provide relief and waivers as necessary to school districts that fail to meet certain ministerial or other procedural requirements where the Commissioner determines that a school district acted in good faith. Such authority would extend to the following areas of state law:

- Authorize the Commissioner to provide a waiver if a school district fails to meet the 180-day school year requirement from law enforcement-ordered school closings. While districts are allowed to receive waivers for other events, closures such as the one that occurred this year in the Saranac Central School District due to the Dannemora prison escape are not covered by state law and the district was forced to require on special legislation. If law enforcement deems it too dangerous for school to be held in session, a school district should not be punished for not being in session and it should not have to rely on special legislation to that effect.

- Expand eligibility for state aid overpayment recoveries. Currently, when additional aid is owed to a district, beyond a certain point it becomes a "Prior Year Adjustment (PYA)" that goes into a first-come-first-serve queue, subject to appropriation by the state. At current rates, it is estimated that a new claim may take seventeen years to pay. At the same time, if a district owes money for an overpayment, the state recovers that funding immediately. By allowing funds collected from overpayments to pay for PYAs, the state could significantly reduce the wait time for funds.

For more information contact the
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