



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF REGENTS

REGENTS TOP FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR 2008

The Board of Regents believes that the federal government is a key partner in providing sufficient resources to ensure that student and adult learners all have the knowledge and skills required for the 21st century.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Full funding for programs in the No Child Left Behind Act is critical: Title I—Education for the Disadvantaged and school improvement grants, Reading First and other early literacy programs, 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, Education Technology, Title II—Teacher Quality Grants, Title III—English Language Arts, Title IV—Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Title V—Innovative Programs, and Title VI—State Assessments and State Data Systems, among others.

Additional Education and Education-related Programs

Equally important is adequate funding for: Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act programs, Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, Vocational Education, Higher Education, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Library Services and Technology Act, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and the Preserve America's Historical Record program.

REGENTS TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2008

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act

The Board of Regents has been a strong supporter of the high expectations set by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. However, to realize the law's promise, the Board believes NCLB must be changed to reflect the lessons learned during its implementation. The Regents have submitted comprehensive recommendations to Congress to better align the law's tools to meet its goals (www.oms.nysed.gov/legcoord/). The Regents' top five recommendations address the following:

- Single Accountability Designation.
- Growth Models.
- Targeted Interventions and Differentiated Consequences.
- Assessments for Special Populations (English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities).
- Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT).

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

The Board of Regents' recommendations for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act are designed to enable students to be ready for citizenship, work, and continued education and to increase the number of students with disabilities who successfully make the transition from high school to vocational rehabilitation training programs, employment, and/or college. The Regents also support provisions to provide more opportunity for out-of-school youth to finish their education and graduate and for adults to receive career and technical education and literacy services to prepare them for gainful employment. Equally important is the creation of a new health literacy program to improve the ability of adults with limited literacy or English language skills to make appropriate healthcare decisions.

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Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLs) Act

The Board of Regents' support for the Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries (SKILLs) Act is rooted in their policies to increase the literacy of children and parents by expanding programs in libraries. The SKILLs Act (H.R. 2864 and S. 1699) sets goals to guarantee that all students will be served by highly qualified, state-certified school library media specialists and have the library resources they need to succeed. Today, only 60 percent of school libraries have full-time, state-certified school library media specialists on staff.

Medicaid Reimbursement for School-based Services

The Board of Regents' policies are designed to ensure that low-income students with disabilities attend school and graduate. Medicaid services enable such students to attend school, in an integrated environment, with their non-disabled peers. The Regents support federal legislation to ensure that Medicaid reimbursement for administrative, transportation, and other health-related services provided by schools is maintained. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has issued draft regulations that would discontinue Medicaid reimbursement for certain school-based services. The Protecting Children's Health in Schools Act (H.R. 1017/S. 578) would require that reimbursement for school-based services continues.

REGENTS ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2008

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Definition of Highly Qualified Teacher

The Board of Regents is committed to the goal of ensuring that all students, including students with disabilities, are taught by highly qualified teachers. Given current shortages of special education teachers at the middle and secondary school levels, the Regents recommend that the highly qualified teacher provisions in IDEA for special education teachers of multiple core academic subjects be expanded to include teachers who are highly qualified in social studies (history, geography, economics, civics, and government). There does not appear to be any valid educational reason for omitting new special education teachers who are highly qualified in social studies from rules governing special education teachers who are highly qualified in mathematics, English/language arts, and science.

Higher Education Act (HEA)

The Board of Regents supports increased investment in programs that improve college graduation rates among low-income students. Such programs in the Higher Education Act (HEA) include Pell grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG); Leveraging Educational

Assistance Partnerships (LEAP), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP), and the TRIO programs. The Regents also support expansion of preparation and professional development programs for school personnel, the alignment of HEA highly qualified teacher reporting requirements with requirements in No Child Left Behind, and establishment of a TRIO program option for students with disabilities who face socioeconomic and other barriers to higher education.

Preserve America's Historical Record

The Board of Regents support programs and policies to ensure that all educational resources will be identified, preserved, and accessible to students and the public. The Preserving America's Historical Record Act will provide federal support to state and local governments, historical societies, libraries, and related organizations to preserve state and local archival records. To date, the only federal funding available for state and local archival and historical records programs has been a competitive grant program funded at \$5 million and administered by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission of the National Archives.

E-Rate Program

The Board of Regents is committed to accelerating the integration of technology into teaching and learning throughout P-16 institutions. The E-Rate program supports that commitment by providing funding to telecommunications vendors who then provide discounts to schools and libraries for telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections (cables and network infrastructure). A ruling to subject the program to the federal Anti-deficiency Act (AdA) would severely hamper the program's operation — delaying or even eliminating the ability of schools and libraries to meet their educational technology needs. Legislation (H.R. 278/S. 609) is pending to permanently exempt the E-Rate program from the AdA.

"Ready To Compete" Agenda

The Board of Regents supports policies to ensure that all children graduate prepared for college, work, and life, and actively engages a full array of partners to assist in meeting that goal. The Regents join with public television, who is a key partner in providing high-quality resources for lifelong learning, in supporting the Ready To Compete Agenda.

The Ready To Compete Agenda includes:

- Ready To Learn – help more children come to school prepared.
- Ready To Teach – support qualified and effective teachers and principals.
- Ready To Achieve – help schools prepare students to meet the demands of a 21st century workforce.
- Ready To Earn – help adults succeed in the workforce.
- Ready To Thrive – support partnerships that sustain healthy communities.

For information, contact:

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