

Coalition for Multiple Pathways to a Diploma

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The Coalition for Multiple Pathways to a Diploma is comprised of more than 65 advocacy organizations, educators, and families across New York State, representing a broad cross-section of students, including students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and economically disadvantaged students.

We have come together to urge the creation of multiple pathways to a high school diploma in New York State, each of which holds all students to high expectations, provides them with quality instruction, and opens doors to career and post-secondary education opportunities. We are united by the concern that high-stakes standardized exit exams act as an unnecessary barrier to high school graduation in New York State for students who have otherwise mastered New York State standards and are college or career ready. We believe that measuring college- and career-readiness requires valuing multiple and equally valid ways to assess the skills needed for success in the workplace and higher education and supporting a diversity of learning styles and goals. We are also united by the concern that access to emerging instructional programs/pathways, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), which have been shown to improve student engagement and reduce dropout rates, has been limited for many students.

2017 Budget Priorities

- **Invest in the development of performance-based assessments as alternatives to Regents exams:** We support the Board of Regents' request for \$8 million in the 2017-2018 budget to finance the piloting of performance-based assessments as alternatives to high school Regents exams. Currently, students who have mastered state standards, but who struggle on high-stakes, standardized Regents exams, are unable to graduate from high school in New York State. Performance-based assessments will provide these students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills so that they may receive the high school diploma that they deserve and move on to college or career. We urge you to fund the development of performance-based assessments as part of the 2017-2018 budget.
- **Renew funding for the improvement of student access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.** We thank the Governor and Legislature for providing funding in the 2016-2017 budget to improve access for students with disabilities and English Language Learners to CTE programs. We urge you to renew the \$1 million in funding for eliminating barriers to CTE programs for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. As education officials at the state and local levels expand and refine CTE programming in New York, it is important that students with disabilities and English Language Learners have equal access to the full range of CTE options and that new programs be developed with a goal of maximizing opportunities for these students to benefit.

Members of the Diploma Coalition Include:

Advocates for Children of New York • Alliance for Quality Education • Annenberg Institute for School Reform • ARISE Coalition • Asperger Syndrome & High Functioning Autism Association • David C. Bloomfield, Esq., Professor of Educational Leadership, Law & Policy, Brooklyn College and The CUNY Graduate Center • Bronx Independent Living Services • Brooklyn Defender Services • Brooklyn Center for the Disabled • Business Teachers Association of New York State • Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce • Capital Region Refugee Roundtable • Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York • Citizens' Committee for Children of New York • Lisa Finnerty Coggi, Parent/Advocate • Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies • Council for a Strong America • Valerie DeClara, Parent • Della DeKay JD, EdD • Max Donatelli, Family Advocate • Irja Estrella, Parent • Families Together in New York State • Ann Marie Fitzpatrick, Parent • Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project • Jennifer Ghidiu, Big Picture Learning • Michael Godino, Advocate • Good Shepherd Services • Roberta Grogan, Parent/Advocate • Lori Gummanow, Parent/Special Educator • Meghan Healy • Shelley Hubal, Parent • INCLUDenyc • Muronji Inman-McCraw • Internationals Network for Public Schools • Lawyers for Children, Inc. • Learning Disabilities Association of New York State • Jill Lewis-Flood, Parent/PIP Member • Long Island Advocacy Center • Long Island Communities of Practice • Chris McNell, Special Education Supervisor/Principal • Diana Medina Mendez, Parent • Mark Anthony Mendez • Mental Health Association of New York City • Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools • New York Council of Administrators of Special Education • New York Immigration Coalition • New York Performance Standards Consortium • New York State Association for Bilingual Education • New York State Coalition of 853 Schools • New York State Community of Practice on Family, School and Community Collaboration • New York State Disabilities Advocacy Association and Network • New York State Independent Living Council, Inc. (NYSILC) • New York State Rehabilitation Association • New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NYTESOL) • NY Stop Grad HST • Regina Paleau, Parent • Parent to Parent New York, Inc. • Sharon Poole, Education for Everyone Consultant • Queens Community House • Lynn Russo, Parent • Rochelle Sarikey, Director of Special Education • SCO Family of Services • Tracey Shannon, Parent • Bruce A. Shields, PhD, Associate Professor of Education, Daemen College • Sinergia Metropolitan Parent Center • Starbridge • United We Stand • Christian Villenas, PhD • Marcia Vogel, Parent/Advocate • YOUTH POWER!