



LOWER HUDSON EDUCATION COALITION
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2022 Advocacy Agenda Board of Regents/NYSED

Since 1976, the Lower Hudson Education Coalition (LHEC) has been a leading regional public education advocacy voice and resource for the 77 public school districts in Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland, and Westchester counties. Our districts educate over 239,000 students and encompass more than 1.7 million community members.

Ongoing Accommodations for COVID-19 Pandemic: *Continue to allow for the suspension of Regents examinations as a graduation requirement through the 2021-2022 academic year.*

Options for Graduation: *The current review of graduation requirements in NYS should focus on ensuring multiple pathways to graduation that maintain the high standards that a Regents diploma has been known for.*

- Permit multiple pathways to graduation.
- Add performance-based assessments to traditional Regents exams.
- Ensure that special education students have a viable pathway to a recognized high school diploma.

Flexibility in Teacher Hiring: *There are longstanding teacher shortages in certain geographic and subject areas. As teacher retirements have increased due to the pandemic, school districts have had difficulty hiring a qualified, diverse teaching force, especially with certification in certain subject areas.*

- Create more flexible and less restrictive NYS certification requirements for experienced teachers from other states and private schools.
- Allow school districts flexibility to utilize highly qualified educators in roles outside of their certification.
- Revise secondary special education teacher certification requirements to align with current classroom needs.
- Facilitate increased diversity in teaching staff by allowing out-of-state colleges/universities (including HBCU's) to qualify as sources of NYS certified teachers.
- Reduce financial burden to teacher candidates, including deferral of fees, until they begin working in schools.
- Ensure dedicated SED staff are available to assist candidates and school districts through the certification and hiring processes.
- Support waiving income cap for retired teachers.

Reduce burden of APPR: *Standardized state testing data has not been demonstrated as a valid source of information on teacher quality. Local administrators are capable of assessing teaching quality in the classroom.*

- Eliminate the use of standardized test scores in teacher evaluations.
- Permit school districts to use locally developed assessments for teacher effectiveness.

Certifying Substantial Equivalency: *Many local school districts do not have the resources to effectively evaluate and monitor the substantial equivalency of instruction in the parochial and private schools in their geographic area. Good working relationships between public and non-public schools will suffer. Parents of non-public students are also taxpayers and voters for their local public school and should not be placed in the midst of a potentially adversarial relationship between schools.*

- Require the state to determine substantial equivalency for private and parochial schools.
- Ensure local school districts are not expected to devote time and resources to evaluate non-public district curricula and monitor and assist parochial and private schools in reaching substantial equivalency.