



LOWER HUDSON EDUCATION COALITION
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2024 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 230 thousand students and encompass more than 1.7 million community members.

Flexibility in Teacher Hiring: *Teacher shortages have been evident in certain geographic and subject areas for a while, including career and technical education. 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. While we appreciate movement in certification issues from NYSED in the past few years, we consider the issue of hiring and retention of teachers to a high priority for school districts in both the short and long term.*

- Institute a national recruitment campaign, involving **reciprocity** with other states, that allows for recognition of teaching experience in private, parochial and public schools throughout the nation.
- Support **superintendent determination** of teacher quality. Remove student teaching requirement for experienced teachers with a minimum of three years in the classroom.
- Allow school districts flexibility to utilize highly qualified educators in roles **outside of their certification**.
- Allow teachers with **special education certification** to serve in integrated co-teaching assignments from preK – 12.
- Allow **out-of-state colleges/universities** (including HBCU's) to qualify as sources of NYS certified teachers.
- **Reduce the financial burden** to teacher candidates, including deferral of fees until candidates begin working.
- Ensure **dedicated SED staff** are available to assist candidates and school districts through the process.
- Support **waiving income cap** for retired teachers.
- Allow special dispensation for **spouses of serving military** to receive expedited reciprocity for teaching licenses from other states.

Options for Graduation: *The continuing 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.*

- Ensure a prompt review of the recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures and timely plans for implementation.

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.*

- Require private and parochial schools to register with NYSED prior to being allowed to operate.
- Acknowledge the definition of LSA within the regulation permitting BOCES to certify substantial equivalency when BOCES has undertaken the pathway 7 review.

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 measures of teacher effectiveness.

Serving School Districts: *NYSED's focus on improving customer service to local school districts has been noted and appreciated. Additional assistance would permit district building projects to get underway promptly and help students who wish to get on a pathway to college.*

- Reinstating the ability of local school districts to use third party architects and construction professionals to review and approve capital building projects.
- Ensure BOCES provides a CoSer for community college or dual enrollment tuition to support students who wish to start on a college pathway.