



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Monica R. Martinez

## Statement from Sen. Monica R. Martinez on Proposed Regionalization Plan by the NYS Department of Education

MONICA R. MARTINEZ November 25, 2024

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The recent announcement by the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) regarding a proposed plan to regionalize some public school services has created significant concern and confusion, particularly among Long Island parents, educators, and community leaders. As a former educator and school administrator, I understand the intent to address disparities and expand opportunities for all students but I must also express my deep

disappointment in the way this proposal has been rolled out.

NYSED and its governing body, the Board of Regents, as an independent body, bear the responsibility to engage with and educate all stakeholders before introducing a proposal of this magnitude. Unfortunately, the lack of proper outreach and transparency has led to unnecessary fear and the spread of misinformation. Some groups have seized on these gaps in communication to create alarm, leaving parents and school districts worried about potential threats to their local autonomy—a cornerstone of our suburban communities.

I call on NYSED to clarify their policy and provide concrete details about how this initiative will achieve cost savings and expand opportunities without undermining the independence of local school districts. Local control is a critical aspect of Long Island's high-performing schools and a defining feature of our suburban way of life. It must not be jeopardized.

NYSED must also address the legitimate questions raised by school districts and parents:

- How will this plan ensure that advanced programs and unique local initiatives remain protected?
- What safeguards will be in place to guarantee that high-performing districts do not lose resources in the name of regionalization?
- How will the proposal balance the need for equity with the preservation of local decision-making?

These are reasonable questions that demand clear, specific answers. Until then, I share the concerns of many in our community that the current proposal leaves too much open to interpretation.

Finally, I urge the NYSED to step back, listen, and engage in a meaningful dialogue with stakeholders before moving forward. A top-down approach to education policy only serves to erode trust. Long Islanders deserve a clear, thoughtful plan—not one mired in confusion and fear.

I stand ready to work with my colleagues in the Legislature, the Board of Regents, NYSED, and our communities to ensure that any efforts to improve our education system are done collaboratively, transparently, and with respect for the values and priorities of local school districts.