



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Senate Republicans Blast Exorbitant Taxpayer-Funded Salary Increase for NYS Education Commissioner

ROBERT G. ORTT January 31, 2025

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FAILING SCHOOLS, FAT PAYCHECKS

Student Proficiency Rates:

Math – 52%

English – 46%

Science – 35%



BIG PAY for
BIG FAILURE



Board of Regents Called Out for Approving \$155,000 Pay Hike

Albany, NY - Today, members of the Senate Republican Conference blasted Albany bureaucrats for their unilateral approval of a ridiculously high salary increase for New York State Education Department Commissioner Betty Rosa. In a [letter](#) to the Board of Regents, Senate Republicans demanded justification for their decision to pay Ms. Rosa an additional \$155,000, increasing her total taxpayer-funded salary to a whopping \$489,000.

“What has Commissioner Rosa done to warrant this pay increase? Taxpayers are now on the hook for her salary of nearly a half million dollars per year, on top of her yearly state pension of \$120,000. How can a public servant make so much money with so little to show for it? The New York State Education Department has been failing students and their parents since the pandemic. The data shows our students’ reading and math test scores are declining, trailing half the states in the country including our neighbors, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The numbers don’t justify a raise. The Board of Regents is rewarding failure,” **said Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt.**

In a [January 2025 report entitled “Highest Costs, Middling Marks,”](#) the nonpartisan, nonprofit Citizens’ Budget Commission (CBC) reported that despite spending more per student in elementary and secondary school than any state in the country and double the national average, test scores show that too many New York students do not read, write, or do math at a grade level. The study provides data indicating that student performance in this state is “middle-of-the-pack nationally and lower than neighboring states that spend less.” Calling these results middling, disappointing, and less than what New Yorkers deserve, the study calls for the state to improve oversight, technical assistance and accountability in our schools rather than simply throwing more public money at them.

News of Betty Rosa’s \$155,000 pay hike comes amidst revelations that in addition to her full-time salary, she is collecting a state pension to the tune of \$120,000 per year, bringing her total known governmental compensation to well over \$600,000 annually.

“New York State Democrats have broken our state education system. Our runaway spending leads the nation. We don’t have much to show for it. Half our students score below grade level on state exams, and state bureaucrats have failed to chart a path forward to address pandemic learning loss and get our kids back on track. Most leaders who spend record amounts of money and make things worse get fired. Betty Rosa got a \$155,000 pay raise. This is just another example of why we need more Republicans in Albany to bring checks and balances and common sense to the Capitol,” **stated Senator Jake Ashby.**

“When somebody fails to do their job, only in Albany do they get a raise for it. The hard-earned taxpayer dollars stuffing Commissioner Rosa’s pockets should instead be spent to improve programs that benefit all students,” **stated Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick.**

“It’s outrageous and utterly tone deaf that the Board of Regents pushed through a whopping \$155,000 pay raise for the state Education Commissioner in the midst of the worst inflation and affordability crisis we’ve seen in over four decades. With this kind of unchecked and out-of-control taxpayer-funded spending spree, it’s no wonder more and more New Yorkers are finding our beautiful state to be an unaffordable place to live and work,” **stated Senator Jim Tedisco, Ranking Member of the Senate Education Committee.**

The Senate Republican Conference has proposed a broad range of legislative proposals that will improve education, rein in reckless spending, promote affordability, and improve accountability to taxpayers. Over the next several weeks, the Republican Conference will continue to announce solutions intended to provide enhanced oversight over Department and Agency promotions and compensation.

A copy of the letter is attached.