



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Senator Bonacic Statement on Education Reforms in 2015-16 State Budget

JOHN J. BONACIC April 7, 2015

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Governor Cuomo stated emphatically that if the legislature did not include education reforms in the budget, he would not sign it and withhold any increase in state aid. Further, the Governor tied education reform, including counting student test scores as 50% of a teacher's evaluation, to the distribution of increased school aid.

We were able to prevent the governor from tying school aid to 50% testing and 50% classroom observation, for teacher evaluation (APPR). Instead, any evaluations must be reviewed by SED, who will develop a prototype. Additionally, Governor Cuomo wanted the observation section completed by an individual from outside the school district. We were able to allow the observations to be conducted by a principal or trained administrator and an impartial evaluator who can be from **within the district**.

Stakeholders, who are the best education minds in the state, can weigh in with SED to come up with a plan that treats teachers fairly, and promotes excellence in education for our students. We secured a \$1.4 billion increase in state aid for our schools, of which \$603 million

will go to reduce GEA. Reducing GEA has been the top priority of the schools in my district. In addition, we included \$14 million for teachers centers.

If the Legislature did not pass an agreed upon budget by April 1<sup>st</sup>, this would force the Legislature to enact his original proposals, or shut down state government. This was not about a late budget, but rather a full scale government shutdown.