



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Advances Key Education Reforms

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ONEONTA, 05/07/15 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I- Oneonta) today announced that he is co-sponsoring legislation ([S.5124](#)) that will make major changes in New York State education policy.

“After rejecting many of the governor’s education proposals, I secured modifications in the state budget that will reduce standardized testing and test preparation, and require education professionals to revise the teacher evaluation system,” said Senator Seward. **“Changing the governor’s bad proposal was just a first step. I know more reforms are needed to make certain our children are truly receiving a quality education and teacher evaluations are fair - this legislation will help reach that goal.”**

[Senate bill 5124](#) is comprised of a number of reforms including:

- Extension of comment period on state education department (NYSED) regulations so more teachers and school boards can participate;
- Adjusts the deadline to approve modifications to the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) from November 15 to December 15;
- Requires NYSED to release test questions and answers (ELA-math 3-8) by June 1 of each year;
- Ensures teacher's growth score within APPR will account for certain factors, such as - students with disabilities, poverty, academic history;
- Creation of a content review committee to make certain that exams are age appropriate and within grade-level expectations;
- Requires NYSED to review, with education stakeholders, the effectiveness and appropriateness of Common Core standards.

Along with the legislation, Senator Seward will also advance a senate resolution calling on the federal government to revise the "No Child Left Behind" criteria and ensure local schools with high testing opt-out rates are not penalized.

"Many parents decided not to have their children take standardized tests this spring and federal funds tied to these testing numbers should not be in jeopardy. I am calling on our federal representatives to back up our parents on this issue, and to reduce the number of required standardized tests," Seward added.

The new legislation, coupled with substantial modifications made to the governor's original budget proposal, will help fortify local control of schools and provide school districts with the resources needed to meet student needs.

"The state budget increased school aid by \$1.4 billion and greatly reduced the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA), two steps that will help schools with their balance sheet. Now, by looking at additional reforms, we will be able to make sure that classroom needs are being met and students and teachers are able to excel - which is the ultimate goal we all share," Seward concluded.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Education Committee. Companion legislation has been introduced in the state assembly by Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan.