



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery and Colleagues Fight for NYC Transfer High Schools

Senator Montgomery

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Senator Montgomery attended the most recent Board of Regents meeting to present this letter signed by herself and over 20 of her colleagues in the Senate and Assembly, asking the State Education Department to reconsider a proposal that would have designated almost every transfer high school in NYC as a failing school by requiring a 6-year, 67% graduation rate. This requirement is intended to meet federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) regulations but would ultimately punish schools that serve some of our most vulnerable youth. The Senator and her colleagues requested that the proposal include an alternative method of accountability for transfer schools that takes into account the high need nature of their student population.

We believe that the State's proposed plan will greatly limit the ability of transfer schools to carry out their mission of supporting NYC's most vulnerable students.

Labeling our transfer schools as failing because they do not meet the 67% standard will do nothing but discourage educators from developing innovative ways to address the complex needs of our students.

It will reinforce every message our students have received that they are "not good enough," "not smart enough," and that they "should just drop out."

Transfer schools serve youth that are over-age and under-credited, most of whom attended other high schools for several years. The very nature of their student population makes this requirement all but impossible for them to meet in spite of their many successes. These schools provide instruction that is rigorous but specialized, career development and college preparation and often provide comprehensive social services that address some of the underlying challenges faced by their students. They show those who may have fallen off track that they can succeed and go on to do great things and every effort should be made to support schools that do this vital work.

To read Senator Montgomery's letter, download the attached PDF.