



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

Legislature Elects Two New Members and Reelects Two Members to Board of Regents

TOBY ANN STAVISKY March 3, 2021

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Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, Senate and Assembly Education Committee Chairs Shelley B. Mayer and Michael Benedetto, and Senate and Assembly Higher Education Committee Chairs **Toby Ann Stavisky** and Deborah J. Glick today announced the Legislature's election of Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer and Ruth B. Turner, and the re-election of Elizabeth S. Hakanson and Dr. Luis O. Reyes to the New York State

Board of Regents.

The Board of Regents is composed of 17 members elected by the Legislature for five year terms. One member is elected from each of the state's 13 judicial districts and four members serve at-large.

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins said, "Congratulations to Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer and Ruth B. Turner on their elections to the New York State Board of Regents. I'm also pleased that Elizabeth S. Hakanson and Dr. Luis O. Reyes will be continuing their service. The Board of Regents continues to grow in diversity and experiences that will allow for strong leadership and help ensure all of New York's children receive the education they deserve. COVID-19 has placed a great hardship on students, teachers, and parents alike, and I am confident that this board can lead us forward."

"It is critical that the Board of Regents is made up of skilled and experienced individuals that will put New York students first," said **Speaker Heastie**. "The regents elected today have a proven track record of leadership, serving diverse student populations throughout New York. I am confident that the new and returning regents will uphold our mission of excellence and accessibility in our education system, ensuring New York students have the opportunities they need to be successful."

Senator Mayer said, "The Board of Regents serves a critical role spearheading education policy within the state. It is essential that we elect thoughtful and dynamic leaders who are committed to innovation and to ensuring a quality education for every student. Congratulations on their re-election to the Board of Regents to Elizabeth S. Hakanson and Dr. Luis O. Reyes, and on their election to Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer and Ruth B. Turner. I look forward to continuing my work with the Board of Regents on behalf of students, parents, teachers, and school districts throughout the state."

“Today’s regents election is a necessary step to ensuring that all New York students have access to a quality education and the tools to succeed. I want to congratulate Elizabeth S. Hakanson and Dr. Luis O. Reyes on their reelection and Ruth B. Turner on her election. I want to give a special congratulations to Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer on her election representing the Bronx. Her career and leadership in education will be an asset to the board and I look forward to working with her,” said **Assemblymember Benedetto**.

Senator Stavisky said, “The Board of Regents goes back to the founding of New York. It is charged with setting educational policy and the Legislature elects the regents. I congratulate the two incumbents, Dr. Reyes and Ms. Hakanson, on their reelection. The two new members are outstanding individuals who provide experience in education as well as diversity. I know Dr. Ferrer will bring a wealth of experience. Ms. Turner represents a new perspective and brings unique experiences to the board. They will be following in the footsteps of former Regents Alexander Hamilton and John Jay and I am delighted with their election.”

“The election of two new and two returning regents today reaffirms New York’s commitment to education and improving our education system,” said **Assemblymember Glick**. “The regents elected today embody a dedication to leadership in academic excellence and the experience necessary to serve all New York students.”

Elizabeth S. Hakanson (5th Judicial District) has over 32 years of teaching experience with progressive growth, incorporating learners from Early Head Start to adult. She has been identified twice as a Fullbright scholar, and twice as an National Institute of Humanities grantee. She has excellent mediation and relationship skills, demonstrating the ability to inspire individuals to outperform expectations. Using strategic models and diverse curricula she has a proven record of designing, implementing and enhancing multicultural education. Hakanson was first elected to the Board of Regents in 2016.

Ruth B. Turner (7th Judicial District) has worked in large urban school systems for over 18 years. She has served in the Rochester City School District as a school social worker, executive director of Student Support Services, and most recently as chief of Student Support Services and Social Emotional Learning. In her career she has been responsible for recommending, developing and implementing policies, procedures and practices which foster and promote student learning and engagement; serving as a lead in evidence-based strategies to support a coordinated and effective school climate, classroom management, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, and behavioral interventions process schools as part of a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support; and leading training in restorative practice, implicit bias and sexual abuse.

Dr. Aramina Vega Ferrer (12th Judicial District) taught in elementary and secondary education for over 30 years, and developed and implemented innovative instructional programs for culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. She then taught at a number of colleges and universities throughout New York City before becoming an associate professor and chair of the Department of Literacy and Multilingual Studies at Mercy College School of Education. Dr. Vega Ferrer also served as founding director of the School of Education Bronx Parent Center, an initiative working with Bronx families and educators to increase student achievement in pre-K through 12th grade and ensure college access.

Dr. Luis O. Reyes (At-Large) has been an educator for more than 48 years, beginning as a Spanish teacher. He administered a federal peer-counseling project for Aspira of America, Inc., that trained and engaged Latino and Haitian high school students throughout the country, led Aspira of New York, Inc.'s Leadership Development Program, and founded the Aspira Office of Research and Advocacy (AORA). He also represented Aspira in various public education coalitions, advocating on behalf of Latino and other immigrant students and children of color. Dr. Reyes was appointed as a member of the New York City Board of

Education in 1990 serving two terms from 1990 to 1998, and represented the board on the New York State School Boards Association and the Conference of Big Five School Districts. He has taught at several colleges and universities throughout New York State and published works on the legal right for native Spanish speakers to receive bilingual education instruction. Dr. Reyes was first elected to the Board of Regents in 2016.

The Board of Regents was established in 1784 and is the oldest continuous state education entity in the United States. Regents are responsible for the general oversight of all educational activities within the state, presiding over The University of the State of New York and the State Education Department.