



State Senator Velmanette Montgomery

25th New York Senatorial District

Ranking Democratic Conference Member, Children & Families

Proposals Advanced to Reform New York's Education System

Legislation Will Give Students Competitive Edge, Make Process More Transparent & Accountable

by

NYS Senator Velmanette Montgomery, 25th Senate District

School administrators, teachers and students alike deserve our praise for working hard to meet rigorous educational benchmarks in the face of shrinking state and local resources. Their jobs are not easy, and in to persevere, they need enhanced support from the Governor, legislators and education leaders.

I am doing my part, with the aid of my Senate Democratic colleagues, to make the education process more transparent and accountable, and to give students greater opportunities for academic success.

During the 2013 Legislative Session, I introduced legislation that responds to concerns raised by **parents of New York City student, teachers, and other education advocates to reform the City's education system**. Together, my legislation allows for greater parental input in school governance, as well as transparency and accountability.

School Governance Reform

Senate Bill 1406/Assembly Bill 792 seeks to restore a Democratic system of checks and balances by changing the composition of the Board of Education, ending mayoral control of the public school system, and giving parents greater involvement in education policy creation and decision making. The legislation returns to the New York City Board of Education appointment authority for the City School District Chancellor. It also allows parents and educators to be Board members, and disburses appointing authority for Board members among borough presidents, city council members, and the mayor. (*Montgomery/Weprin.*)

Bringing Regents' Meetings to NYC

Senate Bill 1411/Assembly Bill 5313 would require the New York State Board of Regents to hold at least two meetings a year in NYC. Currently, all regular Regents meetings are held in Albany. Enactment of this bill would allow parents direct access to policy changes by permitting public input, which is not the current practice, thus allowing for more input into decisions made by the New York State Board of Regents, the governing body for the state education system. (*Montgomery/Weprin.*)

No More Waivers

Lastly, I introduced legislation that would **prohibit waivers for nominees to the office of Chancellor of the NYC school district (S.1408)**. This legislation would ensure that only qualified professionals in the education field are appointed to the position of Chancellor. Under current law, these qualifications can be waived, resulting in disastrous consequences for school children when major education-related decisions are made by unqualified individuals. By prohibiting waivers and thus removing mayoral control over the selection of the chancellor, parents can be assured that the leader of NYC schools is truly qualified to work in the education system. (*Montgomery.*)

Early College High School

Recognizing the importance of achieving a college education, I am also working to expand student participation in the innovative **Early College High School Program**. I am a co-sponsor of **Senate Bill 4008**, which provides funding for the Program through the *NYS Tuition Assistance Program* (TAP). Early College High Schools provide students often under-represented in higher education with access to college-level courses in high school. This initiative blends high school and college in a rigorous yet supportive program, offering students the opportunity to simultaneously pursue a high school diploma and earn up to two years of college credits. (*Flanagan, Montgomery.*)

All of these measures combined are an important step toward needed reform that will result in greater access to a quality education in New York State. Additionally, these proposals will allow for transparency and accountability when it comes to decisions made at the state level that impact all stakeholders in the education system, including students, parents, and teachers. Such changes are critical and necessary for an open, responsible and effective education delivery system that will benefit the children of NYC.

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Committees: Children & Families (Ranking Member,) Crime Victims, Crime & Correction,
Agriculture, Education, Finance, Health, Rules
District Office: 30 Third Avenue, Room 207, Brooklyn, NY 11217
Tel (718) 643-6140, Fax (718) 237-4137
Albany Office: Legislative Office Building, Room 903, Albany, NY 12247
Tel (518) 455-3451, Fax (518) 426-6854
Website: www.nyssenate25.com
Email: montgome@nysenate.gov

