



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

## Senate Education Chair, Suzi Oppenheimer, Hails New York Educators and Advocates for Race to the Top Victory

SUZI OPPENHEIMER August 25, 2010

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Photo Caption: Senator Oppenheimer listens to Mayor Michael Bloomberg at press conference announcing New York's winning of \$700 million in Race to the Top funding. From L to R: Senator John Sampson, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Michael Mulgrew, Chancellor Merryl Tisch, Christine Quinn, Speaker of the NYC Counsel, Senator Suzi Oppenheimer

*Oppenheimer sponsored education reforms are key to winning \$700 million in federal grant money*

New York State was today named a winner in the federal government's Race to the Top competition, which will bring up to \$700 million in federal funds for education innovation in the state. In announcing the recipients of Race to the Top funds, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan hailed New York for showing "a tremendous amount of leadership and a bold commitment to education reform."

Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck), who chairs the Senate Education Committee, sponsored the landmark reforms that paved the way for today's victory. These reforms demonstrate New York's commitment to take a hard look at what is working and what needs improvement in our educational practices. Among the reforms are rigorous new evaluation standards for teachers and principals, which streamline the hearing process for removing ineffective educators, a new data system for tracking student performance from pre-k through post secondary education, and new rules for the financial oversight and expansion of charter schools.

"I was confident that if we all came together, we could transform our state's educational policies to enrich the learning experience for all students, while bolstering our application for this extremely competitive grant program," said Senator Oppenheimer. "Achieving consensus on the necessary reforms was not easy," acknowledged the Senator, who worked closely with the Education Commissioner, David Steiner, Chancellor Meryll Tisch and the Board of Regents to forge common ground between teachers unions, charter school advocates and other key stakeholders. "Ultimately, these parties deserve our thanks for putting aside deeply entrenched differences for the benefit of New York's students.

Education Commissioner David Steiner recognized the Senator for championing the legislation through the state senate. "I want to take this opportunity to tell you, on behalf of the Board of Regents and the Department, how much we appreciate your leadership and support for New York's application – and particularly for our Race to the Top legislation. The reforms, of which you were an integral part, will make a real difference for the next generation of school children in this state.

New York was one of nine states and the District of Columbia to win in the second round of the Race to the Top competition. The other states were Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio and Rhode Island.