



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Offer Your Opinion on Diplomas for Disabled

PATTY RITCHIE January 12, 2012

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Tell Regents How To Keep Kids in School

State Senator Patty Ritchie is urging parents, educators and special education advocates to weigh in as the New York State Regents consider options to provide safety net diplomas for students with disabilities. "It is critical that New York State's Board of Regents look at all options as they consider how to keep students with disabilities in high school," Senator Ritchie said. "A lot of people were upset when the Regents abolished the local diploma program. If the Regents abolish the Individualized Education Program (IEP) diploma, some special education advocates worry that students will be more likely to drop out if they lose hope that they can obtain a diploma."

The local diploma program has been phased out for students who entered grade nine in September 2011. On January 9, 2012, the Regents approved replacing the IEP diploma with a Skills and Achievement Commencement Certificate, effective February 2012 for the 2013-2014 school year.

Students with disabilities will still have the option of obtaining a local diploma if they obtain a score of 55 or better on one or more Regents exams.

"If we are going to leave no child behind, we need to make sure we develop realistic proposals that address the unique needs of all students," Senator Ritchie said. "While the Board of Regents have made a decision, the P-12 Committee understands the need to look for additional alternatives."

To comment on the Regents proposal, contact: Tony Lofrumento, Office of the Board of Regents, 89 Washington Ave., Albany, NY 12234. E-mail: RegentsOffice@mail.nysed.gov

A copy of the Regents proposal is attached.