



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Once Again, Money for Education is Taken by the Bureaucracy

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What You Should Know

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You should know that an article written by Aaron Short titled "DOE's race to 'divert' fed \$\$ from students" appeared on page 2 of the July 5, 2014 edition of the New York Post. The article reported: "Less than a quarter of the \$107 million that the school system received in federal Race to The Top funds last year was sent directly to school principals."

You should know that Race to the Top's mission is to "promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access." Race to the Top was created by the federal government to reward states that compete and write proposals showing how they will improve education. It's the successor to another high-minded education subsidy, No Child Left Behind.

According to the New York Post, \$83 million dollars in federal money that was sent to New York State through the Race to the Top has been taken by bureaucrats in the New York City Department of Education's central office to spend every which way they can, and who are once again, ignoring the needs of our children.

You should also know that when the New York State Senate is in Session, well-intended unions bring busloads of Black and Hispanic students to Albany on Lobby Days to fight for more educational resources. They make appointments with our offices to welcome students and use Black and Hispanic students to lobby us. The students inform us how important it is for the Budget to allocate more and more education money for poor and needy districts. I have seen the hallways of the Legislative Office Building filled with Black and Hispanic students - all being used to fight for more educational resources.

The impression that is given is that students are fighting for what they need, and when funds are allocated, those goals are all met, and those additional resources will fulfill these needs. The reality is that when the money is allocated, the Department of Education bureaucrats claim it. There are too many consultants, too many contracts, too many administrators, and too many fringe benefits. There are too many people who are not in the classrooms - never in the classrooms - taking money away from the students and teachers who are in the classroom.

You should know that every year in both the Senate and the Assembly, we fight to put more money into New York State's Budget, even though the school districts that serve our economically disadvantaged students are getting worse and worse. The schools that educate underprivileged students do need more resources, but these same students who go to Albany to lobby and believe their efforts will be rewarded, go back to their schools, and year after year see no change. They don't get to see that the additional money that is allocated in the Budget ever makes a difference in their classrooms. It goes to the bureaucrats.

I remember when Rudolph Guiliani was the Mayor and appointed Herman Badillo to serve as Special Counsel for the Fiscal Oversight of Education. Back then, the New York City Board of Education's books were so complicated that Herman Badillo was unable to find out how the bureaucrats spent the money. Since then, it hasn't gotten any better. This disgrace and shame is still going on.

It is about time for New York's elected officials, especially my Black and Hispanic colleagues, to start paying attention to what happens to the money we fight so hard to get for education and for our communities. The bureaucrats from the central offices of the New York City Department of Education who benefit from the money that comes to New York are feeding like vultures off of the pain and suffering of our community. This must end.

I am calling on my colleagues who serve in New York's Congressional delegation to find out why \$83 million dollars in federal funds never made it to the classrooms.

I am also calling on Governor Andrew Cuomo and my colleagues in the New York State legislature to investigate how these resources are being taken by bureaucrats and why these resources are not ending up in the actual classrooms.

My dear reader, if we were to add up all of the money and resources that have been thrown at education for New York's underprivileged communities - from regular State and City Budget appropriations, to whatever they get from the New York State Lottery, to this extra infusion of federal Race to the Top dollars - our children should all be scholars. Instead, the bureaucrats take money that belongs in needy districts, and our students struggle to graduate with bare literacy. This is a vicious cycle, and every year it gets worse.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is obvious that the bureaucrats in the New York City Department of Education's central office will never care for our children - especially our Black and Hispanic

children. If we really want to improve education and advance our community, we need to be vigilant and follow the dollar, and stop letting bureaucrats siphon off money that is supposed to go for our children's education.

This is Senator Rev. Rubén Díaz, and this is what you should know.