



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

NYS Education Department Revises Transfer High School Proposal

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY September 5, 2017

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I recently attended the Board of Regents meeting to present a letter signed by myself and over 20 members of the State Senate and Assembly, asking the State Education Department (NYSED) to reconsider a proposal that would have designated almost every transfer high school in New York City as failing by requiring a 6-year, 67% graduation rate.

Labeling our transfer schools as failing because they do not meet the 67% standard would have done nothing but discourage educators from developing innovative ways to address the complex needs of our students. It would have reinforced every message our students have received that they are “not good enough,” “not smart enough,” and that they “should just drop out.” These schools provide students individualized and rigorous instructional settings, robust student support services, career and post-secondary development, and more. In order to continue supporting the work of our transfer high schools, we requested that NYSED and the Board of Regents consider transfer schools in a special category that recognizes the high need nature of these students while at the same time requiring vigorous accountability for academic standards.

I am happy to report that the Board of Regents and New York State Education Department (NYSED) were receptive to our request. Though they could not provide an exemption to the

graduation rate requirement, they did release a revised plan that addressed some of our concerns. Under the updated plan, transfer high schools would not be automatically placed into receivership for being unable to meet new standards.

Instead, NYSED will partner with districts to determine the most appropriate interventions for improvement. Furthermore, the NYC Department of Education will be highly engaged and has been asked to develop appropriate metrics for measuring performance at transfer high schools.

Thank you to the teachers, parents and advocates who are working every single day on behalf of our children. We have much more work to do and I will continue to work with my colleagues, NYSED, DOE, advocates and all other stakeholders to ensure the viability of our transfer high schools and make sure our children continue to be supported in their academic endeavors.

Please see the attachment to read the entire letter and to see all proposed revisions, visit:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/essa/documents/changes-made-to-ny-essa-plan-july-2017.pdf>