



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

Senate Education Committee Advances Bill to Authorize Special Act Schools and Private Special Education Schools to Establish Reserve Funds

SHELLEY B. MAYER March 2, 2021

| ISSUE: **SPECIAL ACT SCHOOLS, SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL, PRIVATE SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS**



**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ADVANCES BILL TO AUTHORIZE SPECIAL
ACT SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE SPECIAL
EDUCATION SCHOOLS TO ESTABLISH
RESERVE FUNDS**

On Tuesday, March 2nd, the Senate Education Committee voted to unanimously advance Senator Shelley Mayer's bill, **S.572**, to allow the governing boards of special act schools and private special education schools to establish reserve funds. **S.572** limits the amount of funds that may be retained annually to one percent the allowable program cost, in keeping with

fiscal management options for independent school districts.

Special act schools were created by the state to serve the state's most high-need students placed in these schools through juvenile justice programs or child welfare agencies, or for reasons concerning the student's mental health or developmental disabilities. These schools serve the state's most challenging students, yet they are funded by a stringent rate setting methodology which does not currently allow for reserve funds to meet unexpected circumstances. State approved private special education schools also serve students with specific needs that cannot be appropriately addressed in public school settings.

Senator Shelley B. Mayer, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, said "This bill extends the fiscal management tools available to independent school districts to schools which serve some of our most vulnerable students. The fiscal strain of the pandemic on states, local governments, and school districts, highlights the need for additional flexibility for school leaders to act in the best interest of their students and to meet unexpected challenges. Thank you to my colleagues on the Senate Education Committee for advancing this bill to equip education leaders with additional tools to plan, respond, and provide for the state's most vulnerable students in changing fiscal circumstances."

Other legislation advanced by the Senate Education Committee:

- **S.392, Kaminsky**: An act to amend the education law, in relation to requiring nonpublic and private elementary and secondary schools to apply to the commissioner of education for criminal history record checks on prospective employees;
- **S.1709, Gallivan**: An act to amend chapter 396 of the laws of 2012, amending the education law relating to services to out-of-state school districts by boards of cooperative

educational services, in relation to making the provisions thereof permanent;

- **S.2687, Brooks:** An act to amend the education law, in relation to authorizing leases outside the boundaries of the school district;
- **S.3184, Mayer:** An act to amend the education law, the tax law, the state finance law and the public service law, in relation to ensuring all children have access to the delivery of technology through high-quality broadband internet connectivity in support of the constitutional education obligations of the state; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof (E-LEARN);
- **S.4315, Hinchey:** An act to amend chapter 537 of the laws of 1976, relating to paid, free and reduced price breakfast for eligible pupils in certain school districts, in relation to purchases of food products from New York state farmers, growers, producers or processors;
- **S.4561, Hinchey:** An act to amend chapter 537 of the laws of 1976, relating to paid, free and reduced price breakfast for eligible pupils in certain school districts, in relation to reimbursement for certain lunch meals served during the declared COVID-19 state of emergency.

Click here to watch the March 2nd meeting of the Senate Education Committee.