



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Senator James Sanders Jr.'s Statement on New York Proposal to Force Yeshivas to Meet State Standards

JAMES SANDERS JR. September 15, 2022



State Senator James Sanders Jr. said: “While I am supportive of the efforts of the State Education Department to ensure that all children get the best education possible and I applaud its efforts to foster change at low-performing Yeshivas in our state, we should not sensationalize this story in ways that might fan the flames of anti-Semitism in our state.

With this in mind, the Department of Education should be applauded for its thinking and desire for quality education.

However, none of this will be possible without the buy-in and cooperation of parents and people of good will.

I have personally visited many of the Yeshivas in my district and found them to be very committed to both religious and secular studies. There is no reason to believe that a quality secular education must come at the expense of religious belief.

I also have personally witnessed how the Jewish focus upon Talmud study sharpens the minds of its students and I am surprised that the new regulations do not recognize the value of Talmud study in fostering critical thinking.

While I have visited most of my district's yeshivas, I have not visited all yeshivas.

Just as there are low-performing public schools, there are low-performing religious schools and therefore we must ensure that all youth receive a quality 21st century education that respects their culture and traditions.

I have found dialogue to be the best medicine to remedy many problems, and with that in mind, I urge all parties to come together and find the best answer for our children's sake.

I have always believed that constructive dialogue is the best way to elicit change.

As parents, as educators, and as government officials, our paramount interest must be the safety, well-being and education of our youth.

Creating regulations is a great first step towards change but without constructive dialogue

with the affected communities, I fear that there is little chance this will be implemented by the poorly performing Yeshivas.

If my office can be useful to either side or both sides, we stand wiling to act.”