

nysut
Committee of 100



LEGISLATIVE SNAPSHOT
ISSUES IN FOCUS

2021



ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION AGENDA

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the social and emotional well-being of our students. As we look to the future and students returning to school buildings full-time, we must ensure that we are creating safe and supportive environments. We believe that New York has a unique opportunity to reshape the experience of students while creating opportunities to diversify the teaching profession.

Teacher Diversity

ISSUES OF CONCERN

In 2018, NYSUT created the Take a Look at Teaching campaign to address the teacher shortage in our state and increase diversity in the profession. Between 2012-17, we have seen enrollment in teacher education programs decline by as much as 49%. Unfortunately, the education workforce in our state does not reflect the diversity of our student population. In New York State, 43% of the students are Hispanic/Latino or African American, while only 16% of the teacher population is Hispanic/Latino or African American. As we look to address the teacher shortage, we should take this opportunity to address the lack of diversity in the profession.

EXECUTIVE BUDGET

The executive budget provides \$18 million to the My Brother's Keeper Program. It also eliminates funding for the Teacher-Mentor and Teachers of Tomorrow programs.

LEGISLATIVE ASK

NYSUT urges the Legislature to oppose the elimination of programs such as the Teacher-Mentor Intern Program and Teachers of Tomorrow and include the following initiatives in their one-house budgets, which we believe will help to diversify the profession as well as address the teacher shortage.

Grow Your Own

As we look to diversify the educator workforce, one of the most powerful programs is the Grow your Own Model. This is a locally driven program that works to enlist new and aspiring teachers at various stages of the pipeline. These programs allow local communities to target diverse candidates who reflect the student populations they serve. We urge the Legislature to include \$1 million in new funding to provide school districts with money to support the creation of grow your own models in schools across the state.

My Brother's Keeper

A national program started under President Obama in 2014, this program was developed to focus on closing opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color. This model was enacted in New York and with state funding has implemented grant programs to foster relationships in communities to support boys and young men of color. Funding from this program supports a number of grant programs, including the Teacher Opportunity Corps II, which



seeks to increase the participation rate of historically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged individuals into the education profession. This program includes strategies for teacher retention and best practices, such as mentors for new teachers and differentiated instructional techniques. NYSUT urges the Legislature to support the \$18 million executive budget for this program.

Positive Learning Collaborative

ISSUES OF CONCERN

Programs that support social-emotional learning help to foster characteristics that contribute to student success in education and future employment. In addition, programs that focus on addressing the whole child, rather than just their behavior can decrease student suspensions, expulsions, referrals to alternative institutions and arrests in our public schools. The state should also invest resources to ensure all staff are properly trained to address students presenting disruptive behaviors in school. Models such as the United Federation of Teachers' Positive Learning Collaborative (PLC) are shown to improve overall school climate, reduce school suspensions and improve academic outcomes.

LEGISLATIVE ASK

NYSUT urges the Legislature to include \$2 million in new funding in their one-house budgets to replicate the PLC model across the state.

Implicit Bias Training

ISSUES OF CONCERN

NYSUT has begun to offer implicit bias training to all of our members and local leaders to assist them in identifying and adjusting their implicit biases. This union-led training assists in the creation of an environment where educators begin to explore, identify and examine their own implicit biases and how it impacts their behavior. It is through training and awareness, that meaningful change can occur that will help to foster an inclusive and safe space in our schools and classrooms.

LEGISLATIVE ASK

NYSUT urges the Legislature to provide \$1 million in funding in the state budget to support the expansion of union-led implicit bias training opportunities to an additional 20,000 educators across the state in the upcoming year.



nysut Legislation

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