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REDEFINING READY! NEW YORK STYLE

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Without a doubt, school districts exist to provide an outstanding education for their students. We may define “an outstanding education” differently by district, but we would all agree that in some form this means that our students are prepared for their future. So how do we know they are ready? How do we define ready? Is it time to “redefine ready?”

For many, many years, New York stood out as an example to the rest of our country regarding high standards for graduation and ways to measure that readiness and success. Regents exams were designed as exit exams to provide accountability as to the value of a New York State diploma. With all the controversy over testing and the “gates” that are in place for graduation, it’s time to rethink what metrics are used to measure what it means to be ready to move on from high school graduation to college, career, and life.

AASA, the national superintendents’ organization, examined this exact question and identified measures that are common, researched and already in place in most high schools across the country. Redefining Ready! lists well-researched identifiers of college, career, and life readiness. Based on their work, I developed a New York version that if implemented, would allow New York students to graduate with one diploma with three possible designations, depending on the level of rigor achieved in high school. For those of our most disabled students, a life-ready certificate would certify their completion of the high school experience.

History

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was signed into law by President George W. Bush. President Barack Obama then reauthorized it in 2015. This weight of testing in these pieces of legislation left educators and many communities with the feeling that our education systems were forced to emphasize testing forsaking students’ individuality and creativity. Slogans such as, “students are more than a number” became mantras of resistance. AASA embarked






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The New York State Council of School Superintendents is a professional and advocacy organization with over a century of service to school superintendents in New York State. The Council provides its more than 875 members with numerous professional development opportunities, publications and personal services, while advocating for public education and the superintendency.