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Dear Regents' Task Force Members:

THE COUNCIL believes the Regents Reform Agenda has arrived at a critical crossroads. The current level of discord witnessed across New York State is unprecedented in recent memory. Professional educators, parents, and the political community are all calling for adjustments to the Reform implementation and system.

Although many of those who are calling for adjustments have been strong supporters of the Reform goals, the apparent lack of responsiveness on the part of the Board of Regents has placed even this support at risk.

Your task force has the opportunity to begin turning the tide of negative energy into a positive force for children. It is our belief that immediate and transparent action(s) is required before the Reform is lost in the confused cacophony that presently exists.

It is imperative the Regents demonstrate through decisive task force action that practitioners, parents, and legislators are being heard. Your leadership is needed now.

Making adjustments, while not losing sight of the primary goal, is a sign of strength and courage that will ultimately provide stronger support for children and educators across New York State.

It is in this spirit that THE COUNCIL offers the following actions for your consideration:

1. **Focus immediately on a campaign to build understanding, as recommended by the Educational Conference Board.** Take a page from the State of Kentucky's public relations playbook and develop a collaborative statewide campaign. The current noise is deafening and diverting attention from the goal.
2. **Reverse/change the message.** Emphasize standards and professional development rather than testing and accountability. Invest in professional development. Professional development, done properly, will yield maximum results for our children.

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

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3. **Defer the implementation of any further new requirements or initiatives for two years to give schools the chance to effectively implement the two major initiatives that were launched a year ago – instruction fully aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and new Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) procedures.** We view this as an extremely proactive time for educators; activities could include on-going professional development and aligning curriculum, instruction, and other resources. We elaborated on this recommendation in our testimony to the Senate Education Committee (Attached, see pp. 8-9).
4. **Construct and distribute a road map which charts out the Regents Reform Agenda for future years.** Superintendents first made this request over two years ago. This will provide educators with a planning guide, reduce uncertainty, minimize surprises, avert wasted effort, promote transparency and contribute to the overall stability of the system (we also elaborated this recommendation in our Senate testimony; Attached, see p. 4 “General implementation frustrations”).
5. **Develop a precise plan for a minimum eighteen month preparation window prior to the start of any new course concluding with a Regents Exam revised to reflect new standards.** This will allow districts time for proper planning, curriculum and professional development opportunities.
6. **Disclosure of test questions.** Disclose all questions on state assessments and related results. This would allow educators to analyze their instructional programs and make the requisite adjustments. THE COUNCIL stands ready to assist in lobbying the legislature and governor for additional resources to honor this request.
7. **Resolve the *InBloom* distraction.** This issue is consuming educators across New York State and interfering with their focusing on the prime mission of implementing the Reform Agenda. The Department must satisfy the concerns being raised by parents and educators. Failure to do so could necessitate terminating involvement with *inBloom* altogether to preserve support for the remainder of the Reform Agenda.
8. **Revise APPR requirements.** Much of the additional student testing and stress over testing arises from state APPR requirements; take down the temperature by, 1) providing alternatives to the assignment of the 20 point scale associated with the local component of the APPR; up to and including the elimination of the Student learning Objective (SLO) process, 2) continue to streamline the Review Room process for simple changes.

Superintendents are an integral part of the implementation of education reforms, playing the pivotal role in translating policies enacted for the whole state into practices that can succeed in the diverse school communities they lead and serve. We have a great desire to be involved and assist with refinement and successful implementation of these reforms. We ask that you

review and seriously consider the steps suggested herein, as they have been thoughtfully developed by superintendents in the field.

The success of a generation of students relies on our joint efforts, which will only be possible through a true collaboration that has the complete buy-in of the field. In anticipation of your thoughtful consideration of these sensible changes, we stand ready and willing to partner with the Regents and the Department to move forward with wise and effective changes to the current agenda.

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