New York State Educational Conference Board

FOR RELEASE: February 1, 2016

CONTACT: John Yagielski
518-810-8382 (cell)
email: kyagiels@nycap.rr.com

ECB RECOMMENDATION: REFORM STATE'S RECEIVERSHIP LAW

ALBANY – The state's leading education organizations today unanimously recommended that New York reform its receivership law to create a more reasonable timeframe to turn-around struggling schools, and to commit additional funding to create more community schools and better conditions for teaching and learning in these schools.

The Educational Conference Board – a coalition of seven education groups – released a policy paper with recommended changes to the state's approach to 144 schools in 17 high-needs districts involved in a "race against the clock" to improve student performance. Twenty of the 144 schools have been identified as "persistently struggling" and given just one year to show "demonstrable improvement" based on a set of agreed-upon metrics.

ECB Chairman John Yagielski said the state's punitive approach is flawed, and said ECB is instead recommending a new path to success centering on helping "receivership" schools improve student achievement in a comprehensive, supported and sustainable way.

He noted that schools in any phase of state receivership must overcome challenges. Eighty-three percent of the 93,738 students attending the 144 schools are economically disadvantaged. In addition, about18 percent of students are English language learners.

"There is little evidence to suggest that takeovers and threats of punishment with the expectation of near-instant results will help these struggling schools – and their students – achieve long-lasting success," Yagielski said. "There is considerable evidence to show that, with care and modifications to current law, these schools can be transformed to better meet the needs of students."

ECB recommended that the state's strategy be revised to create a more reasonable timeframe to turn around a school before its operations are handed over to an external receive

"It is unreasonable to expect any school to implement systematic changes that support sustained learning gains almost overnight," Yagielski said. "New York's receivership law should be amended to allow at least five years for schools to show demonstrable improvement."

In addition, ECB said schools districts with schools on the receivership list should receive their full funding of Foundation Aid. The 17 districts with schools in receivership are currently losing $2.7 billion in Foundation Aid and $94.3 million through the Gap Elimination Adjustment.

more…

ECB said the state should also support the facilities and transportation activities necessary to create and run community schools, saying receivership schools must have the flexibility and funding to work with community organizations to develop robust plans to help students.

This is the link for the position paper:

http://www.newyorkecb.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/ECB-Receivership-2015-FINAL.pdf