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Statement of NYS Council of School Superintendents on Board of Regents action on teacher evaluations

ALBANY – “We commend the members of the Board of Regents for their efforts to make the best of a bad law mandating yet one more set of changes to teacher and principal evaluations. But no amount of regulatory resourcefulness can alter the fact that the State Education Department and the schools are both being called upon to implement a law that will hurt teaching and learning for our schoolchildren if it is implemented as written.

The changes in the evaluation law mandated in this year’s state budget are woefully misguided. They repeat the gross mistake of forcing districts to negotiate local plans under a threat of losing state aid. The 2013 aid penalty deadline forced districts into undesirable compromises that led to evaluation results that provoked criticism and incited this year’s legislative changes. They would also damage one part of the system that is seen by educators as a true success story – better classroom observations and related practices.

Each time the state alters its requirements for teacher evaluations, as it has nearly every year since the first evaluation law was passed in 2010, schools are disrupted and time and effort of teachers and school leaders are diverted from their true work of helping children learn. It’s worth remembering that schools were evaluating their teachers before the 2010 law was enacted.

Implementing the evaluation changes mandated in this year’s state budget will prolong and amplify the discord that has damaged teaching and learning in our schools for too long already.

We support any action that would actually spare districts from implementing new evaluation procedures for at least a year – so that the need to adopt a wiser set of evaluation changes might be realized and acted upon.”

Robert J. Reidy, Jr.
Executive Director

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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 and other school system executives in New York State. The Council provides more than 800 members with professional development opportunities, publications and personal support while advocating for public education and the superintendency.