The New York State Council of School Superintendents has the following Federal Education Priorities, and urges attention

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

We strongly support ongoing efforts to reauthorize ESEA. Complete reauthorization is the best way to fully address the areas of the legislation that need improvement.

The improvement of ESEA requires an accountability system that is transparent; uses multiple sources of evidence and a growth measure; is fair to all students; and calls for federal authority that is commensurate with federal funding. The Council supports a differentiated federal accountability system that is focused on useful interventions with strong Local Education Agency (LEA) involvement and linked to the amount of federal assistance a school is receiving.

We support the use of formative assessments to inform instruction and provide timely and instructionally useful information to teachers and principals to directly improve student achievement.

We seek passage of HR 2445, the State and Local Funding Flexibility Act.

We also endorse the Formula Fairness Campaign and support the All Children Are Equal (ACE) Act, both of which advocate for distributing all Title I dollars to LEAs based on the concentration of students in poverty.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Council and its members supports full funding of IDEA and urges Congress to meet its chronically underfunded commitment to provide 40 percent of the additional costs associated with educating children with special needs.

We seek a legislative fix that would allow LEAs to seek a direct waiver from the Department of Education to reduce their maintenance of effort for special education and related services due to “exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances.”
Budget & Appropriations

We strongly believe that federal appropriations levels should safeguard education programs and recognize education as the investment that it is.

Funding priorities must be on existing federal commitments that drive dollars to all schools, especially Title I and IDEA.

We oppose funding of new competitive grants and believe that dollars proposed to expand Race to the Top, School Improvement Grants and Investing in Innovation should instead be directed to programs that serve all schools, instead of those who have the capacity to apply.

The Council opposes absolute spending caps. An absolute spending cap overlooks the realities of ever-growing programs like Medicare and Social Security. Even if growth is somehow slowed, there is still growth, leaving an ever-smaller slice for discretionary programs (like education). The last time federal spending met the proposed spending cap levels was in 1966, before ESEA, IDEA, Medicaid and Medicare.

Other Priorities

- Reauthorize the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) and the creation of an Office of Rural Education Policy within the Department of Education.

- Support continued and proper investment in education technology, including raising the cap on E-Rate and opposing any effort to zero-fund or eliminate the Enhancing Education Technology Program.

- Superintendents are committed to providing a safe and healthy school climate where are students feel safe and able to learn. The Council supports bullying policies that provide federal funding and supports so schools can implement effective, evidence-based, school-wide bullying prevention programs. However, we opposes policies that give school districts more unfunded mandates by requiring both the collection and dissemination of numerous data points on the frequency and type of bullying and harassment that occurs in schools.

- Remove restriction on foreign students spending more than one year in a public high school.