



MEMORANDUM OF CONCERN

Pre-K Special Education Cost Shift

In relation to the 2012 – 2013 Executive Education Budget

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*The New York State Council of School Superintendents is **CONCERNED** about shifting costs for Pre-K special education to districts, and urges attention*

The Governor has recommended programmatic reforms to preschool special education, as well as a restructuring of how future costs should be shared in his budget proposal.

We support programmatic changes to revise evaluation procedures and require greater justification when a distant service provider is chosen. But we oppose requiring schools to assume a share of the growth in costs for the program. With the advent of the tax cap, any state cost shift now amounts to a state order for schools to cut some current services.

We support many of the programmatic changes to preschool special ed, including:

- providing that at least an “arm’s length relationship” exist between the evaluator selected by the parent and the provider recommended to deliver services, unless the Commissioner approves or if the child was enrolled in the program in the prior year;
- stating that unless authorized by the Commissioner upon a finding that the program offered is the only one available, the parent selected evaluator and the board recommended evaluator cannot be the same entity that delivers the service to the child;
- mandating that the committee recommending placement of a preschool child in an approved program must consider location and whether there is another approved program that’s closer to the child’s home; and
- requiring the placement committee to include in their statement why the more distant program was recommended, when another closer approved program offering comparable services is available.

*However, we **oppose** requiring school districts to share the cost in growth in the program with the State and counties. In this economic reality, with the imposition of a tax cap, depleted reserves and with previous education spending cuts or freezes, any cost shift would mean reducing necessary and vital services and programs to students.*