



ANNUAL REPORT

Accomplishments and Priorities
New York State Education Department
2024

Departments



Office of Counsel



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Finance



Public Affairs



P12 Instructional Support



P12 Operational Support



Higher Education



Adult Career and Continuing Education
Services



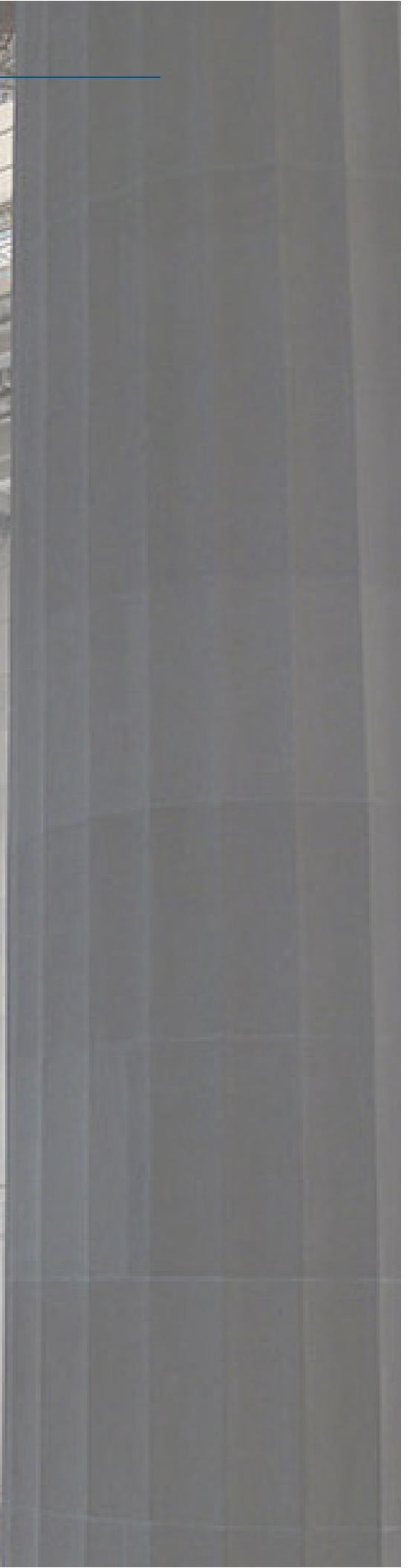
Professions



Cultural Education



Our focus is on creating an equitable educational environment where every student, irrespective of their socio-economic status or background, has access to the necessary resources and support.



Leadership

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University

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JUDITH CHIN, <i>Vice Chancellor</i> B.S., M.S. in Ed.	Little Neck
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WADE S. NORWOOD, B.A.	Rochester
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PATRICK A. MANNION, B.A., M.B.A.	Fayetteville
SEEMA RIVERA, B.A., M.S., Ph.D.	Slingerlands

Commissioner of Education and President of The University

BETTY A. ROSA, B.A., M.S. in Ed., M.S. in Ed., M.Ed., Ed.D.

Executive Deputy Commissioner

SHARON CATES-WILLIAMS, B.B.A.

Senior Deputy Commissioner

JEFFREY MATTESON, Ph.D.

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Office of Counsel

DANIEL MORTON-BENTLEY, COUNSEL AND DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS

Program Area Introduction and Summary (2023-24)

The Office of Counsel (OC) provides comprehensive legal advice and guidance to the Board of Regents, Commissioner of Education, and the State Education Department. OC also drafts and issues legal documents on behalf of the Department, including legislation, regulations, litigation, administrative appeals, freedom of information law requests, and contracts. OC is also responsible for the agency's ethics and privacy compliance. OC currently consists of 20 attorneys and 8 administrative staff.

2023-24 Accomplishments

Appeals

OC manages the approximately 150-180 administrative appeals to the Commissioner filed each year and prepares draft decisions in consultation with the Commissioner. OC also expeditiously reviews stay requests in administrative appeals (75 stay requests were reviewed last year, 21 were granted). This process requires a prompt review and a determination as to whether a party will be ordered to do or refrain an act during the pendency of appeal. Accounting for appeals that are withdrawn or settled, the Commissioner typically issues 130-150 decisions per year. The Commissioner issued 161 appeals last year and will issue about 130 this year.

In 2023-24, OC implemented new regulatory procedures for appeals to the Commissioner. The two principal changes are: (1) eliminating the \$20 filing fee; and (2) clarifying that appeals will not be dismissed for lack of a required document (the notice of petition). Both amendments will help parents and ensure that this process remains an "expeditious and simple method" for dispute resolution.

Recent regulatory changes also include electronic filing, which has saved parents and schools time and money. It has also allowed for greater access to appeal files and documents within OC. The process has encountered few practical difficulties and is working as intended.

OC continues to utilize the settlement conference procedure for appeals to the Commissioner created in 2023. Even when the procedure has not resulted in a settlement, it has produced helpful information for OC and the parties.

Significant decisions of the Commissioner issued last year include:

- Appeal of Moms for Liberty of Wayne County, 63 Ed Dept Rep, Decision No. 18,402 (<https://www.counsel.nysed.gov/Decisions/volume63/d18402>) (upholding school board's maintenance of five challenged school library books in its collection)
- Appeal of D.B., 63 Ed Dept Rep, Decision No. 18,383 (<https://www.counsel.nysed.gov/Decisions/volume63/d18383>) (articulating multifactor test to consider appropriateness of suspension, including students' age/developmental level and the extent to which schools have attempted to help students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior)
- Appeal of Rogers, 63 Ed Dept Rep, Decision No. 18,364 (<https://www.counsel.nysed.gov/Decisions/volume63/d18364>) (expunging counseling letter from teacher's file, finding that it was disciplinary in nature)

OC additionally reviews and drafts appeals concerning teacher certification (Part 83 of the Commissioner's regulations), clearance for school employees (Part 87 of the Commissioner's regulations), and Freedom of

Information Law (FOIL) appeals. OC received 4 Part 83 Appeals, over 50 Part 87 appeals, and 41 FOIL appeals last year.

Litigation

OC received, managed, and responded to approximately 65 litigation matters during 2023-24. Significant victories include successful defense of the Department's charter school tuition methodology, dismissal of all cases challenging the transfer of special education due process hearings to New York City's Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH), and dismissal of the State from class action litigation seeking compensatory education as a result of the COVID pandemic. OC also successfully defended the Commissioner's decision in the Cambridge Native American mascot appeal, lead the Office of Professions through litigation and administrative challenges stemming from fraudulent nursing schools in Florida, and developed the Department's Title IX policies and procedures in response to a complaint filed with the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

In 2023-24, SED received scores of additional internal and Division of Human Rights (DHR) complaints seeking reasonable accommodations in the form of 100% telecommuting. These complaints arose in response to the return to in-person work following COVID-19. SED continues to be wholly successful in defending the agency's position, resulting in several favorable DHR decisions.

Regulations

OC assisted in the development, review, and publication of dozens of regulations in 2023-24. Having received numerous inquiries about struggling institutions of higher education, OC primarily drafted the text of the new guidance and regulations governing mergers, partnerships and acquisitions between colleges and universities. Additionally, OC worked with program staff to rewrite outdated regulations regarding mixed competition to provide athletes of all genders equal opportunities to play and participate in extra class athletic activities.

Contracts

OC drafted, negotiated, and approved approximately eight hundred contracts in conjunction with the CAU and Chief Financial Officer. OC also approved special legislative grants and provided guidance on complex contract issues, including multi-million-dollar disputes with vendors over federal assistance monies.

Ethics

OC's Ethics Office oversees compliance with the Public Officers Law, including the review of outside activity requests and annual ethics training. In 2022-23, the Ethics Office reviewed approximately 102 outside activity requests and 105 travel requests involving third-party payment.

The Ethics Office continues to work with the Office of Human Resources Management's Training Unit to offer training to all new employees within a few weeks and yearly training thereafter.

Continuing Legal Education

OC presented Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs for attorneys throughout SED. Attorney presenters delivered seven CLE programs

during 2023-24. Topics included litigation, administrative appeals, legislation, LGBTQ+ rights, and student privacy.

Additionally, Counsel participated in a March 2024 CLE program jointly hosted by the New York State Bar Association and Albany Law School entitled "Symposium on Racism, Wealth Equity, and the Law."

Privacy

Internally, the Privacy Office:

- Convened and oversaw monthly meetings of SED's Data Governance Board;
- Assisted with the State Longitudinal Data System project;
- Negotiated and drafted 12 specialized data use/protection agreements with researchers and collaborators;
- Convened an AI Task Force and drafted Department guidance on the use of AI; and
- Reviewed and approved numerous privacy documents (Appendix R) for the Department's contracts.

Externally, the Privacy Office:

- Drafted an order of the Commissioner prohibiting facial recognition technology in schools and authorizing schools to determine whether to use other kinds of biometric identifying technology;
- Reviewed over 200 data incident reports and created a new, easier form for reporting data incidents due to human error;
- Conducted monitoring of 120 school districts' data privacy and security web pages to ensure compliance with FERPA and Education Law Section 2-d;
- Organized and hosted four meetings of the Data Privacy Advisory Committee;
- Issued four newsletters for Data Protection Officers and Superintendents;
- Collaborated with the Office of the Attorney General on an enforcement case against College Board, resulting in a fine of \$750,000;
- Issued 16 parent complaint determinations and responded to parents in another 14 filed complaints;
- Collaborated with the United States Department of Education to offer FERPA training to New York school districts and charter schools;
- Joined Access for Learning (A4L) a national consortium of SEAs, LEAs, and education technology providers to access the Student Data Privacy Consortium (SDPC). This allows New York's LEAs to use a National Data Protection Agreement when negotiating with education technology vendors;
- Conducted numerous data privacy trainings and participated in several conferences throughout New York State;
- Reviewed the text of the Parents' Bill of Rights with numerous stakeholders (ongoing); and
- Collaborated with other state agencies regarding data sharing and drafting of memoranda of understanding (including OTDA, DOH, DCFS, SUNY, and CUNY).

Customer Service

OC continues to offer quarterly summaries of all decisions of the Commissioner under Education Law § 310 for distribution to P-12 leadership. These decisions, which are precedential, expand managers' knowledge of the Education Law and assist them in carrying out their duties. OC has received positive feedback from several managers

regarding these summaries.

OC has continued to strengthen its connections with program offices in 2023-24 by inviting SED leaders to attend OC's staff meetings to introduce themselves and their program areas.

Previous Year's (2023-2024) Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

- Improve OC's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI): OC attended an internal training entitled "All Means ALL: Elevating LGBTQIA+ Identities Within NYS Schools" on May 22, 2024. We are currently scheduling a follow-up and additional programming.
- Continue to organize and digitize OC's physical/digital resources: with the assistance of an intern, OC made substantial progress in organizing and reviewing physical files from the past 20 years.
- Improve SED's customer service: OC has begun the process of consolidating all P-12 inquiries into a single location for consideration. After discussion with P-20 managers, we realized that the agency would also benefit from the centralization of standardized SED documents (e.g., nondisclosure agreements, releases, data privacy agreements). This project is ongoing.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

- Ethics Visibility: Develop a dedicated Ethics website for the Department where employees can find forms, information, and copies of relevant laws/guidance.
- Five-Year Survey: Conduct a survey for each member of OC as to where they see the office in five years. Consider which areas of personal and professional development they would like to prioritize.
- Tracking software/legal portal: OC aims to implement a new tracker and database manager for litigation, appeals and corporations work. This will include external interfaces for inquiries and electronic filing of documents.

Government Relations

JENNIFER TROWBRIDGE DIRECTOR

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Worked with the Board of Regents and Department leadership to develop the 2024 Budget & Legislative Priorities, of which, the following were successfully addressed:

2024-25 Enacted NYS Budget provided the following:

- Funding for 24 new positions requested by the Department: 11 IT staffers; 5 staffers for the Statewide Longitudinal Data System; 5 staffers in our Office Standards & Instruction (4 literacy related staffers and 1 health associate); and 3 staffers to work on zero-emission bus issues;
- \$934,000 requested to maintain support and oversight of charter schools in our Office of Charter Schools, which would replace funding from a sunset federal grant;
- \$500,000 for continued exam translations into the 8 most common languages;
- \$4 million for a peer-reviewed English language proficiency assessment for ELLs with the most significant cognitive disabilities that is consistent with federal requirements (as the NYSESLAT is insufficient for this purpose);
- \$865,000 to temporarily extend the administrative staff funded by the stimulus funding to continue required monitoring and support, as well as compilation for USDE of the fiscal reporting of LEAs through ESSER, GEER, and EANS late liquidation;
- \$3.2 million to support ITS investments and funds for software/hardware licensing and support.
- funding to support the cost of monitors in: Rochester (\$175,000), Hempstead (\$175,000), Wyandanch (\$175,000), and East Ramapo (\$225,000). The Enacted Budget also includes \$150,000 to continue the fiscal consultant in the Rochester City School District; and
- statutory changes that consolidated the three Statewide Universal Full-day Prekindergarten (SUFDPK) expansion grants into a single grant and eliminated the language that required all new grants to supplement existing state funds, which was a barrier to districts' accessing awarded state funds.

2024 NYSED Legislative Initiatives

- APPR Reform- A.9849 Benedetto/S.9054 Mayer;
- Implementation of shared pharmacy services in New York State- A.9729 McDonald/S.9186 Stavisky; and
- Allows the Office of the Professions to email registration notices to licensed professionals 4 months before the end of their registration period instead of mail them this saving NYSED around \$250,000 annually- A.7716-A Hyndman/S.6112-A Stavisky.

Other Activities

- Created impactful written testimony and related information, in conjunction with Department staff, for the Commissioner and staff to testify at the 2024 Joint Legislative Elementary & Secondary Education Hearings as well as provided answers and information related to any follow-up requests.
- Developed, in conjunction with our fiscal staff, comprehensive summary documents related to the proposed Executive Budget, One House Budget proposals, and the Enacted Budget.
- Addressed/continue to address numerous daily constituent issues and policy-related questions, on behalf of the Department, coming from legislative offices and the Governor's office to ensure the provision of helpful customer service is met.
- Provided, in conjunction with relevant program and fiscal staff, technical assistance to legislative offices on many bills impacting the Department as well as the field- this included collaborating with various education

and professional stakeholder groups on issues of mutual interest.

- Tracked a high volume of legislation introduced and moving throughout the 2024 legislative session that was of interest to the Department.

2024-2025 Priorities

Work with the Board of Regents and Department leadership to develop, streamline, and refine the 2025 Budget & Legislative Priorities process and related documents.

Enhance current advocacy methods as well as create new opportunities to successfully advance and coalition build around the 2025 Budget & Legislative Priorities.

Enhance the current process of providing technical assistance to legislative offices on the bills impacting the Department, especially in the off-session, and increase collaboration efforts with various education and professional stakeholder groups on issues of mutual interest



Finance

CHRISTINA COUGHLIN CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Chief Financial Officer's team focused on several important projects for the 2023-24 year. We focused on the development of a more effective budget request process, improved special education rate-setting, continued implementation of key programmatic initiatives and process improvements/budget centralization within the CFO group and across the agency.

2023-2024 Accomplishments Budget Request

Coordinated NYSED's budget request resulting in \$14.8 million in new state general funds in 2024-25 to support the Department's capacity to both meet statutory mandates and increase investments in IT. This includes funding for NoveNY, Summer School for the Arts, NYSELAT, and translations of the Regents exams, staff to support literacy work and the zero-emission bus transition. The request process prioritized agency needs to maximize the agency's effectiveness and customer service capacity, and the streamlined list supported more focused advocacy.

Special Education Rate-Setting

- The Rate Setting Unit has reduced the tuition rate waiver backlog from 119 waivers in 2022 to approximately 46. This is with at least 40 new waivers submitted in the last year alone. The waiver backlog had not been below 100 waivers in nearly a decade. This progress is particularly noteworthy, given the impacts of COVID on providers' fiscal stability and the surge in need for waivers. NYSED has reduced the number of providers with "missing rates" (no prospective, reconciliation, or interim rate for at least one year) from 87 last year, down to only 18 this year. This is the result of new, more proactive, and thorough processes for following up with providers who have not met reporting deadlines.
- Obtained agreement from DOB to allow approved special education providers to spend up to 35% of tuition on non-direct care costs, up from 30% in prior years. This has provided significant relief in light of providers' rising fixed costs (e.g., property/facility costs).
- For the third school year in a row, the Rate Setting Unit has issued interim tuition rates to approved special education providers by July 1, the start of the school year.
- Obtained agreement from DOB to include tuition rate growth in interim tuition rates for the last two school years, which has given providers access to much needed funding increases at the start of the school year. In prior years, DOB had only authorized us to include approved growth in prospective rates, which are issued later in the school year after planning has occurred.
- Began rate setting methodology redesign study by conducting nine regional stakeholder engagement sessions to gather formative feedback that will shape redesign efforts.
- Received an additional \$1.37 million and an extended deadline in the Enacted Budget for the tuition rate setting redesign study that will enable the Department to complete this important work.

Programmatic Initiatives

Federal Funds: Fiscally administered \$14 billion in federal education COVID response funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA Act); and the American

Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. Completed closeout of CARES ESSER and CARES GEER grants totaling \$1,028,305,992 (LEA 994 grants) and \$163,652,057 (664 LEA grants) respectively.

State Aid:

- Finalized procurement documents to begin the state aid modernization build and submitted these for Division of Budget review prior to the end of the fiscal year.
- Documented business requirements, forms, and calculations managed by State Aid to inform the vendor building the new system.
- Communicating about state aid: Undertook a major reorganization and enhancements to three areas of the state aid website—attendance, ST-3, and transportation. These changes made critical resources and guidance more available. Rewrote nearly a dozen SAMS help files to provide additional clarity, including examples, tables, and links to relevant guidance.

Process improvements/budget centralization

Budget Centralization

- Developed a consistent agency wide budget format, to improve visibility for leadership.
- Created and staffed a position to lead the centralized budget effort.
- Convened a working group on operational/budget issues that has identified issues to address to improve efficiency.
- Process Improvements:

Continued Success in MWBE Contracting

Achieved a combined total of 33.85% participation by Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) across all state funded contracts and grants in 2023-2024, exceeding NYSED's 30% participation goal. This is an increase from the total prior year 33.15% MWBE participation.

Attained a grade of "A+" on the State's semi-annual MWBE Report Card for the first half of 2022-23 and an "A+" for the second half of 2022-23 based on a score of 26 points, which is the highest possible score an agency can receive.

Improved workflow

Modernizing the Department's procurement and contracting processes by building a content management system with document management, workflow, data analysis, and reporting functionality, to replace outdated and disconnected Access databases and Excel spreadsheets currently used for tracking/reporting. Expected launch in late summer/early fall 2024. This will reduce data entry and improve reporting and analysis capacity, as well as allowing for easier collaboration between offices.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

We intend to continue to work toward the general goals we pursued for 2023-24 (Budget Request, Special Education Rate-Setting, State Aid Modernization, and Process improvements/budget centralization)

Budget Request

- Develop a long-term strategic plan that focuses on agency priorities and achieves internal budget sustainability.
- Coordinate a realistic call-letter development process that builds the organization's capacity to serve our stakeholders well.

Special Education Rate-Setting

- Reduce and maintain the tuition rate setting waiver backlog to fewer than 20 waivers.
- Increase timeliness of prospective and reconciliation tuition rates for providers.
- Successfully migrate NYSED's fiscal system, EFRT, off the Department's mainframe without impeding STAC or Rate Setting processes. This represents a significant step toward the Department's goal of eliminating the mainframe completely and will provide fiscal staff with improved ways of reporting and connecting data across systems.

- Select an expert consultant and begin the next phase of the rate setting redesign study. NYSED's subject matter experts will work closely with the consultant to analyze data, engage stakeholders through surveys, review other agencies' methodologies, and begin drafting report on the study findings.

State Aid Modernization

Onboard a high-quality vendor to enter the coding phase of the modernization process.

Process improvements/budget centralization

- Launch the Department's procurement and contracting content management system in August 2024 to improve efficiency, accuracy, transparency, and timeliness of the Department's procurement and contracting processes.
- Continue implementation and reporting work on the fiscal components of federal education COVID response funding.



Public Affairs

JP O'Hare, Director of Communications

The Office of Communications is responsible for the preparation and distribution of materials that explain, promote, and defend the programs, policies, and activities of the Board of Regents and State Education Department internally, as well as externally to the public, media, stakeholders, and other relevant audiences. Distribution methods and platforms include press releases, responses to press inquiries, the NYSED website, social media, direct email, and newsletters. As well, the Communications Office writes talking points, speeches, and opinion pieces for Commissioner and Chancellor, and provides event briefings for Commissioner's public appearances.

The office currently consists of the director of communications, one deputy director of communications, one digital content manager, two media relations specialists, one assistant in education improvement services, and one administrative assistant.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Press Releases and Statements

Drafted and distributed 76 press releases and statements to amplify Board of Regents and Department programs and initiatives.

Supported the Department's goal of increasing cooperation with other state agencies by coordinating the inclusion of quotes by Chancellor Young and Commissioner Rosa in those agencies' press releases on topics and initiatives important to NYSED.

Newsletters

Drafted and distributed 27 newsletters, including News and Notes, the family newsletter, and the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) newsletter.

Also distributed newsletters for the Office of Cultural Education and the Office of Education Policy.

Website

Worked cooperatively with program offices to migrate all of the Department's static websites to the Drupal environment.

This year, we migrated five websites from the older, static website platform to the newer Drupal platform in cooperation with the program offices to better align with our organizational objectives and stakeholders' needs. Each website migration requires a significant amount of content review. For example, the old P-12 Special Education website had over 14,000 files that included web pages, document attachments, and images that needed to be reviewed for the migration to Drupal. After the content review, the reorganized pages and files were migrated to the new platform.

This year's new Drupal websites include:

- Higher Education
- Indigenous Education
- Innovation and School Reform
- Religious and Independent School Support
- Special Education

In addition, three existing Drupal websites were fully reorganized and updated this year:

- Standards and Instruction (formerly known as Curriculum and Instruction)
- Accountability
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Our office also assisted with the launch a new Teacher and Leader Development website.

Video Productions

In addition to our traditional media efforts, the Office of Communications developed and produced the following videos to amplify the Board and Department's initiatives:

- *New York State My Brother's Keeper: It's Working Back to School Video Series*
- *Ensuring Educational Excellence and Equity: NYS Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures What is the PLAN Pilot?*
- *Elevating Student Voices as Leaders to Advance Equity and Inclusion*

Streamlined Communications on Cultural Education Programs

- Monthly press releases on NYS Library programming
- Regular press release and media advisories related to OCE Programming from the New York State Museum, NYS Library, NYS Archives and NYSSSA
- NYSM Staff Interviews with PEF Union Publication regarding NYSM Exhibits: Each One Inspired: Indigenous Art Across the Homelands and Berenice Abbott "Changing New York"
- Routinely respond to media Inquiries as well as facilitating Staff Interviews with the media.

A sampling of highlighted articles from this past year include:

NYS Museum piecing together remains of Revolutionary War soldiers recovered in Lake George;
State Museum celebrates Women's History Month;
State Museum Acquires Women's Rights Pioneers Central Park Monument Model;
Why thousands of spiders are in glass vials, moths in drawers at the New York State Museum;
New York State Museum's carousel returns after closing for repairs;
New York State Museum carousel returns after three-year absence;
Here are your picks for the Best of the Capital Region - Best Museum - Times Union;
State museum prepares for \$14 million renovation;
State museum works to return Native American artifacts and remains;
On Exhibit: 'Captured' gives a sweeping view of NYS history;
Capital Region students compete in History Day at NYS Museum;
He foiled Benedict Arnold. His Medal is Now Out from Under the Bed.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Social Media

Continued growth of audience on the Department's social media channels and expanded use of these channels to engage stakeholders and inform the public on Board and Department priorities, actions, and initiatives. Using information from the Office's database of press inquiries, staff have begun to cross-reference popular topics to inform content creation and distribution.

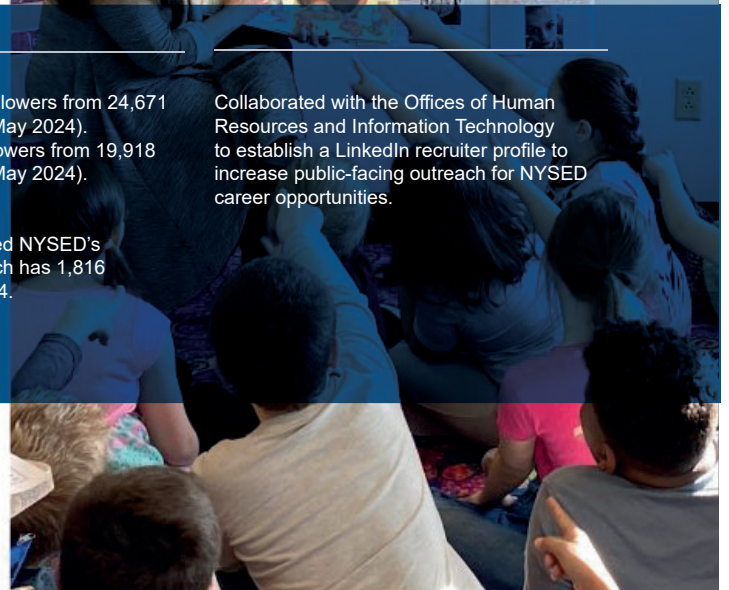


Twitter (now X): Increased followers from 42,402 (May 2023) to 43,723 (May 2024). Our number of followers continues to rank among the highest of New York State agencies.

Facebook: Increased followers from 24,671 (May 2023) to 26,524 (May 2024).
LinkedIn: Increased followers from 19,918 (May 2023) to 23,751 (May 2024).

Instagram: Reestablished NYSED's Instagram account, which has 1,816 followers as of May 2024.

Collaborated with the Offices of Human Resources and Information Technology to establish a LinkedIn recruiter profile to increase public-facing outreach for NYSED career opportunities.



- Regular communications shared regarding programming from the New York State Museum, NYS Library, NYS Archives, and NYSSSA via NYSED Weekly and the OCE Listserv
- Regular internal communication and coordination between Communications and OCE staff on social media campaigns
- Regular newsletters and Podcasts from OCE, including:
 - NYS Library Newsletter
 - Talking Book and Braille Library newsletter
 - OCE newsletter
 - Archives Partnership Trust Newsletter
 - Update from New York State History Newsletter
 - A New York Minute in History

My Brother’s Keeper Symposium

Executed a robust communications plan, in close coordination with NYSED’s MBK team, which included promotion of the event via three press releases, pitch calls to members of the media, radio/TV appearances, student interviews/video, social media, and the website.

Graduation Measures Initiative

In November, the Department announced the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Graduation Measures. Media strategy consisted of a press release, multiple press interviews, a video, and posts across our social media channels. Coverage of the announcement was largely positive.

Graduation Rates Data Release

In March, NYSED released graduation data for the 2019 Cohort. Despite a slight dip in the graduation rate for this cohort, working with the data team, we were able to deliver a message to the press and members of the public that resulted in positive media coverage in both traditional press and on social media.

Mayoral Control Report

In April, the Department released its legislatively required report on Mayoral Control of New York City Schools. The media strategy included coordination with our research partners to develop and manage messaging, a press release, interviews with members of the press, and rapid response to press inquiries to ensure accurate and timely coverage.

The Office of Communications has begun to enhance quality controls to monitor and evaluate website content continuously. Working across program areas, we continue to conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with web posting standards.

Website Page Views May 16, 2023 to May 16, 2024		
Program Area	Views	Users
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)	2,454,289	874,725
Board of Regents	448,125	150,876
Child Nutrition	798,083	81,924
Data.nysed.gov	4,456,683	680,423
Higher Education	8,621,709	1,610,953
National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)	310,257	97,319
New York State Archives	1,254,348	250,513
New York State Education Department	31,774,600	5,621,221
New York State Library	123,646	47,501
New York State Museum	783,177	284,580
New York State Museum-ESOGIS	48,866	1,793
Office of Counsel	469,931	91,135
Office of Cultural Education	58,523	22,473
Office of State Review	156,216	18,959
Office of the Professions	84,998,641	12,623,909
P-12	1,878,166	588,182
Performance Improvement and Management Services (PIMS) and CFO	595,836	91,785
Regents Past Examinations	15,315,505	2,462,347
USNY	4,046	3,051
XTF	155,422	42,621
Total:	154,706,069	25,646,290



2024-2025 Priorities

Restructuring

The Public Affairs team will focus on restructuring office staff to consolidate communications work within the Department under one roof. This will include reorganizing the existing public affairs, social media, and website teams for efficiency and to promote internal and external communications.

Website

Finish migrating the remaining program office websites in 2023-24 and work with ITS to upgrade to a newer version of Drupal, NYSED's website management system. Continue to implement measures to streamline and evaluate information being posted to the Department's website.

My Brother's Keeper

Coordinate with Department staff to release a comprehensive report illustrating the rich history and successes of the NYS MBK initiative.

My Sister's Keeper

(content needed)

Graduation Measures Initiative

Organize a strategic release of the implementation of the final recommendations on graduation measures, with a focus on outreach and coordination with stakeholders. This continued work will emphasize the efforts of the BRC throughout the summer, into the fall, and beyond.

Internal Communication

Meet with external organizations to evaluate and gain insight into potential tools to improve internal communication within the Department. The goal is to develop a system of internal communication to share information between department leadership and staff, helping all SED employees to feel part of an informed team working toward common goals.

Daily News Clips

Earlier this year, staff in the Communications redesigned the process and design by which we distribute daily news articles to make delivery more streamlined and user-friendly. We continue to evaluate and test new methods to further refine this process and will be debuting a completely redesigned system in the coming months.

P12 Education Instructional Support

Angelique Johnson-Dingle Deputy Commissioner

Bilingual Education and World Languages

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) has organized our work around four key focus areas that represent the support needed to increase the academic success and language proficiency of all students: 1. Standards and Instructional Support, 2. Enforcement and Monitoring, 3. Building Capacity, and 4. Policy.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Academic and Linguistic Demands (ALDs): Release of Academic and Linguistic Demands: Creating Access to the Next Generation Learning Standards in English Language Arts for Linguistically Diverse Learners (ALDs) document which helps teachers identify the words, phrases, and language structures embedded in the Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards so that they are able to provide standards-aligned, grade-level instruction to English Language Learners (ELLs). The purpose of the ALDs is to provide a linguistic perspective from which all teachers, regardless of content area, can examine the standards, building their capacity to recognize the types of words, phrases, and structures present in the lessons they are planning that are necessary for ELLs to achieve grade-level success. The ALDs include sections to address alignment with the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework, instruction for students with disabilities, and Home Language Arts instruction.

Voices United Annual Conference: Held successful conference Voices United: Embracing Diversity to Foster Multiculturalism and Multilingualism Conference. Co-hosted with the Fordham University Graduate School of Education, the event provided more than 220 New York State educators and administrators with a one-day professional development opportunity to strengthen theoretical and practical knowledge to implement high-quality academically rigorous instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) and other Multilingual Learners (MLs). The event included a keynote speech from Dr. Tatyana Kleyn, Professor of Bilingual Education & TESOL at the City College of New York and Principal Investigator of the CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education. Additional activities included seven breakout sessions and a panel of students discussing their experience in the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute.

Dual Language Immersion: Partnered with US Education Department's Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and the Region 2 Comprehensive Center (R2CC) to conduct school visits to Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs in three districts: NYC D14, North Rockland CSD, and Ossining UFSD, followed by a round table discussion among all DLI stakeholders, including the superintendents and program leads from all three visited districts. This event was part of OELA's work to promote promoting the awareness and understanding of Secretary Cardona's Raise the Bar: Pathways to Multilingualism for ALL and OELA's priority on Dual Language Immersion (DLI) by identifying and exploring DLI programs across the country. New York was one of five states selected to serve as a model for delivery of DLI. Lessons learned during the visits and roundtable will inform future USDE guidance on DLI programs.

Support for Immigrant Students

Allocation of \$2.5M in supplemental Title III funding to districts with highest numbers of asylum seekers and other recently arrived students in crisis. Awards were issued to 66 LEAs.

Collaborated with the Office of Teaching Initiatives to develop new flexibility in earning Supplementary Certificates for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Bilingual Extensions, and content area certification for current ESOL teachers through August 31, 2024.

Created policy waiver to extend the ELL identification timeline for LEAs that are overwhelmed by large numbers of newly arriving students.

Continued support of and collaboration with the CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education (IIE), which delivers guidance documents, videos, professional development, and policy recommendations to support the education of all immigrants, with a focus on undocumented students. New resources delivered this year include the Not Too Young: Immigration in Elementary Schools video series—"My Story, Our Story" featuring PS340X in the Bronx, "Family Literacy Program" featuring Children's School of Rochester, and "Welcoming New Students: A Guide for Teachers, Created by Students" featuring PS212Q in Queens. |

Continued provision of resources to support schools' work with newly arrived immigrants and Students with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education (SIFE).

Indigenous Language supports

Continued award of direct funding for all NYS schools that provide instructional sequences in Indigenous Languages. Since 2021, \$830,000 has been allocated to these school districts.

Creation of Indigenous Languages Steering Committee comprised of educators in Indigenous language programs, community members, and scholars. The charge of the Indigenous Steering Committee is to advise NYSED on strategies to support and promote Indigenous language programs in NYS schools, strategies to promote and support students to earn the NYS Seal of Biliteracy in Indigenous languages, resources and professional learning (both existing and which could be developed) that would be useful for Indigenous language teachers as they implement the NYS Learning Standards for World Languages in their schools, and opportunities for the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages to collaborate with Indigenous Nations to support Indigenous languages in general. OBEWL has provided funding to host and support committee members' attendance at the meetings.

ESOL/BE Teacher Pipeline: Provision of 16 Clinically Rich-Intensive Teacher Institutes (CR-ITI), an OBEWL-funded program offering teachers a pathway to additional certification in English to Speakers of Other Languages or Bilingual Education.

Instructional Support: OBEWL published four new topic briefs supporting co-teaching within Integrated English as a New Language classes. These briefs include topics on administering programs, incorporating technology into the classroom, and aligning instruction with the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Framework.

NYS Seal of Biliteracy

Almost 8,750 students earned the NYS Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB) an increase of more than 1,600 students. 26% of all Seal earners were Current and Ever ELLs. Numerous resources are available including a series of 8 modules to guide schools through their first year of offering the NYSSB.

OBEWL has been invited by the US Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition to deliver a presentation on our Seal of Biliteracy program at an upcoming conference in Washington, D.C.

OBEWL delivered 14 professional learning sessions to over 600 attendees to support creation and continuation of NYSSB programs.

International Partnerships: Signed Letter of Intent and entered into a partnership with the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland to support Polish language teachers and programs in New York State. Working collaboratively with Deputy Commissioner William Murphy to support increasing teacher pipeline.

World Language Learning Standards: Implementation of the revised New York State Learning Standards in World Languages began in the 2023-

2024 school year for students in Grade 7. OBEWL held 16 professional learning opportunities for 671 World Language teachers and administrators throughout the year; OBEWL also facilitated two book studies with more than 200 participants.

Communication with the Field

OBEWL communicates regularly with teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. These communications include our monthly newsletter, the ELL Leadership Council, the World Language Leadership Council, and the NYSSB Task Force.

OBEWL provided numerous presentations to stakeholders throughout the year including SCDN, the National Association of Bilingual Education, the New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, the University of Rochester Equity Leadership Forum, the Long Island Teachers' Institute, and the Civil Rights Roundtable of New York/New Jersey.

OBEWL joined the annual legislative event and numerous regional events for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Initiative (PR/HYLI), which is funded by OBEWL.

Strategic Planning Groups: Continuation of working groups and completion of initial resources for instructors and administrators serving English Language Learners and guide policy in support of the population. The teams have developed timely, attainable, and equity-driven goals in the areas of instructional practices (e.g., CTE, Co-Teaching, Digital-Age Teaching, Project Based Learning), administration and school climate (e.g., CR-SE, DEI, Graduation and Dropout, Social Emotional Learning), and student subgroups (e.g., ELLs with Disabilities, immigrant students).

2024-2025 Priorities

Academic and Linguistic Demands (ALDs): The Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs) are creating guidance to help teachers better understand and apply the ALDs in different content areas, including Home Language Arts. These resources and trainings will be rolled out statewide in the coming year.

Voices United Conference: OBEWL will host second annual statewide conference for ELL educators on October 24, 2025. The focus of this year's conference will be on civil rights with a focus on Dual Language Immersion, the Seal of Biliteracy, and the 50th Anniversary of two landmark decisions:



the *Lau v Nichols* Supreme Court case and the ASPIRA New York Consent Decree. The Keynote speaker will be Dr. Ayanna Cooper, author of *And Justice for ELs: A Leader's Guide to Creating and Sustaining Equitable Schools*.

Dual Language Immersion: OBEWL will develop a DLI Consortium with all three school districts involved in the work with USDE-Office of English Language Acquisition to continue to strengthen the foundational understanding, implementation and expansion of dual language immersion programs.

Support for Immigrant Students:

OBEWL and OTI will propose a one-year extension to the previously approved flexibility in Supplementary Certificates.

Extension of CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education for the project's sixth year.

Bilingual Education Toolkit

OBEWL engaged consultant to develop new topic briefs for the Bilingual Education Toolkit to support the teaching and administration of Dual Language Immersion and Transitional Bilingual Education programs. Once drafted, OBEWL will seek guidance from the Bilingual Education Advisory

Panel to review the briefs and ensure that they are accurate to NYS policy and will meet the needs of NYS educators.

MTSS-I: Establish a cross-collaborative PLC with the Office of Special Education, the Office of Student Support Services, and the Office of Innovation and School Reform to foster teacher, principal and overall school development on the effective utilization and application of the intersection of MTSS-I that meets the holistic needs of all learners while seeking to simultaneously mitigate the effects and impact of ACES on student's social-emotional and academic development, with the targeted intent to close subgroup performance gaps.

ESOL/BE Teacher Pipeline

Development of new Clinically Rich-Intensive Teacher Institutes (CR-ITI).

Support of all NYS programs awarded a National Professional

Development Program grant by US Department of Education. Grants beginning in 2024-25 will support "Grow-Your-Own" teacher promotion programs and other supports.

Instructional Supports: OBEWL will deliver a number of new resources to support ELL educators on topics including support for ELLs with disabilities (including enhancing ELL success through MTSS-I), a co-teaching administrator's guide, an understanding of ELL graduation and dropout, and applying tenets of social-emotional learning, culturally responsive-sustaining education, and diversity, equity, and inclusion to support ELLs.

International Partnerships: OBEWL will work towards development of partnerships with other local consulates, including Spain and France, as well as international agencies that represent linguistic groups (e.g., Goethe Foundation, China Institute) to create new opportunities for NYS teachers and students to learn directly about language and culture.

World Language Learning Standards

Continued support for the implementation of New York State Learning Standards in World Languages. The full schedule for implementation of these standards is:

- 2024-25: Grades 7, 8
- 2025-26: Grades 7, 8, 9
- 2026-27: Grades 7, 8, 9, 10
- 2027-28: Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
- 2028-29: Grades 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Developed a virtual webinar series, in addition to introduction videos and a composite summary video, highlighting promising practices of districts across New York State in elevating student voices as leaders in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion

Expanded the DEI Leaders Network to include over 300 representatives from districts across New York State, in addition to BOCES representatives, who meet monthly to collaborate on advancing DEI across the state
Formed a DEI Advisory Group consisting of educational leaders from rural, urban, and suburban districts to support planning and facilitation of monthly network meetings focused on addressing central themes and needs based on feedback from network members

Developed and facilitated over 40 professional development trainings to educational leaders and educators within K-12 and higher education institutions, in addition to SED staff, on strategies for aligning practices with the Board of Regents DEI Policy and approaches for effective implementation of the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework

Created a DEI webpage consisting of a range of resources including updated policies and guidance, webinars, and a resource repository providing access to a range of resources shared by districts across the state engaging in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion

2024-2025 Priorities

Develop resources/toolkits to support districts at all stages of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within their schools and district communities

Collaborate closely with offices within SED to create briefs to support districts in fostering understanding and engaging in effective implementation of best practices as outlined in the Framework for Supporting Transgender and Gender Expansive Students

Begin initial brainstorming and action planning of pertinent topics for a future DEI collaborative conference to be held statewide for districts and BOCES

Continue to expand the DEI resource repository to ensure that it reflects new and emerging promising practices from a range of districts, regions, and BOCES across New York State.

Learning Standards and Instructional Programs

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Literacy Support – To advance the Department's goals around literacy, the Office of Standards and Instruction has focused on providing literacy support to New York State educators, administrators, and literacy leaders to strengthen their knowledge of evidence-based literacy practices in PK-12 education through the release of a series of seven literacy briefs that focus on the science of reading to support students' learning, hosting a statewide

literacy conference, and the development of a K-3 Literacy Curriculum Review Guide, in collaboration with stakeholders, to support districts in selecting and developing high-quality, literacy curricular materials for grades K-3.

Interdisciplinary Areas - To remain informed on current practices, ideas, concerns, and solutions being discussed and/or implemented in our P-12 schools, the Office of Standards and Instruction met throughout the 2023-2024 school year with its Content Advisory Panels and other experts from the field on the four interdisciplinary areas of media literacy, environmental/climate literacy, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics), and financial literacy to explore how these topic areas could be or should be included in a New York State P-12 instructional program.

Smart Start Grant - The Smart Start Grant, administered by the Office of Educational Design & Technology, awarded \$6 million to enhance digital fluency and instructional skills of K-8 teachers in computer science, engineering, and educational technology. The program intends to build the capacity of educators to implement the NYS Computer Science and Digital Fluency Standards (CSDF) over five years. With three years in the books, 17 grantees statewide have already impacted over 500 schools and enabled professional development for more than 7,000 teachers through 17 grantees. Additionally, grantees have developed and shared over 1,000 educational artifacts on their websites (links to websites found on NYSED's Smart Start Page), contributing to a rich repository of resources that will help schools get up to speed on the CSDF Standards.

VITAL Educator Program - The VITAL (Virtual Implementation of Teaching and Learning) Educator Program, funded by the Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) federal grant program, is designed to enhance the expertise of educators in the administration and teaching of virtual learning environments. VITAL's goal is to prepare a cadre of expert trainers, known as VITAL Educators, who can deliver high-quality professional development to their peers across the state specific to the challenges presented by virtual learning. Participants in this year-long program are currently engaging in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to become adept at using purpose-built professional learning content for regional and online trainings, ensuring the dissemination of best practices in virtual education throughout the state. Following the VITAL program's completion, over 100 educators will be trained to become leaders in fostering equitable access to quality education through innovative virtual learning strategies.

CTE CAP - The Office of CTE reassembled the CTE Content Advisory Panel (CTE CAP) to explore two options presented by the US Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education: 1. Develop a new four-year Perkins V State Plan, or 2. Submit revised State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) and determine possible modifications to the current four-year State Plan. Through the work of the CTE CAP, the CTE Technical Assistance Center (CTE TAC), and with the input of multiple stakeholders throughout the 2023-2024 year, the decision was made to submit revised SDPL for the May 2024 submission. These SDPL represent the performance targets for secondary and postsecondary students participating in career and technical education programs supported by Perkins funds.

The Office of CTE has continued to strengthen and align its work with other Offices and New York State agencies including the Department of Labor (pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships, WIOA Youth Collaborative), the New York Power Authority (electric vehicle and charging station technician professional development), the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (clean technologies), and Empire State Development (advanced manufacturing and construction technology). For example, the Office of CTE, in collaboration with the Office of Information and Reporting Services, produced a public-facing School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) Course to Certification Crosswalk Workbook and accompanying guidance video to support schools and BOCES when determining what courses to offer and the appropriate certifications necessary for teachers providing instruction in those courses.

2024-2025 Priorities

Graduation Requirements – The Office of Standards and Instruction will continue to provide support and technical assistance related to graduation requirements, including work related to the vision for implementing the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures.

Numeracy Support – In addition to continued support for literacy, the Office of Standards and Instruction will be providing support on effective,

evidence-based practices for mathematics in the elementary grades.

Financial, Climate and Media Literacies – The Office of Standards and Instruction will continue its focus on the interdisciplinary areas of financial literacy, climate literacy, and media literacy, including developing educational materials and resources to support instruction in these areas.

Comprehensive Virtual Learning Guidance – Through the TRLE federal grant program, the Office of Educational Design & Technology will work with action research partners at SUNY Stony Brook to develop a comprehensive framework for virtual learning.

Computer Science and Digital Fluency (CSDF) Standards Support & Artificial Intelligence Guidance – Full implementation of the CSDF Standards is scheduled for the start of the 2024-25 school year. Due to the rapid growth of AI, the Office of Educational Design & Technology plans to supplement existing guidance and resources on the CSDF Standards that should assist schools in seeing CSDF as the way to address Artificial Intelligence with their school community.

Perkins V State Plan - The Office of CTE will finalize modifications to the Perkins V State Plan for submission in May 2025.

Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Standards - The Office of CTE will conduct a review of the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Standards and develop a standards revision plan aligned with the priorities set forth by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures.

Electronic Application Submission - The Office of CTE will build a framework for CTE applications, i.e., program approval/reapproval, Perkins, registered work-based learning programs, to be submitted through the NYSED Business Portal.

Special Education

2023-2024 Accomplishments

In collaboration with the Office of Counsel, the Office of Special Education (OSE) facilitated significant system changes to due process systems, proposing three regulatory packages, two of which were adopted in 2023 and the third proposed for adoption in September 2024. Both have been working in collaboration with the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) and the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) to facilitate the transition, over time, of the New York City (NYC) impartial hearing system to OATH. Effective January 1, 2024, all newly filed NYC due process complaints are assigned exclusively to OATH. OATH has been successful developing the systems and structures necessary to provide more effective, efficient, and timely processing of due process complaints. OATH has also eliminated the wait list for appointment of an impartial hearing officer (IHO), which in October 2021 exceeded 9,000 students awaiting appointment of an IHO.

To ensure preschool students with disabilities receive programs and services in the least restrictive environment (LRE), the OSE required the NYCDOE to revise its parent resources to promote inclusion, provide training for committees on preschool special education (CPSE) on LRE requirements and review and document its CPSE decision-making processes to ensure preschool students receive services in the LRE. The OSE also monitored the NYCDOE preschool regional need data and reviewed the NYCDOE applications to expand preschool inclusive offerings in its public school programs.

Working in collaboration with the Department's Rate Setting Unit, the OSE conducted nine regional meetings to obtain feedback from stakeholders regarding the tuition rate setting methodology redesign to inform the direction of the methodology study that will best support programs serving preschool and school-age students with disabilities. The study will consider alternative approaches to reimbursement to ensure students with disabilities receive special education and related services in accordance with their individualized education programs.

Working in collaboration with the Office of Student Support Services, Office of Information and Reporting Services, and the Office of Counsel, OSE conducted research, sought stakeholder input, proposed regulatory amendments, and released guidance in response to regulatory changes adopted by the Board of Regents. The adopted regulations ensure that schools utilize proactive and preventative frameworks to support students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs from a culturally responsive and strength-based perspective and ensure that behavioral supports and interventions are used safely, carried out in accordance with research-

based practices, and with the highest standards of oversight, monitoring, and data collection.

The OSE's Multi-Tiered System of Supports-Integrated (MTSS-I) Center provided coaching and professional development to 28 districts and 73 schools using the NYSED MTSS-I Pilot Framework. Districts have created support plans based on their district capacity assessment, demonstrated increased use of evidence-based practices and district capacity particularly regarding leadership and organization. In collaboration with the MTSS-I Center, OSE facilitated a two-day MTSS-I Summit in the Summer of 2024 in which over 700 individuals participated.

2024-2025 Priorities

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Accountability and Professional Development: The OSE will continue its general supervision responsibilities with the implementation of new policies and procedures developed in 2023 regarding verification and correction of district noncompliance, State complaint processes, timeliness of impartial hearing decisions, and monitoring the implementation of impartial hearing decisions. The OSE will work in collaboration with the Office of Information and Reporting Services to design and implement the structures necessary to launch a new, much more rigorous district IDEA determination process in spring 2025, as required by the federal Office of Special Education Programs.

IDEA Accountability and Professional Development: With the development of multiple memorandums of understanding and the release of several request for proposals in January 2024, the OSE will continue to provide embedded professional development through the OSE - Educational Partnership including parent and family support through the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Centers through June 2029. The OSE will continue to work with the Office of Information and Technology Services and the Office of Information and Reporting Services to design and implement a staffing plan to increase the capacity of each of these offices to engage in data system modernization.

IDEA State Performance Plan for 2020-2025: The OSE will continue to identify priority improvement strategies, informed by stakeholder perspectives with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including initiatives to scale-up implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports-Integrated (MTSS-I); strengthen the capacity to provide high quality inclusive options for preschool students with disabilities; increase parent access to effective dispute resolution processes; develop initiatives to address special education continuum capacity in New York; and ensure school districts address any finding of significant disproportionality based on race and/or ethnicity in the suspension, identification and/or placement of students with disabilities.

Student Support Services

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Student Support Services administered several state and federal grants to support students, both during the school day and during out-of-school time. These student-centered grants promote social, emotional and physical well-being, provide academic and other enrichment activities in fields such as STEM and the arts, support college and career exploration, and foster positive youth development for tens of thousands of students in hundreds of districts across the state. The federal, Nina M. Lowy 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant, alone, provides over \$100M annually to 152 subgrantees. Leveraging district and community partnerships, these subgrants are able to serve roughly 60,000 students and their families, primarily in underserved communities.

The state-funded Recover from COVID School Program (RECOVS) grant was awarded to 55 districts totaling \$100M over two years, \$50M is to support mental health initiatives and \$50M to address learning loss. Applications were due in September 2023. This competitive funding is equally divided between Mental Health Grants and Learning Loss Grants and requires that applicants provide 100% matching funds or in-kind contributions. This \$100M will allow for school districts and BOCES to address student well-being by expanding mental health supports in schools and addressing learning loss exacerbated by the pandemic. Mental Health Grant-specific objectives include the following: expanding student access to school-based mental health professionals, evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions, programming, services, supports and practices that promote mental health and wellness; improving capacity for school staff and students to identify mental health concerns and increase help-seeking behaviors.

Learning Loss Grant-specific objectives include the following: expanding student access to academic recovery professionals, evidence-based and evidence-informed interventions, programming, services, supports and promising practices that counter learning loss; Improving capacity for school staff and students to identify learning loss, and increase student and staff resourcefulness and skills in seeking, receiving, and providing academic recovery supports. Both program types require: implementing a variety of evidence-based and evidence-informed school-based programs and practices that are culturally, linguistically, and trauma responsive while promoting student diversity, equity, and inclusion; and ensuring financial stability and continuation of evidence-based and evidence-informed opportunities for students continuing beyond the second and final year of the RECOVS Grant Program.

Student Support Services developed an FAQ in collaboration with the Office of Special Education on the updated Corporal Punishment Regulations to address a language shift from corporal punishment to Behavioral Supports and Interventions; to prohibit corporal punishment as a response to property damage; to prohibit seclusion and prone restraint; and to authorize limited use of other restraints and time out by trained staff only.

Student Support Services developed updates based on the revisions in law, regulations, and best practice recommendations from medical experts to guide the field in providing the best health care to our students on Concussion Management, Opioid Overdose Programs, Immunizations, and Allergies and Anaphylaxis. These guidance documents were shared with all public and nonpublic schools via the NYSED weekly and nonpublic school listserv - reaching all 690+ districts, BOCES, charter schools and nonpublic schools.

Student Support Services relies on our contracted technical assistance centers to expand our capacity and ensure the field is provided with professional development and technical assistance health and safety issues in a timely manner. These two centers enable us to ensure the health and safety of our students by providing timely responses and information.

1. The New York State Center for School Health provides: Online training courses on a variety of health related topics and maintains robust website.
2. Technical assistance to schools by responding to an average of 400 calls per month and 9,000 emails per quarter.
3. A listserv of more than 4,600 subscribers and routinely share urgent health related information from the Department, DOH and OMH.
4. The New York State Center for School Safety provides online and in person training to schools on school safety and the Dignity for All Students Act.

They also provide:

- Online training courses on a variety of topics posted on their website.
- Technical assistance to schools by responding to an average of 54 calls and emails per month.
- A listserv of more than 957 subscribers to share their monthly newsletter along with school climate and safety related information from the Department.

Held the second School Safety Summit in collaboration with the New York State Center for School Safety to provide training opportunities, information and resources to New York's schools and districts on topics related to emergency response planning and creating safe and supportive learning environments for the whole school.

Collaborated with the School Safety Improvement Team and other stakeholders to revise regulations on school safety and drills, including developing common terminology for the entire state to alleviate confusion between schools and first responders, using trauma-informed practices to announce drills and prohibit the use of props and actors during the school day. Collaborated with the "I Love You Guys" Foundation to develop a New York State Standard Response Plan (SRP) using New York's common terminology, for schools that choose to use common language during safety drills.

Through Student Support Service's oversight of the New York State Center for School Safety provides online and in person training to schools on school safety and the Dignity for All Students Act. The Center provides online training courses on a variety of topics posted on their website. They hosted a webinar with Department of Labor to provide guidance to districts on the new workplace violence prevention plan requirement.

Held a series of regional meetings in 2023 to inform the development of new Mixed Competition regulations, which guided the revision of the regulations. Once adopted, they are slated to go into effect in the 2024-2025 school year.

2023-2024 Priorities

- To ensure our TAC Centers are able to continue their work, a priority is to secure funding related to those services of contracted Technical Assistance Centers, including the Center for School Safety and the Center for School Health.
- Support grantees' implementation fidelity by providing ongoing communication regarding grant requirements and provide supports as needed to foster high-quality programming. Monitor for on-going compliance and effectiveness.
- Develop an inventory of Dignity for All Students Act reporting issues and develop guidance to increase accurate reporting and encourage schools to use student centered approaches to investigate, respond and successfully mitigate incidents of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Student Support Services will prioritize the continuing and ongoing alignment of staff and their work within the recently reorganized office structure. Further, we anticipate increasing our staffing to support the large portfolio of services, including filling open positions, and advocating for additional lines as needed.
- Student Support Services supports the field through guidance responsive to schools, families, and communities. Priorities include development of mental health guidance; development of transition liaison guidance; and updates to Dignity Act guidance.
- Development of relationships and collaboration with the Office of Mental Health, and other State Agencies.

Student Support Services Child Nutrition

2023-2024 Accomplishments

The successful implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision State Subsidy, along with new federal eligibility thresholds, has significantly increased access to free school breakfast and lunch for students. As a result, 2.35 million students now benefit from these nutritious meals without financial barriers, and participation has risen by twelve percent. Our efforts involved securing necessary federal regulatory allowances, implementing system changes, coordinating outreach with advocates and stakeholders, conducting individual discussions with school administrators, and disseminating information through memos, emails, and webinars. Additionally, we dedicated 3,200 staff hours to processing requests and assisting schools.

To enhance the quality and nutritional value of school meals, we have actively promoted the use of farm-fresh New York products within school meal programs. This initiative involved aligning the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education with recent statutory changes related to State bidding exemptions. Additionally, in collaboration with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, we developed a comprehensive guide specifically tailored for schools. This guide provides clear instructions on how to implement these exemptions effectively when procuring local products for use in school meals. By prioritizing locally sourced ingredients, we aim to support local farmers, improve student health, and create a more sustainable food system.

2024-2025 Priorities

In our ongoing commitment to support and expand farm-to-school programs we are planning several activities. We are collaborating with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Harvest NY to host the New York Farm-to-School Summit in fall 2024. This event will bring together schools, farmers, and community members to integrate local food and farms into classrooms, cafeterias, and communities. Additional activities include training school staff on procuring, processing and incorporating local foods in school meals, as well as providing schools with agricultural education resources.

The Child Nutrition office is restructuring staff assignments to enhance our service, assistance, and support to schools and summer meals operators. As part of this restructuring, we will assign subject matter experts to provide targeted assistance to schools and summer meals providers. Our goal is to improve efficiency and foster close collaboration, allowing us to share insights and best practices across the state. Ultimately, this effort aims to increase the quality of meals and boost program participation, ensuring that more students benefit from nutritious meals.

A new Child Nutrition learning management system is set to launch next school year. New training is being created and existing content is being enhanced for use in this system. This interactive platform streamlines training, enabling schools to log and monitor staff training progress easily. This system will improve training efficiency, centralize tracking, and enhance communication with schools on child nutrition topics and requirements.

Early Learning

2023-2024 Accomplishments

- Provided technical assistance and in-person monitoring of 131 districts and ongoing support to all UPK programs in New York State, which includes over 600 school districts
- Provided oversight for a UPK budget of over 1 billion dollars and provided technical assistance directly to districts through webinars, phone calls, public presentations, and site visits
- Held three in-person Early Learning conferences in Albany (P-3 Institute and UPK Day I and II) that reached 400 Early Learning educators, including one-on-one fiscal planning sessions with districts and Early Learning staff
- Advocated for elimination of the “supplement, not supplant” requirement in UPK law and streamlining the UPK payment process
- 23-24 UPK expansion grant process resulted in awarding 34 million to 64 school districts
- Expanded the Office of Early Learning’s team to 25 professional staff to provide more P-3 technical assistance and resources to schools
- Provided ongoing communication to P-3 educators with three quarterly newsletters, an email information database, and ongoing live and recorded webinar events
- Developed and published Prekindergarten-Grade 3 resources (including Positive Behavior, Prekindergarten Literacy, Frequently Asked Questions, and Family Guidance) for schools and families to support P-3 learning and program support
- Published a State-Administered Prekindergarten Data website, with yearly data on 3PK and UPK enrollment, plus a “fast facts” sheet for schools and families
- Partnered with the NYSED Office of Cultural Education and Public Broadcasting to share resources and begin work on an Early Learning UPK Science Initiative (Science Everywhere!) and P-3 Cultural Education toolkit

2024-2025 Priorities

- Streamline the UPK monitoring and application process for school districts to ensure most effective use of time at the district level and advocate for expansion of UPK seats through a NYSED application process, instead of competitive grants
- Create Prekindergarten reading and literacy curriculum guidance for districts and programs that provides examples of research, best practices, and resources around reading
- Publish and support Science Everywhere!, a prekindergarten science initiative that promotes inquiry-based science and is aligned to the NYS Standards
- Provide additional P-3 webinars, both live and recorded, to support the UPK application process, as well as highlight promising practices for P-3 schools
- Provide additional professional learning opportunities, including in-person conferences around the P-3 continuum and support for the UPK application and funding process
- Create 3PK (age 3) learning standards that connect the birth-age 5 continuum and align with the State Prekindergarten Learning Standards
- Continue to publish quarterly P-3 and UPK newsletters and enact a communications strategy to ensure each school and UPK program receives timely information on all deadlines, grant opportunities, and P-3 resources

- Prepare changes to Part 151 and Part 125 regulations to ensure the regulations around early learning are up-to-date and best support schools
- Add additional staff to the Office of Early Learning to build capacity around the annual UPK application process and required monitoring, to ensure alignment with all state laws; plan to monitor around 200 school districts in 2024-2025.

Charter School Office

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Secured \$934,000 in the Governor’s Enacted Budget, championed by Commissioner Rosa, to maintain crucial state level support and oversight for charter schools across New York. This marks an historic milestone as the Charter School Office receives state funding for the first time since the enactment of the Charter Schools law in 1999. The allocation addresses the impending challenge of the sunset federal Charter School Program grant, ensuring seamless continuity in operations.

Delivered extensive technical assistance and professional development sessions, focusing on governance, home-to-school connections, special education, and financial operations to charter schools across New York state. These efforts empowered charter leaders and school boards to make informed decisions in curriculum selection, staff hiring, and development. See NYSED’s NY-RISE charter school technical assistance center: (<http://www.nysed.gov/charter-schools/ny-rise>).

Through the New York Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide (NY HELPS) program, we successfully recruited and hired one administrative assistant and transitioned three provisional staff (SG26) onto a permanent track.

Renewing twenty-eight (28) Board of Regents-authorized charter schools, ten (10) New York City Chancellor-authorized charter schools and two (2) Buffalo-authorized (BCSD Board of Education) charter schools.

2024-2025 Priorities

Building upon the successful recruitment efforts of the NY HELPS program, prioritize restaffing the Charter School Office with capable and dedicated team members. Focus on filling the remaining vacant positions with individuals possessing strong work ethics, exceptional interpersonal skills, and a commitment to operational effectiveness.

Pursue resources to establish a dedicated paralegal or lawyer position within the Charter School Office to effectively handle the constant flow of charter school complaints statewide, regardless of the school’s authorizer. This staff person would be responsible for triaging complaints, conducting thorough investigations, and facilitating timely resolutions in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Continue to emphasize a service-oriented approach to supporting charter schools and strive for ongoing improvement in fostering equitable educational opportunities for families in traditionally underserved communities.

Performance-Based Learning and Assessment Networks (PLAN) Program

2023-2024 Accomplishments

The PLAN program progressed from the Exploratory Phase to the Installation Phase and accomplished the following program milestones:

- Conducted the PLAN Pilot School Application process and selected 23 Pilot Schools to represent different geographic regions of the state, different stages of implementation, and different student populations.
- Conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and established contracts with professional learning providers to provide technical assistance and professional learning to pilot networks and schools through the operation of three PLAN Technical Assistance Centers.
- Continued the PLAN advisory input process, including convening the PLAN Advisory Workgroups and holding an annual meeting to provide updates and answer questions from workgroup members, parent and student advisors, representatives of model partner organizations, and representatives from New York’s education stakeholder organizations.

- Continued professional learning activities to build statewide knowledge and capacity around performance-based learning and assessment, including presenting at a major statewide professional development conference and hosting a new installment of the PLAN webinar series.
- Worked with research partners from the City University of New York to produce a report documenting and analyzing key findings on NYSED's efforts to build foundational knowledge on performance-based learning and assessment. Expanded PLAN's research capacity by connecting with faculty researchers from the State University of New York to initiate a new partnership for the program's evaluation.

2024-2025 Priorities

To complete the Installation Phase and progress to the Initial Implementation Phase, the PLAN program will prioritize the following milestones in the coming year:

- Run an application and selection process to engage exemplary Mentor Schools that are systematically implementing an evidence-based approach or model of performance-based learning and assessment and are interested in supporting PLAN Pilot Schools in making the transition.
- Form 8 Pilot Networks, each consisting of approximately 3 Pilot Schools and one Mentor School, and matched with one of the 3 Technical Assistance Centers.
- Collaborate with the winning professional learning providers from the 2023 RFP process to launch the PLAN Technical Assistance Centers and begin providing professional learning and technical assistance to pilot schools and networks.
- Work with research partners to begin collecting qualitative and quantitative data from pilot sites, including administering an initial survey of the perceptions of performance-based learning and assessment implementation among Pilot School educators.
- Continue to convene meetings of the PLAN Advisory Workgroups to collect advice on program design and implementation around research, network formation, professional learning, and technical features of assessments. Convene Parent and Student Focus Groups.
- Continue to develop professional learning activities to build statewide knowledge and capacity, including collaborating with capacity-building partners to support communities of practice focused on performance-based learning and assessment.

Office of Indigenous Education

The Office of Indigenous Education (OIE) supports native students of the 9 New York State and federally recognized tribal nations that have a government to government relationship with the State of New York. Towards this aim, OIE allocates approximately \$70 million in state funding and provides assistance to school districts that educate indigenous children residing on sovereign land from primary school to and through post-secondary education. OIE administers the New York State Indian Aid program, which provides funding for indigenous students attending post-secondary schools in New York State. The office works with leaders and educators from Tribal Nations and districts to close the opportunity gap and ensure that all indigenous students have access to educational and social-emotional programs to support college and career readiness.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Closing the Opportunity Gap

Starting last summer, the office expanded its use of student data to support districts serving indigenous students by creating an annual report compiled from school-reported NYSED data meant to inform conversations among Tribal Nations, school district personnel, and NYSED staff, with the goal of improving educational and developmental outcomes for the indigenous students.

The office recently shared its second annual indigenous student data reports with district and tribal education leaders in the spring/summer of 2024. These reports, developed by OIE using NYSED data, include information on subgroup population enrollment (students with disabilities and students who are economically disadvantaged); chronic absenteeism; suspensions; 3-8 state assessment results; Regents exam outcomes; graduation and dropout rates; diploma types; Advanced Placement

and International Baccalaureate assessment outcomes; and College, Career, and Civic Readiness. Reports show multi-year trends comparing indigenous and non-indigenous student population outcomes with aim to address disproportionality and help districts to pinpoint areas in need of support and improvement.

OIE traveled around the state meeting with district and nation representatives to discuss report findings and to support and help improve indigenous education programs offered by districts and nations. Starting this summer, with an aim to address Board of Regents strategic priorities, OIE will begin partnering with school districts to collect additional year-end information regarding internal assessment results in reading and math, advanced course participation beyond Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses; postsecondary plans for graduating seniors; Indigenous-related courses, clubs, and activities; and indigenous staff counts.

With the combination of NYSED data and the Year-End District Indigenous Education Program Reports, district and tribal education leaders will be able to gain a more comprehensive view of the Indigenous Education Program, its strengths, and challenges, as they come together to discuss the best use of Supplemental Funds (additional fiscal support provided by NYSED to school districts to support interventions and enrichment opportunities for indigenous students) for the upcoming school year.

Cross-Agency Collaboration

NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH)

- OIE is partnering with OMH to provide community-based peer-led wellness and mental health supports to indigenous students.
- OIE and OMH is providing Indigenous Nations with \$50,000 grants to pilot Peer Advocacy programs under the supervision of OMH-approved school-based mental health clinics on the Nations.
- NYS Department of Health (DOH)
- The DOH is working with OIE and the Indigenous Nations to bring awareness to increased vaping by indigenous students and strategies and resources to address this issue.
- The NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
- OIE is assisting districts serving indigenous students to transition from diesel to electric buses by the 2027 statutory deadline.

New Investments in Service Learning

OIE applies for and was awarded two substantial grants from America's Service Commissions. These grants, part of a focused effort to engage and empower Indigenous youth, aim to enrich civics education and service-learning opportunities in three New York school districts serving large Indigenous populations: Niagara-Wheatfield, Silver Creek, and LaFayette Central School Districts, serving the Tuscarora Nation, Seneca Nation of Indians (Cattaraugus), and Onondaga Nation, respectively.

Empowering Youth-Led Service Grant

Funded by the Allstate Foundation with an allocation of \$40,000, this initiative will foster youth-led service projects within indigenous communities, enhancing students' readiness for college, careers, and civic life. Indigenous students, who have historically scored lower in these areas compared to their non-indigenous peers, will lead projects that apply civics education to real-world challenges, aiding their development and readiness for post-secondary endeavors. The New York State Seal of Civic Readiness will recognize their achievements and civic engagement, signaling their preparedness to universities, employers, and society at large.

Deepening Youth Service Grant

Supported by the Mott Foundation with \$30,000, this grant will extend the impact of the first by building sustainable frameworks for youth service initiatives. The Deepening Indigenous Youth Service (DIYS) committee will collaborate with school districts and Tribal Nations to enhance curricula and support service-learning projects. This collaborative effort aims to ensure the perpetuation and expansion of these programs, emphasizing the development of civics education tailored to the unique histories and cultures of indigenous communities.

Dignity for All

OIE has been working with districts and communities across New York to implement the newly established Commissioner's Regulation Part 123 pertaining to the prohibition of mascots, team names, and/or logos connected to or stereotyping indigenous nations and peoples. OIE, working with an Indigenous Mascot Advisory Group, has provided technical assistance and support to school districts implementing new team mascots, names, and/or logos.

The vast majority of impacted New York State school districts have already changed, or are in the process of changing, their team mascots, names, and/or logos where they are in conflict with the Part 123 regulations and the Dignity for All Students Act. Through assistance from OIE, most of these districts have engaged in robust community/student driven processes to identify and select new team mascots, names, and/or logos.

Fiscal Portfolio

- This past year, OIE administered tuition contracts for 13 public school districts (~\$44.4M) educating students residing on tribal land.
- Supplemental Funds are administered under the Tuition contract, totaling \$1.5M annually.
- OIE administered funding for 3 state-owned Indigenous Schools under Operations and Maintenance contracts with the managing school district (~\$13.9M) – St. Regis Mohawk School, the Onondaga Nation School, and the Tuscarora Nation School
- OIE facilitated the disbursement of funding for the transportation of indigenous students residing on tribal nations (4 vendor contracts and 9 school district contracts) (~\$10.2M)
- Commissioner's Advisory Council on Indigenous Education
- Continue to meet in-person with the state's first Commissioner's Advisory Council for Indigenous Education. The Council is composed of representatives from Indigenous Nations across NYS. This year's meetings took place in July at the Onondaga Nation, in November at the New York State Cultural Education Center in Albany, and in June at the Ganondagan State Historic Site located on the traditional lands of the Onondowa'ga'.
- Speakers and topics of conversation included the Office of Bilingual Education and World Language's Indigenous culture and language teacher initiatives, the Indigenous Student Well-being Pilot Program, Indigenous student identification in data reporting, cross-agency collaboration such as conversations with the NYS Department of Health around Vaping awareness and reduction, meeting the needs of Indigenous students with disabilities, and updates on state budgeting.
- Indian Aid – Supporting Indigenous Post-Secondary Opportunities
- Expanding opportunities for funding to support indigenous student graduate and professional opportunities and facilitate indigenous professionals returning to tribal lands to support the development of the next generation of leaders.
- Revisiting the funding requirements and application parameters for Indian Aid.
- Currently moving the application into an electronic format.
- Tracking and storing student information electronically will improve efficiencies and free-up physical space required for files.
- Operational Efficiency
- Streamlining operational and business processes to ensure complete and timely processing of reimbursements and contract submissions.
- Created Due Date Chart, distributed annually beginning July 1, to inform district and OIE processes.
- New Staff to Support Equity and Customer Service
- Onboarded two permanent Associate level (SG-26) staff.
- Recruited for Administrative Specialist 1 (SG-18) position.

Website

Updated the office's website to include information and resources for teachers, students, and families as well as content that celebrates the creativity and accomplishments of indigenous students.

2024-2025 Priorities

- Closing the opportunity gap through highlighting areas of disproportionality, collecting key data points aligned with contractual requirements, sharing data, and providing technical assistance in collaboration with Indigenous Nations, districts, and communities.
- Exceptional customer service to Nations, districts, and communities by creating transparent processes, expectations, and technical assistance.
- Increase the number of students participating in Indian Aid college tuition assistance programs by partnering with colleges and communities to retain participating students, reviewing postsecondary data to identify qualified students who have not yet applied, and expanding program eligibility to include graduate studies.
- NYSED Staff Development and Commitment – OIE staff will participate in at least one statewide and one nation Indigenous education conference.
- Partner with the State Museum, Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, Curriculum and Instruction, school districts, and Indigenous Nations to engage in cross-disciplinary programmatic development and provide OIE staff with content specific professional development.
- Streamline processes by:
 - Continue to identify areas for improvement, eliminate repetitive and unnecessary steps in programmatic and fiscal work to make the office more efficient and effective.
 - Electronic Records
 - Moving the office away from paper file management. Requesting all contractual obligations, proposals, and vouchers for reimbursement in electronic format.
 - Establishing an organized electronic filing system and tracking methods for easy storage, access, and reference for future use.
 - Reduction in errors and redundancy.
 - Converting physical documents into digital files, we will reduce the need for physical storage space and be more eco-friendly.
- Utilize data related to students' postsecondary plans to identify which colleges/universities indigenous students are attending so the office can build connections with them to increase student retention rates and work to enhance the supports they offer indigenous students.
- Identifying programs of study students are pursuing will inform work with districts, colleges, and Nations, building pipelines that can lead to postsecondary success.
- Analyze office-created and district-submitted data reports to find correlations between such areas as (1) Indigenous language and culture offerings and indigenous student academic and graduation outcomes and (2) Indigenous representation on faculty/staff lists and indigenous student engagement (chronic absenteeism, suspension). The results of these and other inquiries will help us identify best practices to be shared among districts and potential areas for policy changes.



Office of Religious & Independent School Support (ORISS)

2023-2024 Accomplishments

The Office of Religious and Independent School Support (ORISS) is the New York State Education Department office that has the primary responsibility for serving the needs of the over 1,800 state-recognized religious and independent schools and the students they serve. ORISS provides support by offering: high school registration application processing and site visits to offer interested schools the privilege of offering NYS diplomas and administering Regents exams; professional development activities for religious and independent school administrators and staff; technical assistance and support to religious and independent schools in all stages of the school life cycle; grant administration for six grants pertaining directly to religious and independent schools; and oversight of Federal and State aid for religious and independent schools. ORISS is composed of two units. One offers supervision and assistance for business and fiscal matters, while the other offers programmatic school functions.

For ORISS to streamline our processes with the focus of providing exceptional customer service to the religious and independent schools and other stakeholders, the duties, and responsibilities in ORISS were separated into two units with the focus on providing Fiscal and Program oversight.

Fiscal Team Accomplishments

Religious & Independent (R&I) School Customer Support

Grant work requires a good deal of customer support. From the application phase to payment processing, grant management is a high contact area. R&I school grants have seen a good deal of transition in the last 3 years. ORISS's new Fiscal Team sought to improve the R&I grant administration, resources, and communication. Three of the four grants that were initially administered by Program staff were transferred to the Fiscal unit as the Program unit staff were inundated with responsibilities related to Substantial Equivalency and FOIL requests. Since January 2024, the Fiscal Team at ORISS has fielded over 5,000 inquiries focusing on application and technical assistance. Requested resources include Website Renovation, Monthly Newsletters, a Grant Planning Calendar, and Application Tutorials.

The Nonpublic Safety Equipment (NPSE) grant application can now be submitted electronically, with the goal of increasing efficiencies, transparency, and grant continuity. The new submission process will significantly enhance the grant program.

R&I Grant Portfolio

As advocates for all the R&I schools, the Fiscal Team is thrilled to see the grant portfolio expansion.

For 2024/2025, the Fiscal Team will be charged with administering a 34% year over year growth. Recent expansion includes:

- A 467% increase in NPSE funding.
- Two new RFPs, dedicated to providing professional and health and safety resources to R&I schools.
- A new Art & Music Teacher Salary Reimbursement (AMTS) grant requiring all new guidance, application, payment processing, website, etc.
- Request to administer additional RFPs for 4201 schools for a combined \$90M.

Program Team Accomplishments

Onboarded and trained three permanent staff and three temporary (in rotation) staff.

- Streamlined the FOIL review process to ensure accurate and timely processing of FOILs in response to a significant increase in FOIL requests.
- Reviewed BEDS code applications to ensure timely delivery of programs, services, and resources that schools' students are entitled to receive from their school district of residence.
- Performed desk audits and site visits to process new high school registration applications and move long-standing pending registered schools to full registration status.
- Processed numerous charter and consent petitions for all stages of the school incorporation life cycle, ranging from starting a new school to the dissolution of an existing one.
- Provided oversight and guidance to enact Part 130 regulations of the Commissioner of Education relating to R&I students receiving substantially equivalent instruction. This included providing support and training to Local School Authorities (LSAs) and R&I schools, creating new guidance and collection tools, reviewing and approving accreditors and assessments, and reviewing commissioner-determination schools.
- Coordinated multiple professional development opportunities including participation and oversight of the annual Religious and Independent School Educator (RISE) conference; oversight of the three professional development resource centers (PDRCs); and sharing of other professional development course offerings, state-wide, for R&I schools.
- Coordinated receipt and provided support to R&I schools for fire inspections submissions required by Education Law 807-a.
- Participated in the continuing project to redesign and update website content to provide resources to members of the R&I school community related to all aspects of R&I schools.
- Responded to complaints regarding R&I schools and parentally placed home schoolers in a timely manner.
- Responded to ombudsman related issues between R&I schools and public schools in a timely manner.
- Provided significant assistance to the fiscal team in both the review of grants and the training of new staff to transition ORISS to the new office model separating program from fiscal.
- Routinely collaborated with members of the R&I school community, including working with the Commissioner's Advisory Council, in the implementation of guidance and processes of the Department.
- Provided support to parentally placed home schooled families and affected school districts and BOCES.

2024-2025 Fiscal/Program Priorities

Staff Longevity:

- Encourage professional development through continued peer to peer mentoring.
- Celebrate staff growth by taking notice and expressing recognition as they develop and grow.
- Encourage a Healthy Work/Life Balance by ensuring staff members requests are approved for adjustment in work schedules, telecommuting, and requested time off.
- Provide metrics for success by highlighting and recognizing staff skills and abilities and utilize traits to encourage growth and productivity in areas that each staff excel in.
- Balancing workload amongst staff to protect against employee burnout.
- Streamline Processes through identifying and eliminating repetitive and unnecessary steps in programmatic and fiscal work in order to make the office more efficient and effective.
- Digitize Office files so that they are easily stored, organized, accessed, and modified in an effort to reduce errors and maximize the efficiency of resource-use and productivity. By converting physical documents into digital files, we will reduce the need for physical storage space and also be more eco-friendly.
- Provide Exceptional Customer Service by providing a positive, helpful, and timely experience for internal and external customers through best practices like valuing customers' time, having a pleasant attitude, and providing knowledgeable and resourceful resources.

P12 Education Operational Support

Jason Harmon Deputy Commissioner

Office of Accountability

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Provided differentiated supports and coaching to schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement and expanded supplemental support opportunities to include schools in the Additional Targeted Support and Improvement support model.

Designed and introduced a Resource Allocation Pilot program for Districts designed to emphasize equity when making district-level resource decisions.

Redesigned school check-in process to better promote the establishment of school-level systems, building school and district capacity to continually monitor and reflect on plan implementation.

Increased capacity for coaching continuous improvement on the Field Support Team as evidenced by completion of the Improvement Science micro credential through partnership with the University at Albany.

Successfully developed processes and procedures for the review and approval of the Stronger Connections Program Grant applications.

Validated internal controls, systems, and structures through an issue of no findings in the single audit conducted by KPMG for the administration and oversight of Education Stabilization Funds.

Implemented the two-year Rebuild accountability system using 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 school year results as part of the USED-approved amendment to the ESSA Plan.

Increased explainability by providing indicator information sessions to outline the indicator performance calculation methodology used to make 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 accountability determinations as part of the two-year Rebuild accountability system.

In partnership with the Office of Innovation and School Reform, restarted the Demonstrable Improvement system for Schools under Receivership based upon 2021–2022 school year results and realigned the system to reflect post-pandemic performance targets that will be used beginning with the 2023–2024 determinations.

Enhanced the Public School Registration system, support and communication as evidenced by successfully completing the process for a large city districtwide reorganization. Increased capacity of the Policy, Analytics and Research team as evidenced by all projects being replicated and supported by at least two staff.

2024-2025 Priorities

Build the capacity of the field to establish systems, structures and practices that allow for educational equity, continuous improvement, and supporting all students by:

Refining and enhancing continuous improvement tools, resources and support.

Developing and implementing second-year programs to expand the differentiated support continuum available to schools through Supplemental Support offerings.

Evaluating the outcomes and implications of the Resource Allocation Review Pilot to design a process for review of equitable distribution of resources assisting districts to appropriately support schools/ students based on need.

Designing dynamic tools and resources to support LEAs in the implementation of the Stronger Connections Program and other ESEA Funded Programs.

Strengthening internal capacity to provide tailored support to LEAs and foster exceptional customer service through training and collaboration.

Developing toolkits to strengthen the field's understanding of reintroduced and/or modified indicators used for accountability determinations during the Reimagine phase.

Refine internal controls and systems by:
Implementing the second year of the Rebuild accountability system and initiating a longitudinal analysis of the system and its outcomes beginning with the 2021–2022 school year results, prioritizing the English Language Proficiency indicator.

Designing the Reimagine- Phase 1 iteration of the accountability system and obtaining approval from USDE to implement the system beginning with the 2025–2026 school year based upon 2024–2025 school year results.

Adjusting and refining the Demonstrable Improvement Determination system to make determinations based upon 2023–2024 school year results.

In collaboration with the Office of Innovation and School Reform, evaluating and revising the continuum of support provided to schools identified for Receivership, per Education Law § 211-f and Commissioner's Regulations §100.19.

Reframing the structure of monitoring the ARP funding and late liquidation as the rescue funds approach their closeout.

Designing a system to monitor school improvement 1003 grant funding.

Education Management Services

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Fully implemented primary functionality of the Paperless Pupil Transportation System, eliminating nearly all paper document submission requirements and modernizing the Pupil Transportation processes and workflow.

Reviewed and processed over 100 Transportation Contract Late File/Late Execution forgiveness requests from school districts, allowing the Aid penalties imposed to be added to the prior year aid queue.

Reduced Smart Schools Reimbursement Claim queue from 12 months to about 7 months; reduced Smart Schools Investment Plan review queue to where initial review starts within days of a district submission.

Established a planning and open communication protocol between NYC Public Schools and NYSED to help ensure adequate progress toward reducing the District's class size counts contained in NYS Education Law §211-D.

Project Staff in the Office of Education Management Services produced and distributed comprehensive reports on program sustainability beyond the expiry of federal COVID response funds to over 574 school districts.

Developed and implemented a framework for BOCES to engage with local Institutes of Higher Education to develop regional Early College Access programs, wherein students concurrently earn credits toward high school graduation and fully matriculated college credits upon successful course completion.

Developed and delivered strategic planning guidance to school districts and BOCES in support of the State's transition from fossil fuel transportation to zero emission transportation.

2024-2025 Priorities

Continue working with relevant internal program areas, BOCES, and other stakeholders on efforts to regionalize education and educational services across NY State, including working to remove the stigma around school district reorganization/consolidation.

Continue to work closely with New York City Public Schools to update and implement the District's plan to reduce class sizes as contained in NYS Education Law §211-D.

Work in collaboration with relevant NYSED program offices to develop and implement a BOCES shared-service framework to provide regional CTE workforce development pathways, internships to inform individual student post-secondary planning, and CDOS graduation pathways.

Continue working to add more functionalities to the Paperless Pupil Transportation system, including building and maintaining a searchable district driver/monitor/attendant database.

Continue to provide technical assistance and guidance around the mandate to transition from fossil fuel vehicles to zero-emission bus fleets by 2035.

Further reduce wait-time for NYSED review of Smart Schools Bond Act reimbursement claims.

Update Smart Schools Bond Act guidance to reflect statutory program updates contained in the State's FY2025 enacted budget, including the dissolution of the State's Smart Schools Review Board.

Office of Facilities Planning

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Coordinated with DOH, DEC, and other NYSED offices to assist in the development of a new reimbursement method for schools to use to access funds that 2022 legislation allocated to be used for the remediation of Lead in School Drinking Water.

Developed new guidance for Districts working on the statewide transition to Zero Emission School Buses. The guidance addresses NYSED funding avenues for electrical infrastructure components of this work, as well as details for submissions to our office as we continue to be the permitting authority for construction resulting from these changes. We are already expediting projects in support of this initiative.

Completion of permit reviews of all remaining federal stimulus funded construction projects and assisted Districts in coordination with adjacent NYSED offices for mutual approval of project amendments in order to maximize use of the funds before the deadlines.

Successfully advocated for the office to receive two additional positions to support the Fire Safety and Electrical Engineering needs of our office and some of the new initiatives we are supporting. Our office reclassification strategy is just about to be implemented to incorporate these additional positions and bring new titles to the office that better align with some of the tasks our office performs.

2024-2025 Priorities

Finalize and implement the Project Information Management System (PMIS) and engage the field in this new system. This will relieve the worry that the existing fragile system will fail and hold up the issuance of building permits and the flow of Building Aid. The new system's stability, access, integration with our existing Fire Safety portal system, and increased communication with State Aid are the top benefits for this transition.

Develop guidance identified as a requirement in the 2023 Safe Schools by Design Act. A workgroup has been formed to draw on the experience of several design and safety professionals around the state.

Continue to develop procedures to convert from paper to digital submissions of paperwork, plans, and specifications to increase efficiency in our reviews.

Re-start the Third Party Review program in collaboration with CiTi BOCES. This program will provide Districts an opportunity to choose an option for a paid expedited review while simultaneously reducing the strain on the Office and lead to shorter queue lengths all around.



Information Reporting Services

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Provided ongoing support and guidance for all P20 reporting entities to meet state and federal reporting requirements, timely release of State Report Card data and other reports to the public in support of our Board of Regents agenda and priorities.

Served as critical partner and data experts in multiple on-going research partnerships (e.g., Stanford EOP study, Westat national IES ELL study) to advise education policies.

Work force stabilization: successful recruitment of eight (8) data analysts, five (5) IT, and three (3) support staff within the Office.

Awarded \$3.75 million, 4-year State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant from USDE to kick start the SLDS initiative; approval of five (5) permanent state positions for the SLDS initiative to focus on building up the technical infrastructure team.

2024-2025 Priorities

Professional develop for new and existing staff; continue reclassification of professional educational titles to non-competitive data analysts titles in recruitment (because of attrition and retirement) and stabilize workforce to keep up with current and future reporting needs.

Collaborate with school districts, Regional Information Centers (RICs), Level 2 Statewide Educational Data Repository for accurate and timely data collection and reporting.

Merge Teacher Preparation Program Data Collection into the Student Information Repository System (SIRS); involve in the design and implementation of the data dashboard.

Implement new data collection initiative of behavioral intervention about Corporal Punishment, Restraints, Seclusions, and Time Out.

System enhancement: strengthen and expand data collection for UPK students; implement audit function of the L2RPT reports in the Level 1 reporting environment.

SLDS initiative: recruit technical team and request additional resources to establish the data analytic team; continue stakeholders' engagement (Governor's Office and other state agencies) for the development of Data Governance Program.

Innovation and School Reform

2023-2024 Accomplishments

We conducted biannual on-site, quarterly e-check-in sessions on Demonstrable Improvement Indicator (DII) progress monitoring, providing targeted Technical Assistance and differentiated supports, resources, and materials to Schools Under Receivership and their respective districts in the explicit identification of effective School Innovation and Turnaround strategies that support school attainment in meeting Demonstrable Improvement Indicators with a focus on subgroup improvement.

Modeled and reinforced the utility and application of:

1. The Department's Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education (CRS-E) Framework
2. Ensuring equitable access to high quality instructional programs and SEL-based services in a safe and inclusive educational setting for all students
3. Project-based Learning and CTE options for students in Schools Under Receivership

In addition, we:

- Provided Receivership School Principals, Assistant Principal and their ELA and Math Coach Teams with models of data review and analysis of student progress mapped to DII target attainment.
- Reframed and added a provision in the Receivership Quarterly Reporting template to ensure that schools (and districts) explicitly provide evidence and maintain artifacts of professional learning and increased resource accessibility on CRS-E for all learners.

- Redesigned the OISR School-based Targeted Technical Assistance and Support Framework and Site Visitation protocol model, tool, and process to more clearly reflect the school's integration of increased alignment with the Department's D, E, and I Framework.
- Activated the Transitional School Support (TSS) model providing scaffolded supports to those interested schools that transitioned out of Receivership in June 2023.
- Provided support to immediate past Schools Under Receivership, Commissioner's Discretion, and Independent Monitor (IM) Schools with the option of implementing the newly designed Transitional School Support Model (TSS) with the intent of providing a warm hand off from OISR to OA of same schools.
- Increased targeted resource accessibility to schools in identifying and maintaining SEL-based supports for students as a primary component to Receivership Continuation Plans and Quarterly Reports.
- Provided direct supports, planning and goal-setting mapping and coaching to State Monitors and District leadership in aligning Academic and Financial Plans.
- Conducted an on-site Technical Assistance and Support Session to assess Academic and/or Financial Goal attainment with each Monitor District Superintendent and State Monitor.
- Collaborated with the Department's internal Core 4 Monitor Planning Team to ensure Monitor and District reporting, timelines and resources were accessible and aligned to district needs, outcome targets and legislative intent.
- Provided schools under Receivership (and their districts) in identifying professional learning opportunities to increase performance across all subgroups – including providing access to cross-office regional supports for OBEWL and IDEA State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator accountability.
- Collaborated with the Office of Accountability in providing targeted coaching to Principals through the School Support Partner (SSP) model, aligning school-based walkthrough data with principal development needs.

2024-2025 Priorities

- Provide schools Under Receivership and their districts with resources, modeling and facilitated guidance on assessing and evaluating programmatic efficacy that is mapped to student outcomes as aligned with Demonstrable Improvement Target attainment.
- Triangulate student interim/formative assessment data, the school/district-specific walkthrough protocol and related qualitative observation data to frame and facilitate on-site PLC sessions post Technical Assistance Support and Review Sessions on tracking student cohort data to frame, refine and outline teacher, grade level and vertical team professional learning sessions as aligned with student performance trend data using point-in-time data to facilitate a performance gap closure analysis that will result in school teams refining interventions for students.
- Aid schools and districts in determining the efficacy of Chronic Absenteeism mitigation actions and evaluate student, parent and family engagement strategies that measurably contribute to increasing average daily attendance.
- Continue to provide school and district leadership with timely State and Federal resources that align with their needs based on cross-sections of data.
- Outline the school's improvement strategies and how the contributive value of key practices and supports are being monitored, measured, and adjusted based on DII target attainment (i.e., walkthrough protocol models, professional development, internal 'look fors,' classroom routines and procedures, and the assessment and monitoring of student learning).
- Model the identification of key instructional strategies, inclusive of active student engagement and ownership in their learning, teacher-

student and student-student interactions, and explicit progress monitoring systems aligned to the school's improvement plan that inform the school's practices toward meeting DII targets, resulting in improved student outcomes inclusive of:

- Improved student academic growth, achievement, and grade-level reading and math proficiency based on school-based formative assessments and NYS 3 – 8 data
- Increased Graduation and reduced Dropout Rate(s) tracking, as applicable - Grade 9 student persistence to 4-, 5- and 6-year graduation
- Increasing student average daily attendance and reducing chronic absenteeism
- Assessing the degree to which the school climate is safe, welcoming, inclusive, and conducive to learning and students are provided equitable access to high quality educational programs and SEL-based services
- Reducing duplicated and unduplicated Out-of-School Suspensions and rates of recidivism
- Assessing ELL and SWD disproportionality data
- Identify and monitor explicit targeted supports being provided by Central/District Office to principals, teachers and classrooms based on student- and school-specific needs.

In addition, we will:

- Increase the application and outreach of the Transitional School Support model to schools exiting Receivership.
- Continue collaborative efforts with the Office of Accountability and their Field Support Team to ensure the provision of School Support Partner (SSP) activities and resource accessibility remains in direct alignment to OISR's model of Technical Assistance and Support based on school data and Principal specific leadership development needs.
- Utilize the MTSS-I Framework to provide access to professional learning using school- and district-specific data on data-driven decisions to frame support-based scaffolds.
- Establish a cross-collaborative PLC with the Office of Special Education, the Office of Student Support Services, and the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages to foster teacher, principal and overall school development on the effective utilization and application of the intersection of MTSS-I that meets the holistic needs of all learners while seeking to simultaneously mitigate the effects and impact of ACES on student's social-emotional, academic linguistically diverse development, with the targeted intent to close subgroup performance gaps.
- Collaborate with Regional BOCES District Superintendent to provide targeted access and professional development-related supports to Schools Under Receivership.
- State Monitor Districts - Continue to refine the State Monitor Program and support process and model. Assess the utility of the current reporting model and provide updated SMART Goal resources as well as work 1:1 with each State Monitor to ensure that they are effectively applying the SMART Goal setting strategy and model to the Academic and/or Financial Plan reporting process with 100% accuracy by annual report submission.
- Provide at least one on-site Technical Assistance and Support Session to assess Academic and/or Financial Goal target attainment with the Superintendent and State Monitor.
- Collaborate with the internal State Monitor Core 4 Coordinating and Planning Team to refine and streamline the State Monitor check-in, reporting and Monitor Team Development Session timelines to ensure that the calendarization of same is efficient and sessions meet agenda outcome targets.

State Assessment

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Completed the first year of a three-year implementation plan of computer-based testing (Grades 5 & 8). This included successful computer-based testing for over 700,000 students – over double the previous year and almost 70% of the Grades 3-8 student population!

Introduction of new Elementary- and Intermediate-level Science Tests and a new Regents Examination in Algebra I measuring updated learning standards. All aspects of the development were led by NYS teachers and questions were written, reviewed multiple times, and selected for inclusion by NYS teachers.

Implementation of hands-on, three-dimensional science Investigations for embedding into science classes. This included a collaboration with scientists at the NYS museum and environmental educators from the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Support for English language learners through revised processes for test administration, including computer-based testing, and legislative funding for exam translations.

Provision of substantial amounts of documentation and user-friendly support materials for administrators, teachers, parents, and students with information about NYS tests and our assessment strategy.

2024-2025 Priorities

Continue the successful implementation of the three-year computer-based testing implementation plan (Grades 4, 5, 6, and 8).

Administer and provide support for the new Regents Examinations in Geometry, Earth and Space Sciences, and Life Science: Biology measuring new learning standards. As with other NYS assessments, all aspects of the development will be by NYS teachers and questions will be written, reviewed multiple times, and selected for inclusion by NYS teachers.

Continue close partnerships with educator organizations to support high quality teaching and learning through best practice uses of assessment results. Guidance for how to best use different types of assessments – from classroom level to national – will be developed, among other resources.

Explore substantial revisions to NY's proficiency assessments for English language learners. This will include computerization of the exams, provision of an alternate assessment for ELLs with significant cognitive disabilities, and availability of an interim assessment that will allow teachers to check and monitor student progress in English proficient.

Adult Education Program and Policy

The Adult Education Program and Policy Unit promotes, develops, and supports adult education programs that provide adult students with successful pathways to post-secondary education, apprenticeship training, credential training, and the workforce.

In coordination with NYS Department of Labor, the AEPP office also reviews proposed curriculum for NYS Apprenticeship programs.

The AEPP unit manages and monitors three state and federal funding programs. There are 14 Staff in the unit

Adult Literacy Education (ALE- State Funded)

Programs are funded from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2025. Funding supports Adult Basic Education (ABE), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs.

Funds are allocated to public and private not-for-profit agencies, including 2- and 4-year colleges, community-based organizations, libraries, volunteer literacy organizations and other not-for-profit organizations.

Eligible students must be 16 or over without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II and Welfare Education Program Funding (WIOA-Federal Funding / WEP-State Funding)

Provides adult education and literacy services to assist out-of-school youth and adults to become literate and obtain the skills necessary for employment. Students must be 16 years of age and older and not enrolled, or required to be enrolled in high school, and do not have a high school diploma or equivalent.

These students typically are unable to speak, read, or write proficiently in English.

Employment Preparation Program (EPE State Funded)

Provides funding to public school districts and BOCES that offer educational programs for adults leading to a high school diploma or equivalent diploma.

Students must be 21 or over without a high school diploma.

Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)

Ceylane Meyers-Ruff, Deputy Commissioner

There are four offices within ACCES: Adult Education Programs and Policy (AEPP), High School Equivalency (HSE), Bureau of Proprietary School Services (BPSS) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

ACCES

2023-2024 Accomplishments

As the Title II program in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), AEPP submitted its 4-year plan for the delivery of adult education services to New Yorkers. AEPP funding supports approximately 68,000 students annually.

AEPP funds supported adult education providers in serving asylum seekers. Seventy-four (74) percent of services were for English as a Second Language adult learners.

AEPP trained 124 District Superintendents and Adult Education Executives on policies and regulations related to adult education services to ensure that programs comply with federal and state expectations.

AEPP convened Literacy Zone and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education summits sharing resources and best practices for adult education programs across the state.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

AEPP will release a request for proposals related to the Bridge to College & Careers Pilot Program.

AEPP will host a summit for Department of Corrections and county jail adult education programs.

High School Equivalency (HSE) Office

The HSE Office oversees the administration of the NYS HSE exam, obtains test scores and issues HSE diplomas and transcripts. HSE launched the delivery of the GED® Test in January 2022, replacing the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) Test as the state's HSE exam. GED develops the exams and distributes and scores all exam subtests (Math, Social Studies, Science and Reading/Writing). Test scores are uploaded daily to the HSE database. There are 13 staff in the unit.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

There are currently 181 HSE test centers statewide, including those in secure youth detention facilities and incarcerated settings (DOCCS prisons and county jails).

The online ordering of HSE duplicate documents (transcripts and/or diplomas) was launched in March 2024. Users create an account on the my.ny.gov platform and connect with their HSE records. Within about one month of the launch, 50% of all duplicate documents - or about 1,800 transcripts and/or diplomas - were requested and paid for online. The prior system, which will continue to be available, requires a completed paper application to be mailed to the HSE office, with a postal money order or certified check. The online option provides documents much more quickly than those ordered using the paper application.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

The HSE Office is continuing to prioritize adding new GED testing sites and is collaborating with several operational test centers to increase the amount of GED testing offered.

The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) is an assessment-based model that leads to an HSE diploma. Work will continue on the statewide

restructuring of the NEDP (Accountability with Support). The goal is to improve client outcomes and increase the number of graduates. Program modifications include mandated reporting of program performance measures and a comprehensive review of monthly evaluative reports of client activity. Quarterly Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions provide opportunities for agencies to connect and share best practices.

Bureau of Proprietary School Supervision (BPSS)

BPSS licenses and oversees 380 non-degree postsecondary schools in New York State. Of this number:

354 career schools, varying in size and type, offer postsecondary training leading to careers in a wide range of sectors: allied health; computer technologies (coding); cosmetology; culinary; and traditional trades (e.g., automotive; refrigeration, welding, etc.).

26 ESL Schools offer educational programming—primarily to non-immigrant foreign students—to improve English skills for personal enrichment, increase job prospects in students' home countries, or to prepare students to enter colleges and universities in New York or abroad.

BPSS' operational mission is to ensure educational quality and to provide consumer protection for students attending non-degree postsecondary schools. In support of this mission, BPSS:

- reviews and approves each course or curriculum offered;
- licenses teachers, school directors, and enrollment agents;
- approves instructional facilities;
- reviews audited financial statements to ensure school financial viability;
- monitors compliance and conducts school inspections;
- investigates and resolves student complaints; and
- administers the State's Tuition Reimbursement Account, which provides students with tuition protection in the event that a school violates the law or closes abruptly.

BPSS has offices in NYC and Albany. Each office has 13 staff.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

BPSS implemented a new school renewal process which provided schools with consistent reviews and uniform documentation of inspection results. Approximately 135 renewal inspections occurred during this time. BPSS utilized this data to identify common areas of non-compliance amongst the inspected schools and then provided training and policy memos to address these areas.

The Licensing, Finance and Education units have implemented cross-unit internal controls to ensure all aspects of licensure, as defined in regulation, are met and approved before a school's license can be renewed or granted.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

BPSS will be providing guidance to schools related to financial viability. This guidance will ensure that schools receive feedback related to their financial viability status and what is required to maintain BPSS licensure.

BPSS will continue to investigate current sector trends and determine what regulations need to be addressed or adapted to meet the changing times of the field and the students in which it serves. Some of the areas to be reviewed include:

- Online schools that do not hold a physical presence in NYS.

- Creation of possible geographic saturation metrics, to be used when approving programmatic or school licensure.
- Continue to provide guidance and support to schools, by identifying schools well in advanced of potential closure due to financial and/or compliance issues, thus improving financial viability and mitigating any risk to the interruption or cessation of instruction and to student tuition funds.

Vocational Rehabilitation

VR's mission is to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve and maintain employment and to support independent living through training, education, rehabilitation, and career development.

Eligibility

A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if the individual:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment;
- Can benefit in terms of achieving an employment outcome consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice; and
- Requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment.

Types of Services

- Vocational Counseling and Guidance
- Vocational Training
- College Training
- Modifications to homes, vehicles and worksites
- Work Try Out & On the Job Training
- Job Coaching
- Occupational tools and equipment
- Pre-Employment Transition Services

Staffing

VR has almost 700 staff dispersed in 15 District Offices and 10 satellite offices throughout New York State, serving over 50,000 participants annually.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

As the Title IV program in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), VR submitted its 4-year plan for the delivery employment services to New Yorkers with disabilities.

VR and the Office for People with Development Disabilities (OPWDD) are working on a MOU that clearly defines roles and identifies opportunities for collaboration to ensure that New Yorkers with disabilities obtain employment.

The Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) project has been begun. The purpose of the grant is to transition individuals with disabilities who are currently engaged in subminimum wage employment or are contemplating subminimum wage employment into competitive integrated employment.

In support of the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities, VR worked with the Office of Higher Education to survey institutions of higher education on reasonable accommodations.

VR developed a MOU with Mohawk Valley Community College to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

VR will continue to work with P12 on opportunities to transition students with disabilities to postsecondary career options

VR will be partnering with the New York State Chief Disability Office on various initiatives to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

VR will continue to work on implementation of the SWTCIE grant.

VR will broaden collaboration with community colleges to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to secondary and postsecondary students with disabilities.

VR will continue supporting the Advisory Council on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities.



Jan... The Fulfillment of a Dream

Occupation: Software Engineer



Jan Guillermo is an academically gifted student. He was referred to ACCES-VR for transition services as a junior in high school from the NY School for the Deaf in White Plains. Jan is fluent in American Sign Language and was assigned to Michele P. Green as his Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf in 2011. Jan fell in love with programming after being sponsored at the Gates Foundation for a summer program while he was in high school.

After being accepted at the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2013, Jan was annually sponsored for tuition, room, board and books for his coursework by ACCES-VR. Jan maintained a consistently strong GPA and worked as a Student Software Engineer and Student Web Developer while on campus. Jan also enjoyed an opportunity as a Software Development Engineer Intern at Amazon in Seattle Washington. He was approved to participate in the BS/MS in Software Engineering at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Fall 2018. Jan graduated with his MS in Software Engineering in August 2019. Jan's case was transferred to the Rochester ACCES-VR office in September 2019 as he relocated permanently to that area. Employment services got underway and as a part of his own job search, Jan secured a full-time position as a Software Engineer at Microsoft in Redmond Washington. He began work in early January 2020. Jan is very appreciative of the services received at ACCES-VR.

This story was submitted by Michele Green
Local Workforce Development and Business Relations Representative
White Plains District Office

Asia...Just Keep Trying!

Occupation: Food Service

It hasn't been an easy journey for Asia T.

Asia's mom passed away when she was 2 years old. She moved from foster home to foster home until she was adopted at the age of 12. When Asia graduated from High School, her adoptive mother suggested that she apply to ACCES-VR. However, her first application was not so successful, as she did not seem ready for vocational rehabilitation services. Asia admitted that she wasn't very serious about her career and was not very motivated in finding employment at that time. She disclosed that she dropped out of college and moved to Virginia.

After a few months living in Virginia, Asia returned to NYC. To support herself, she found a job at a fast-food restaurant where she worked as a crew member for over 7 years. She then decided to change her career and become a certified Home Health Aid (HHA). She worked as a HHA for 3 years, until she realized that the only job-related task that she enjoyed, was cooking. Asia said she liked trying her hand at preparing authentic international dishes, following the recipes of the patients she cared for. She was frequently complimented on her culinary skills and her delicious cooking.

Asia became inspired to follow her passion and pursue a career in culinary field. She investigated schools and was referred to ACCES-VR by Project Renewal in 2017 to receive assistance with obtaining Culinary Arts training and securing stable employment. She applied with ACCES-VR and was assigned to vocational rehabilitation counselor Audrey Green, who worked with Asia one-on-one to help her develop her Individualized Plan for Employment. Asia passed a situational assessment at the culinary school and was supported by her counselor to pursue a career in culinary field. Asia successfully completed ACCES-VR funded training at the Culinary Tech Center and was hired as a Cook/Pizza Cook in less than 3 months after her graduation.



2020 was a difficult year for many, including Asia. She was laid off during COVID-19 closures. Asia lost her brother due to COVID and she was very nervous to return to the culinary field where there was a potential risk for her to be exposed to the disease. She considered applying for SSI or even changing her career field completely.

Ms. Green provided her with support, guidance, and resources during these challenging times. She shared job leads with her and sent her links to different training opportunities, in case she decided to permanently leave the culinary field. Ms. Green also regularly reached out to check in on her progress.

In February 2021 Asia was re-hired with her former employer in the same culinary position that she held pre-pandemic. Later, she secured a new employment at another restaurant as a Kitchen and Floor Manager. The work experience she gained at her previous jobs propelled Asia to find even better employment as a Food Service Worker for the NYC Department of Education. This position gives her the opportunity to utilize her culinary training and skills, and it offers job security and good benefits. Asia disclosed that her ultimate long-term goal is to open her own business and she is currently investigating her options.

At ACCES-VR Asia received a host of vocational rehabilitation services that helped her prepare for, secure, retain, and regain employment, and her impressive motivation and hard work helped her grow her career rapidly. She wanted to share her message for others who are just starting their vocational journey: "It was much of a struggle. But you have to keep going and keep trying".

Congratulations on your success, Asia!

This story was submitted by Kseniya Palishchuk
Local Workforce Development and Business Relations Representative
Brooklyn District Office

Higher Education

William Murphy, Deputy Commissioner

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Improving Teacher Certification and Strengthening the Teacher Pipeline

The Department and Board of Regents continued to modernize and reform the teacher certification system, making changes to requirements for teacher candidates. In recent years we have updated regulations related to grade band levels for special education certificates, streamlined additional science certificate requirements, updated school counselor standards, and amended Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) requirements. The most recent amendments were aimed at streamlining and updating educator certification requirements while maintaining rigorous standards for teacher candidates and educator preparation programs. These efforts are also designed to address the educator diversity gap.

Most recent specific regulatory amendments included:

Certificate Time Extensions and Re-issuances. The Department and Board took action to revise the Initial Reissuance, Provisional Renewal, and Time Extension requirements to ensure that educators have an opportunity to extend the validity period of their certificates during extenuating circumstances that may prevent them from completing the requirements for the Professional or Permanent certificate. The amendment removes more complicated and limited options for Initial and Provisional certificate holders, and instead, allows certificate holders to obtain up to two reissuances/renewals with more flexible eligibility requirements. .

Reciprocity. The Board of Regents adopted a regulatory amendment to streamline the "Endorsement of a Certificate" ("endorsement") pathway and "Completion of a Comparable Educator Program in Another U.S. State" pathway to certification, including giving the Department more flexibility in determining which certificates from another state could be considered comparable to a New York State certificate and removing the time period during which candidates must complete their three years of experience for the endorsement pathway.

Supplementary Certificate and Supplementary Bilingual Education Extension. Communities across New York State are experiencing an influx of recently arrived and asylum-seeking students and families. The Board of Regents and the Department are committed to supporting local educational agencies (LEAs) in delivering high-quality educational services to all students, including recently arrived children and youth. Due to the unanticipated increase in the enrollment of speakers of languages other than English, some LEAs need help hiring the additional educators necessary to support these new English language learners in schools. Therefore, the Department adopted an emergency amendment to provide flexibilities for certain educators who apply for the Supplementary certificate and Supplementary Bilingual Education extension between September 12, 2023 and August 31, 2024. The amendment creates flexibility so that educators can expeditiously obtain this certificate and extension to address this influx of students.

Indigenous Culture and Language Studies (All Grades) certificate. This important and innovative certificate was created for teachers to increase the capacity and number of teachers who can teach indigenous cultures and languages while simultaneously raising the awareness, knowledge, and appreciation for indigenous peoples.

Towards a more innovative and comprehensive pre-service and in-service teacher training model

After establishing new residency model teacher training program standards and certificates in 2022 the Department continues to increase the number of residency programs at New York State institutions of higher education in partnership with school districts. These innovative programs allow candidates year-long, mentor-rich student teaching experiences and the ability to take part in paid residency and apprenticeship experiences. Within the past

year the Department has registered over 140 residency programs at over 30 colleges, across a broad array of certification areas such as childhood education, special education, science, math and technology, and ELA and the arts. Many of the partnership programs have been awarded funding from the Empire State Teacher Residency Program.

The Department recently joined the National Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching Network. This network consists of states from around the country innovating with registered apprenticeships in teaching to address educator shortages. The network will meet to discuss the design and implementation of registered apprenticeships in teaching, inform policy and practice on the national stage and provide feedback to the U.S. Department of Labor. Recognizing the importance of the apprenticeship model in education, both Teacher and Teaching Assistant (TA) Apprenticeship pathways have been created to facilitate funded mentored teacher and TA training experiences through the NYS Department of Labor.

The Department has created a dedicated website for Grow Your Own (GYO) initiatives and resources. GYO is an umbrella phrase to describe initiatives aimed at increasing or sustaining a community-driven teacher pipeline. GYO initiatives recruit, prepare, and support candidates on their path to teacher certification as candidates provide teaching services for and gain teaching experience in their community schools. Some GYO programs provide early exposure to the teaching profession (see Early Recruitment Pipelines below and GYO Entry Points: Early Recruitment Pipelines), early completion of teaching certification and GYO Entry Points: Dual Credit Education Courses & Articulation Agreements, and/or flexible teaching certification routes, such as Multiple Certification Pathways.

The Department is also working with all college educator preparation programs to ensure that the new, more rigorous clinical student teaching experiences are implemented starting in the Fall 2024 semester. The changes impact the duration and structure of clinical practice, place an emphasis on who may provide clinical supervision (their qualifications and the plan to ensure clinical faculty stay current in providing effective clinical supervision), and require partnerships to be established and maintained to support effective clinical practice.

For support in the development of the newly required Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar collaborative agreement, the Department created guidance for Partnership Agreements. The document provides a set of guiding questions for institutions and clinical practice sites to consider as they work to develop and/or refine partnership agreements. The questions have been organized under five key pillars related to establishing strong, effective working partnerships that support the development of teacher candidates, and supplements guidance on data privacy for clinical internships.

Policy and Technology Improvements for Teacher Certification

The Office of Teaching Initiatives has begun to review internal policies related to experience and education requirements for application pathways, as follows:

Shifted the acceptance of transcripts and superintendent experience verification to web-based platforms.

- Electronic submission of transcripts has increased year over year. Approximately 75% of transcripts and 90% of foreign credential evaluations are submitted electronically now. This streamlines the uploading of documents into applicant accounts and enables us to have a quicker turnaround for evaluations.
- Superintendent statements from public and charter schools are now 100% electronically submitted. Again, this allows us to process applications much faster.

Changed how customer emails are routed to office staff to improve responsiveness.

- All external correspondence is now routed through Zendesk, an online customer service platform.
- Since its inception in October of 2023, OTI has received and processed 85,753 tickets. The implementation of Zendesk has revolutionized the way OTI communicates and follows up with stakeholders and has vastly reduced time it takes to respond.

These efforts to update and improve the teacher certification system have already started to yield results. Timelines for certification approval have improved dramatically while still maintaining a high volume of certifications processed.

Year	Applications Filed	Applications Approved
2019	88410	66489
2020	115485	64603
2021	123754	88844
2022	107080	86292
2023	98255	78813

Opportunity, Access, and Equity Programs

The enacted New York State Budget provided over \$200 million in State funding to provide academic and financial support to economically and educationally disadvantaged students through opportunity programs with full funding for all current higher education initiatives, including the following programs with more than \$175 million in funding:

- High School/College Opportunity Programs- Foster Youth College Success Initiative, Liberty Partnerships Programs (offering pre-collegiate dropout prevention programs), My Brother’s Keeper, Pathways in Technology (P-Tech) Program, Smart Scholars Early College High School, Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), and Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP), Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP).
- Teaching and Nursing Professions- High Needs Nursing Program, Teacher Mentor Intern Program, Teachers of Tomorrow, Teacher Diversity Pipeline Project, and the Teacher Opportunity Corps II.

Teacher Opportunity Corps

In 2022, the Department awarded another \$3.45 million in Teacher Opportunity Corps II (TOC II) grants to 17 New York colleges and universities and issued a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for the next round of \$3M grants for the five-year period of 2023-2028. Successful grantee programs will incorporate proven strategies for teacher retention and best practice, such as mentors for new teachers and differentiated instructional techniques. TOC II currently has nearly 500 students enrolled and has graduated over 780 teachers to date.

Enhancing Supports and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities

The Department oversaw the third year of funding for the enhancing supports and services for students with disabilities program for New York State colleges and universities, which doubled the amount of funding to \$4 million for projects and initiatives that support New York’s 85,000 postsecondary students with disabilities.

Participating IHEs are using their awards from the enacted budget for one or more of the following purposes:

- To supplement funding for supports and accommodations of students with disabilities;
- To support summer college preparation programs to assist students with disabilities’ transition to college, and prepare them to navigate campus facilities and systems;
- To provide full- and part-time faculty and staff with training in working with students with disabilities; and
- To improve the identification process of students with disabilities and enhance data collection capabilities.

Department staff worked with stakeholders to gather data and documentation related to how the funding is used to address these priorities. Staff also worked with IHEs to gather information via surveys

on the current supports, services, tools, technology, and policies aimed at improving higher education experience and outcomes for postsecondary students with disabilities at colleges and universities across the state.

Foster Youth College Success Initiative

The Foster Youth College Success Initiative Program funding remained at \$8,161,000 for 2023-24. This program is for students who have experienced foster care or are eligible orphans. Funding can be used towards supporting the cost of attending college, including housing, meals, and transportation.

The program currently provides support services and financial resources to expand opportunities for 1,148 foster youth students at a per-pupil amount of \$7,109:

Sector	SUNY	CUNY	Independents	Totals
Total Students	640	376	132	1,148
2023-24 Funding Amount	\$4,549,686		\$938,373	\$8,161,000
Percentage Funding	56%	33%	11%	100%

College and University Program Approval Improvements

New York State’s statutory and regulatory requirements for the Department’s review and approval of new academic programs are designed to ensure program integrity and alignment with standards for resources, faculty qualifications, administrative oversight, and curriculum development. This protects the educational and financial interests of students as well as the investment of tax dollars in student financial aid programs. Over the past several years, the Department has implemented several efficiencies in our program registration processes, improving timelines for the review and approval of programs. For example, in the Office of College and University Evaluation, the average number of days it took in 2023 to register a program proposal was 25 days.

In 2023, OCUE approved 1,739 program registration applications. 71% of proposals were reviewed and registered within 30 days. Of those 1,739 applications:

- 381 were registered in 10 days or less: 22%
- 1,230 were registered in 30 days or less: 71%
- 1,650 were registered in 60 days or less: 95%

College access and affordability- Tuition Assistance Program Changes

SED also works closely with the students and stakeholders across the p-12 school district and higher education continuum to ensure we are supporting the most proactive approaches and initiatives to bolster college access, affordability, and success.

To specifically address the college affordability and enrollment issues at NYS public and private colleges, NYS policymakers and college stakeholders have attempted to initiate a number of policy, programmatic, and regulatory initiatives. The state’s largest financial aid Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) has been expanded in recent years and the maximum TAP award for full-time students is \$5,665. TAP income eligibility has been expanded and also includes higher awards for part-time students. In 2017, NYS was also one of the first in the nation to implement a tuition-free public college model for lower and middle income families with the Excelsior Scholarship program. According to the College Board’s 2022 Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid, four-year public tuition costs in NYS rank among the 8th lowest in the country, while also maintaining one of the highest per pupil funding models for public college students.

The Board recently adopted an amendment of section 145-2.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education relating to the eligibility criteria for New York State financial aid. This amendment offers solutions for students who have accumulated many early college or dual enrollment credits toward their major and are, at times, unable to meet the definition of full-time study and to remain eligible to receive state financial aid for a semester or more. This allows for advisors to work closely with students and develop a detailed path toward degree completion while maintaining students’ full-time study status toward the approved program of study Support for Institutions of Higher Education in Transition.

Colleges have been experiencing challenges due to changing demographics and enrollment trends in higher education, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NYS has been experiencing an uptick in college closures in recent years. When a college is forced to close, NYSED assist colleges to minimize the impact on students and identify pathways for graduation. We also have a dedicated area on our website which offers updates, details, and resources on specific college closures.

The most important element related to a college closure is a comprehensive teach-out plan which ensures that students can finish their degree programs by the closure date or at partner colleges. NYSED works closely with colleges and their accreditation agencies to ensure that degree programs and required internships can be completed. For example, when the College of St. Rose announced its closure, area colleges identified which of their existing programs could accommodate these students. In some cases, colleges quickly created new programs (adopting faculty and/or curricula from St. Rose) to meet the needs of impacted students, and NYSED was able to expedite the review of these programs.

In an effort to optimize program offerings, some colleges have explored shifting degree programs to partner colleges. A recent example involves Clarkson University shifting its graduate level educator preparation programs to Siena College. This involved a very thoughtful transition plan which included a master plan amendment and charter amendment.

Recent challenges and college closures have also prompted NYSED to explore our existing policies, regulations, and application documents to ensure we are meeting the needs of an evolving higher education landscape, while also maintaining the standards and rigor expected of the colleges across all sectors. For example, we have received inquiries related to transactions involving in-state and out-of-state IHEs, as well as IHEs and

other non-profit entities. In response, the Department has issued guidance to inform the field of the procedures and possibilities for merger, consolidation, or membership between IHEs in New York as well as potential not-for-profit partners. Additionally, NYSED recently recommend that the Board of Regents adopt a regulatory amendment defining the circumstances under which the Regents can consider a merger, consolidation, or membership between an independent NYS IHE and an out-of-state IHE. We have also recently amended and re-posted our application for IHEs seeking degree authority in NYS.

[Interstate Reciprocity Initiatives](#)

New York State's membership in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) provides New York State degree granting institutions a streamlined process for authorization to offer distance education to students in other states. SARA was particularly valuable to institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and demand for distance education programs remains high. New York State currently has 153 SARA-participating institutions, including 12 new participating institutions since May 2023. Over 31,000 out-of-state students enrolled in distance education programs offered by NYS IHE's participating in SARA in 2022. All SARA-participating institutions must file a SARA renewal application annually. Department staff consistently conduct high-quality, timely reviews of these applications.

The Department also recently signed the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement. The provides information about the certification requirements in member states and jurisdictions for out-of-state applicants and facilitates information-sharing and comparison of certification requirements between states.



Responding to Mental Health Issues on College Campuses

In recent years there has been a sizeable increase in mental health issues among students, faculty and staff on college campuses in America, with recent studies noting:

- 60% of college students showed signs of at least one mental health problem.
- 44% exhibiting signs of depression
- 37% exhibiting signs of anxiety

Colleges are now taking much more proactive, comprehensive approaches to mental health and wellness by introducing incoming students to a more robust portfolio of services including, 24 hour telehealth and crisis hotlines, peer-peer assistance networks, and partnerships with state and local mental health and community groups, and a call for better resourced counseling centers.

NYSED has participated in a number of Mental Health awareness events and conferences during this time, such as the Mental Health and Higher Education Summit Sponsored by MHANYS; and the Mental Health Equity Summit sponsored by NYS Office of Mental Health

NYSED has also emphasized a comprehensive, p-20 approach by encouraging connections between our graduate level counseling and university clinical mental health clinics that partner with school districts and communities, and provides the pipeline for college graduates from our MSW, MHC, and other clinical counseling programs.

The Department is also working with colleges to ensure that the updated School Counseling standards and recent regulatory amendments are implemented in a timely manner. Related to this the Department recently announced the availability of the new School Counselor content specialty test (CST). To assist candidates and teacher preparation programs in preparing for the test, the test framework, content correlation table, and study guide are now available on the NYSTCE website.

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) Grant Program Updates

The Department has recently proposed amendments to the Albert Shanker National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification Grant Program to encourage more teachers to seek National Board Certification. The grant program was established by Education Law §3004-a in 1999 to defray the costs of National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification to eligible New York State (NYS) public school teachers. The amendments would revise the eligibility requirements for teachers for grant funds to cover costs associated with obtaining and maintaining National Board Certification. The proposed amendments would make funding available to NBCTs seeking to renew their National Board Certification at the five-year expiration date as required by the National Board's Maintenance of Certification process, and also allow first-time candidates who fail one or more of the NBCT components a one-time opportunity to receive additional funding to retake the unsuccessful component(s).

National Board Certification is a voluntary, respected process designed to develop, retain, and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate ongoing improvement in schools nationwide. In order to earn National Board Certification, a teacher must obtain a passing score on an assessment of each of four components: Content Knowledge, Differentiation in Instruction, Teaching Practice and Learning Environment and Effective and Reflective Practitioner. To date 2,334 NBCTs have become certified in New York State.

Office of School Personnel Review & Accountability (OSPRA)

The Department's Office of School Personnel Review and Accountability (OSPRA) has responsibility for fingerprint supported criminal history background checks for educators, teacher moral character and disciplinary cases, test security, and teacher tenure hearings. Given the breadth of OSPRA's mandate, it is staffed with attorneys, investigators, and a variety of clerical and support staff critical to its mission.

With a continued surge in teacher certification, test administration/security, and discipline-related activity in school districts in recent years, OSPRA has experienced an increased demand for services and in overall activity. Hiring and staffing the office has not kept pace with this demand.

OSPRA processed a new all-time record 117,760 fingerprint clearances in 2023 (up 2% from 2022), which was the highest number of fingerprint clearances in the history of OSPRA, compared to the previous all-time high

of 115,374 fingerprint clearances in 2022, which was the highest number of fingerprint clearances in the history of OSPRA, compared to the third previous all-time high of 107,655 in 2003.

OSPRA's Legal Unit processed and mailed 2,230 Part 87 legal notices in 2023 (1,265 Intent to Deny Notices and 965 Denial Notices). This was down 21 notices from the all-time record total in 2022 (1,277 total legal notices; 759 Intent to Deny Notices and 518 Denial Notices).

OSPRA received 5,878 Part 83 complaints in 2023 and has received 2,147 complaints in 2024 (processed through intake as of May 21, 2024). This was up 5.5% from 2022 when OSPRA received 5,574 Part 83 complaints. Complaint sources include fingerprint hits from DCJS and the FBI, responses from individuals, the national clearinghouse, members of the public, the New York City Special Commissioner of Investigation, school districts, notices of subsequent arrest, and the review of 3020-a cases.

OSPRA's Investigative Unit opened 400 more moral character investigations in 2023 (1,786) than it did in 2022 (1,386), and 942 more than it did in 2020 (844). OSPRA's Investigative Unit has already opened 600 moral character investigations in 2024 as of May 21, 2024.

In 2023, OSPRA reported 89 Part 83 actions to the national clearinghouse (up 23 from 2022) including 43 revocations, 13 denials, and 22 surrenders. The highest ever was in 2020 (with 129) and OSPRA has not exceeded 100 reported outcomes to the national clearinghouse since 2017 (126). As of May 21, 2024, OSPRA has reported 40 Part 83 actions to the national clearinghouse including 14 revocations, 8 denials, and 12 surrenders.

2024-2025 Priorities

OCUE/Program Registration Modernization Project

The Office of College & University Evaluation (OCUE) will continue working with its Modernization Project team to design and build an online system for the submission and approval of program registration applications. In partnership with the Office of the Professions (OP), this team is doing the difficult work of identifying current practices, forms and workflows, and OCUE/OP wants and needs ("to-be" requirements).

This work will lead to the preparation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the selection of a web-based software solution to handle the processes of evaluating, approving, and registering the various college and university programs, migrate data effectively and efficiently to the new platform, and sunset the current (and antiquated) Microsoft Access Databases and mainframe system for the Inventory of Registered Programs (IRP). Upon approval from NYSED leadership and the Division of Budget, this software will be procured; development and implementation will take place over the next three years, as originally scheduled. Prior to a formal launch targeted for mid-2025, the system will be piloted with a group of public, proprietary, and independent institutions of higher education; these institutions will be included in discussions leading up to the pilot.

When fully implemented, the Department will provide:

- Greater transparency to the colleges and universities related to the benchmarks and timelines for program applications and review;
- The capability to track proposals and submit documents and evidence in one place through an online portal; and
- The ability to respond to questions within the platform, with alerts and notifications to ensure no inquiries are missing/delayed.

OTI/TEACH Modernization

NYSED continues to upgrade and modernize its teacher certification system and processes with improvements in the TEACH system, call center, and customer service platforms.

As an example, the office has begun working with Zendesk to manage customer support more effectively through an online ticketing and tracking system. This technology has been used by other NYSED program areas (OP, ACCES, and P-12) for years and will allow OTI staff to better communicate with its customers when they call or email the office for support. More specifically, through the use of chat bots, question-based informational articles that can be easily shared, and other technology to provide on-demand support, this software will allow OTI staff to more quickly and efficiently handle the volume of support calls/ emails that come into the office.

OTI leadership partnered with Zendesk over the summer 2023 to configure the software, author the informational articles, and design training for staff



on how to utilize the recent technology. Staff were trained in late summer/early fall, and launched the new system at the end of the year.

Additionally, OTI staff worked with NYSED's Office of Public Affairs to produce a series of training videos that help customers navigate the office's website and TEACH system. These will be uploaded to the OTI website as they become ready for public viewing.

[Launching the TEACH NY Initiative to enhance teacher recruitment](#)

The Department is excited to announce the launch of TEACH New York (TeachNY), a pioneering initiative aimed at reinvigorating the teaching profession and attracting diverse talent into education, in Spring 2024. TeachNY is a mission-driven effort focused on enhancing the perception of teaching and encouraging more individuals to consider a career in education. This initiative leverages a research-backed model, offering comprehensive support and resources for prospective teachers to navigate the path to certification. Through a blend of digital and in-person resources, TeachNY serves as a gateway to the teaching profession, offering insights, guidance, and inspiration to future educators. Partnering with TeachNY provides Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and other educational organizations a unique opportunity to boost their teacher recruitment strategies. This collaboration promises increased visibility, access to proven tools and resources, and the potential to diversify and expand the educator workforce – all at no cost. This will be the first year of implementation of the program.

[Data modernization efforts to realize a robust and on-time picture of the Teacher pipeline/shortage areas](#)

The Department has been working with the Region 2 Comprehensive Center (WestEd) to identify the right analyses, our existing data sources, and the technology we can use to create educator workforce data dashboards that will analyze the data we collect at NYSED related to our educator preparation programs and teachers and administrators who are employed in our public schools. The goal is to create clear, concise data visualizations related to the supply and demand of educators across the State. Once this project is completed, we will have a much better, more accessible picture related to our educator workforce.

[Evidence-Based Literacy Initiatives for Educator Preparation Programs](#)

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) recognizes the importance and urgency of improving the reading skills of all students in schools, districts, and BOCES. To address this goal, NYSED has engaged in a number of P-20 partnership initiatives related to effective, evidence-based practices in teaching literacy that are aligned with the science of reading.

New York State has been chosen to participate in the third cohort of the Hunt Institute's The Path Forward initiative. In coordination with the New York State Education Department (NYSED), the Literacy Academy Collective has been tapped to convene the NYS Path Forward team with the aim to transform literacy instruction in New York State by embedding the science of reading into educator preparation programs. Led by an esteemed Steering Committee, the state team is comprised of leaders from the Board of Regents and NYSED; the NYS Legislature; the Governor's office; leaders, deans, and faculty from higher education, including educator preparation programs; and key community advocates,

funders, and stakeholders from across the state. They have met regularly throughout the year to collaborate on an action plan that is recommending changes to educator preparation program and certification requirements.

Latest Phase of Teacher Certification Reform Proposals

The Department sent a memo in November 2023 to key stakeholder groups that included a summary of six potential changes to the certification system, with a rationale for each. The goal of the memo was to stimulate thought and discussion and to solicit feedback from our education partners about the future of teacher and school leader preparation and development.

The six potential changes for discussion are in the areas of:

- o Certification examinations
- o Teaching Assistant certification
- o Additional certificates
- o Professional certificate education requirement
- o Transitional certificate joint alternative provider pathway
- o Administrator certification

A focus of the proposals is the minimum level of pedagogical practice and content knowledge, skills, abilities, and employer support an educator needs to excel in the profession. Additionally, it represents an attempt to bring together the assets of our teacher and school leader preparation programs and the rich professional learning experiences provided by BOCES and school districts into a coherent system of professional learning and support.

The Department is continuing the process of stakeholder engagement and collecting feedback on the draft certification reform proposals, and intends to propose Regents amendment items related to the proposed changes that are adequately vetted and ready for consideration.

FAFSA Completion Initiative

The Department is supportive of measures to ensure FAFSA completion which correlates with higher college enrollment participation and affordability. The current Enacted Budget requires each school district to ensure verification from each high school senior that they have completed either the FAFSA or, if applicable, the New York State DREAM Act application, or a waiver promulgated by the Department indicating that have chosen not to file such applications. Beginning July 1, 2025, each school district is required to annually report to the Department the total number of students that have completed either the FAFSA or the New York State DREAM Act application, the number of students completed a waiver, and the total number of seniors enrolled in the school district. National FAFSA Tracker data show that NYS typically ranks near the top 10 nationally for percent of high school seniors completing the FAFSA form, but there is still room for even better participation rates.

The Department is considering strategies to increase FAFSA completion by enlisting MBK Fellows to mentor and work with students in an advisory and mentorship capacity to complete the FAFSA.

Early College High School (ECHS) initiatives

ECHS programs have a long history of encouraging and promoting college access and affordability. In 2009, NYS launched the Smart Scholars Early College High School (ECHS) program to support and expand dual enrollment and early college high school. In 2011, IBM, the New York City Department of Education, and The City University of New York (CUNY) designed and launched the first P-TECH school in Brooklyn, New York. The P-TECH program is designed specifically to provide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)-focused education, based on a partnership with a school district, a college and a business, and aims to increase the number of underrepresented students in STEM related college degrees and careers. In addition to the Smart Scholars ECHS and PTECH programs that NYSED administers, there are many college and school district-led initiatives and partnerships which have expanded to include many different forms of early college credits: AP, International Baccalaureate, CUNY College Now and Early College Initiative (ECI), partnerships with SUNY Community Colleges, Bard HS Early College, and other innovative dual enrollment programs.

With flagging enrollment at community colleges and renewed concerns related to fostering enrollment for underrepresented students, the expansion of early college credit initiatives serves the dual purpose of addressing enrollment and financial challenges with improving access, opportunity, and diversity. Recent national data show that dual enrollment/early college high school students represent a sizeable and growing share of community college enrollments at 16%, with approximately 34% of high school students taking college credits in high school. There is also growing evidence that early college high school programs produce greater outcomes associated with college enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, especially for underrepresented and under resourced students.

The Department is working to align and expand ECHS and Dual Enrollment initiatives across the state and create a more formal and comprehensive framework for ECHS policies, definitions, funding and partnership opportunities.

Statewide Plan for Higher Education

The Department has initiated the development of the latest Statewide Plan for Higher Education. Every eight years, the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the higher education community, develops and adopts the Statewide Plan for Higher Education. The Statewide Plan sets system goals and objectives and addresses priority matters of statewide concern to the State's residents, workforce, and community, as well as New York State's institutions of higher education (IHEs).

Professions

David Hamilton, Deputy Commissioner

In 1891, medicine became the first profession licensed by the New York State Board of Regents. Since then, New York's unique system of professional regulation, which includes all aspects of education, licensing, practice, and discipline, has grown to encompass more than 1,000,000 practitioners in the 56 licensed professions and more than 30,500 professional practice business entities and pharmacy establishments. The Office of the Professions' (OP) newest profession, Histotechnologist, was implemented in 2023.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

Ensured that Professional Oversight Remains with the Board of Regents

- Utilized the budget allocation in the 2023-24 budget to continue to fill critical vacancies and improve customer service.
- Engaged with stakeholders and other state agencies to improve communication, collaboration, and outreach efforts.
- Supported Regents Initiatives
- Continued to monitor and research licensure compacts and the potential positive and negative implications for NYS applicants, licensees, and consumers.
- Continued the commitment to bring focus to issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the educational preparation and professional practice of the 56 professions, with the engagement of affected parties and stakeholders, website improvements to ensure accessibility for all users, including those with disabilities, and drafting of regulatory amendments that helped to implement extra testing time and use of an English translation dictionary for licensure candidates who speak or read English as a second language (ESL) for candidates taking the national Architecture examination.
- Implemented profession-specific surveys at the time of registration, in collaboration with Center for Health Workforce Studies, to gain a better understanding of the current practice and future plans of the workforce.

Focused on Modernization and the Needs of OP Customers

- Issued more than 98,000 professional licenses, a nearly 40% increase from the previous year.
- Responded to over 1 million email and telephone inquiries.
- OP's enhanced online verification search database now includes advanced capabilities. Users can easily search for professionals across all professions using partial information, such as names or license numbers, with search results prioritized by relevance.
- New online registration renewal payments system was introduced streamlining the renewal process for licensed professionals by consolidating information and providing electronic access to various forms, simplifying the process of updating personal details associated with a professional license.
- Re-designed the Career Path portion of OP's website where students and potential professionals can match their interests to one or many of the professions licensed by OP, and they can find tools to help them turn their aspirations into reality.
- Increased social media presence to raise awareness about what OP does, to inform prospective professionals about our education and examination requirements, and to recognize the professions.

Ensured Public Protection

- Completed over 4,500 investigations of professional misconduct complaints.
- Conducted more than 800 pharmacy inspections.
- Opened over 200 illegal practice cases
- Brought forward 446 professional discipline cases and 11 restoration petitions for Board of Regents action.
- Continued efforts in the Office of Professional Responsibility to leverage OP modernization and the New Professions System to ensure swift action on complaints, consistent policies, and timely presentation to the Board of Regents for disciplinary actions.

Provided Technical Assistance, Implemented New Laws, and Developed Amendments

- At the request of state legislators, OP subject matter experts provided in-depth and ongoing technical assistance on nearly 100 legislative bills impacting the licensed professions.
- Took action to implement seven new laws with 2023-24 effective dates.
- Proposed nine amendments to Commissioner's Regulations affecting the professions that were discussed/adopted by the Board of Regents in 2023-24.
- To implement Chapter 134 of the Laws of 2023, which allows for clinical nursing education to use simulation, OP collaborated with educational institutions, healthcare employers, nurse educators to establish a process by which registered institutions can seek an expedited curriculum change to implement one-third of their existing clinical education hours through simulation experience.

Engaged State Boards and Stakeholders

- The Board of Regents appointed 50 new members to the State Boards or Committees for the Professions. State Boards and Committees for the Professions held 79 meetings to discuss pertinent topics in their respective professions and offer guidance and recommendations to the Department and the Board of Regents.
- State Boards engaged in outreach by participating or presenting in more than 18 professional association meetings, conferences, or NYS school events.
- Worked collaboratively with other state agencies to share information and address issues with cross-jurisdictional impact.
- Held extensive and ongoing meetings with professional associations and other key stakeholders to gather feedback, respond to questions, and address areas of mutual concern.
- Attended the Capital Region NY FIRST Robotics Competition, and the P-Tech Engineering Wars at Corning Community College
- Celebrated NY STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) by creating a social media campaign to showcase how many professions are truly interdisciplinary.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

- Maintain quality oversight of the licensed professions.
- Continue to fill critical staff vacancies to better address workload demands and improve licensing timeframes and the customers service experience.
- Update Commissioner's Regulations to implement newly passed legislation and to meet contemporary professional practice needs and demands.
- Collaboration with the Department of Health leadership team to share information and align priorities.
- Confer with the Office of Governmental Relations to improve processes for providing technical assistance to the NYS Legislature.
- Continue meaningful engagement of State Boards and Stakeholder

Organizations on emerging professional practice issues.

- Continuously improve and modernize customer service.
- Implement enhancements to the newly redesigned OP Website.
- Implement the next phases of the OP Modernization Project.
- Implement customer-focused, self-service tools such as an application tracker to improve information sharing and reduce phone calls and emails.
- Continue utilizing a customer ticketing system to better track, understand, and respond to our customer's needs.
- Educate all staff across OP offices to respond to telephone and email inquiries quickly, accurately, and consistently.
- Improve cycle times to issue a license for applicants who meet all requirements in law and regulation.
- Identify and manage emerging trends and Regents Priorities in professional licensure and practice.
- Continue to engage with stakeholders to better understand their concerns and priorities.
- Identify opportunities in professional education and continuing education to better prepare licensed professionals to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Undertake extensive research to determine how best to modernize the pharmacy practice act in an era of rapid evolution.
- Continue to identify opportunities to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion across licensed professions.
- Review existing laws and regulations to highlight areas in need of updating to better serve consumers' needs while ensuring accountability of providers.



Cultural Education

Mark Schaming, Deputy Commissioner

The Office of Cultural Education (OCE), through the State Museum, State Library, State Archives, Public Broadcasting, and Summer School for the Arts, stewards, preserves and provides access to the rich culture and history of New York. OCE's primary goals are to find new ways to connect New Yorkers with these resources through engagement with educators, students, and stakeholders statewide.

2023-2024 Accomplishments

New York State Museum

The Museum serves as a valued and independent research institution that curates comprehensive, creative, and thought-provoking human and natural history exhibitions for visitors worldwide. Before the pandemic, nearly 500,000 patrons visited the museum annually, and as with the changing times, the attendance is on pace to meet those same numbers. It should also be noted that there are many educational programs for teachers, school and college-age students, and adult learners (nearly 30,000 annually).

The museum has hosted countless members of the state legislature, including Speaker Heastie and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, representatives from the State's Big 5 school districts, and our BOCES District Superintendents.

Since its reopening in June of last year after a complete rebuild, the Museum's carousel has hosted nearly 50,000 riders.

The Museum has also acquired significant historical artifacts, including 17th-century Dutch decorative arts, the Vanderveer family collection, photography collections from Fred McDarrah (1926-2007) and Allan Tannenbaum (1945-present), decorated stoneware, and art from the Woodstock Art Colony.

The Museum has also debuted 15 new and refreshed exhibitions this year alone. Opened temporary exhibitions on a wide range of topics, including Moral Arc of Freedom: Lincoln, King, and the Emancipation Proclamation, which included treasures from the New York State Library and New York State Archives. Each One Inspired Art Across the Homelands, which drew upon the Museum's contemporary Indigenous art collection, and The Fidelity Medal: Treason at West Point showcased the Museum's fidelity medallion and the Archives Andre papers. In addition, we:

- Opened a permanent exhibition titled Holocaust to Haven: The Refugee Camp at Fort Oswego about the 982 refugees from war-torn Europe sent to Fort Ontario in Oswego in 1944.
- Directed research in biology, anthropology, geology, paleontology, and history, publishing dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and maps, adding 41,000 specimens to the collection's database, supporting outside institutions and researchers with access to objects, specimens, and discipline experts, and collaborated with P-12 to update and enhance the Earth Science Reference Tables.

New York State Library

The State Library continued to serve as Co-Chair of the ConnectAll Office's Intergovernmental Working Group on Digital Equity Task Force, helping to inform the development of the state's Digital Equity Plan and guide the investment of federal broadband funds in New York. Part of this work included facilitating five statewide town hall meetings to gather input on the Digital Equity Plan.

Awarded \$34 million in State Aid for Library Construction for 196 library/library system projects and \$186,708 for Conservation/Preservation to seven institutions.

The Regent Joseph E. Bowman Jr. Research Library, a designated Preservation Steward for the Federal Depository Library Program, is now a Northeast NCSA (National Collection Service Area) Steering Committee member. The steering committee's purpose is to facilitate discussion and collaboration among the Federal depository libraries in the Northeast National Collection Service Area and work with the Government Publishing Office to develop and refine guidance for a digital Federal Depository Library Program. The Research Library strove to offer high-quality programs for lifelong learning. More than half of the 84 public programs were conducted virtually to reach a state-wide audience, as well as a cost-effective way to host high-quality college and university faculty from outside the Capital District.

The Research Library supports New Yorkers through access to information in the Library's collection for their personal, educational, and working lives. Reference and Manuscripts & Special Collection librarians responded to over 5,000 research requests from individuals, attorneys, state and municipal government employees, students, teachers, genealogists, and historians. About one-third of the questions were legal-related, and one-third were history/genealogy-related. State Archives

Awarded \$5.3 million in grants from the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) to 87 local governments, BOCES, and school districts. Since the inception of the LGRMIF in 1989, the State Archives has awarded over \$246 million in grants to local governments, BOCES, and school districts. In addition the Library:

- Conducted 35 training events that were attended by 2,296 state agencies, local government, BOCES, and school district staff.
- Responded to 7738 in-person and emailed requests regarding archival research, assisted researchers, including 32 state agencies and local governments, and delivered over 50,000 scanned pages for public copy orders.
- The State Records Center took in 8,060 new boxes of records from State agencies and processed 6,055 box retrieval requests from State agencies, an average of 23 boxes per day.
- State Archives staff made over 6,000 consultations with state agencies, local governments, BOCES, and school districts to assist these entities in managing their records and information.
- Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team developed new guidelines for describing records to improve access and improved our public research room by purchasing an adjustable-height workstation to improve accessibility.
- New York Archives Magazine, an education publication of the Archives Partnership Trust, introduced a free Archives Jr! edition for educators to use with students in grades 4-8. Archives Jr! aligns with the New York State Social Studies Framework and allows students to engage with primary sources. In its first year, more than 30,000 copies were requested by educators for use in their classrooms.
- More than 500 in-person and online guests attended the prestigious 2023 Empire State Archives & History Award program honoring Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer and historian Jon Meacham. The award acknowledges the outstanding contributions by a national figure to advance the understanding and uses of history in society.
- The Archives Partnership Trust's education website, ConsidertheSourceNY.org, connects educators and students across New York State to primary source materials and learning activities. In 2023, the website drew 42,000 new users and over 123,000 page views.
- The annual New York State Archives Student Research Awards program recognizes excellence in research using primary sources by students in grades 4-12. Facilitated by the Archives Partnership Trust, the competitive program serves to increase cooperation between schools and organizations that administer historical records useful for education.

Joint State Archives and State Library - Documentary Heritage and Preservation Services for New York (DHPSNY)

In 2023, DHPSNY provided training and in-person assessment services

to over 700 individuals and organizations. Online recorded trainings were viewed over 10,000 times.

Public Broadcasting & Educational Television

New York PBS stations, with guidance from the State Education Department and the Office of Mental Health, developed and launched the Student Mental Health Matters: A Toolkit for Educators. The toolkit is designed to equip educators, school staff, and school-based mental health professionals with critical knowledge and strategies needed to support the mental well-being of their students. The toolkit focuses on five distinct topics that primary and secondary educators often encounter among students: suicide prevention, stress and anxiety, self-harm, adverse childhood experiences, and social media. Each topic includes short videos providing expert perspectives from mental health professionals, school administrators, and educators aimed at helping teachers better understand these challenges, student perspectives revealing the lived experience of students, and strategies providing real-world applications for teachers' practices. The toolkit features more than 50 digital videos. It is available free of charge to all educators in New York through PBS Learning Media, which offers educators access to resources from PBS stations and their partners. Nearly 70,000 educators throughout New York State access these resources each month to complement classroom instruction.

The New York State Summer School of the Arts

In April 2023, NYSSSA received a 1 million Governor's Appropriation to fund the summer arts scholarship and the in-residence program. Based on financial need, the summer arts scholarship program allowed 100 middle and high school students from 22 counties to receive \$179,164 to attend 44 different arts programs across New York State during the summer of 2023. With the increased funding support, NYSSSA can reestablish in-residence programs, offering three 3-week programs during July 2024 at SUNY Fredonia. Selected students across New York State will participate in media arts, theater, or visual arts intensive programs.

OCE Outreach to Educators and Students

State Archives and Archive's Partnership Trust staff facilitated thirty-five workshops directly serving 750 teachers and school librarians and 300 archivists, historians, and librarians.

The New York State Library's Division of Library Development facilitated 29 workshops attended by more than 1,600 librarians and educators.

Through Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) accredited professional development, teacher-supporting organizational conferences, and school programming, the New York State Museum served over 2,020 educators and issued 300 hours of CTLE credit.

The New York State Museum offered free in-person museum instructor-led or self-guided field trip options for students as well as free virtual museum instructor-led programs. All field trip programming is designed to support the New York State Learning Standards, and NYSM Museum Instructors work with educators to personalize the experience as much as possible to meet the educational needs of students.

The State Library and State Archives continued to partner on the successful Documentary Heritage Preservation Services New York Program to provide in-person and online professional development opportunities to the staff of libraries, historical societies, archives, and other cultural education institutions.

More than 1.6 million young people from pre-K to teens participated in Summer Reading at New York Libraries.

2024-2025 Priorities and Ongoing Responsibilities

- Implement the State Museum's gallery renewal plan to renovate 30,000 square feet of exhibition space and add new interactive technology. The renewal project will take several years. The design development and construction document phases are completed. Project bidding is expected to take most of the current fiscal year to complete, followed by construction.
- Continue collaborating with colleagues in P-20 to improve the connection to and use of Office of Cultural Education resources and expertise in developing and applying learning standards.
- Increase teacher professional development opportunities and partner with other institutions to educate teachers on how they can access and use cultural resources in the classroom.





