



**THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK STATE
(SAANYS)
2016 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

GOVERNOR’S COMMON CORE TASK FORCE

Through the collection and integration of perspectives and recommendations from members of the SAANYS Board of Directors and Government Relations Committee an organizational position will be developed and advanced to the task force that was established by Governor Andrew Cuomo and charged to address and recommend revisions in six areas:

1. Review and reform the common core state standards
2. Review New York State’s curriculum guidance and resources
3. Develop a process to ensure that tests fit curricula and standards
4. Examine the impact of the moratorium on recording students common core test scores
5. Examine how the state and school districts can reduce the quantity and duration of testing
6. Review the quality of tests to ensure the professionalism by private test developers

STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

SAANYS will take affirmative action in engaging the Commissioner of Education, members of her leadership team, and members of the New York State Board of Regents in regard to six advisory groups and initiatives:

1. Common Core Standards – Survey and Review Committee
2. Committee on Technical and Policy Aspects of Common Core Regents Examinations
3. Advisory Committee on Common Core-aligned Assessments in Grades 3 to 8
4. Advisory Committee on the New York State English as a Second Language Test
5. Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Advisory Committee
6. Committee to Examine the Effectiveness of Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

The School Administrators Association of New York State is a professional association of more than 7,000 principals, assistant principals, administrators, and supervisors working in New York State’s schools. As the largest professional administrators’ association in New York State, SAANYS provides its members with legislative representation, legal and professional development support, and negotiation services. SAANYS is affiliated with the National Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (NAESP/NASSP), the New York State School Administrators Consortium (NYSSAC), the Educational Conference Board (ECB), and is chartered with the New York State Department of Education.

I. SUPPORT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS

As the roles of school leaders become more complex, identifying ways to recruit, train, and retain effective school leaders has become a priority of SAANYS. In a report commissioned in 2007, only 42 percent of practicing administrators had fewer than three year's experience as a building leader and 70 percent have fewer than five years. Coupled with the reality that fewer aspiring leaders are looking to fill the void in these positions, the need to focus on research based strategies that will attract and retain a strong, diverse pool of highly qualified candidates for the principal ship is critical. School administrators, both seasoned veterans and newly certified professionals, need to be supported in order to continue taking on challenges so schools can continue providing the best education to children across the state.

School Leadership and Professional Development Opportunities

SAANYS supports the development of professional learning communities that provide opportunities for building leaders to collaborate and share best practices. Simply put, we must identify, through a needs assessment, topics of interest and concern to the building leader. Topics must be school specific and support both the vision and mission of the school building. We must provide research based professional development opportunities that are practical and reflect school-specific goals and leader-specific interests and needs. In addition, we need to begin exploring the demands and complexities of the position of building leader to determine how to best support and encourage prospective administrators to pursue this career path, and seasoned administrators to remain in their positions.

Streamlining Planning and Reporting Requirements for School Districts

A substantial portion of the reporting and planning requirements imposed on schools and school districts by state statute should be eliminated if they are duplicative, unnecessary, or outdated. Although some progress was achieved in this regard in 2011, legislation is necessary to eliminate statutory requirements and allow the State Education Department to rescind additional regulations that are duplicative or unnecessary. It is SAANYS' position that plans and reports should be limited to those that are necessary to carry out critical state interests, such as maintaining school district accountability; closing the student achievement gap; and protecting the health and safety of students, teachers, and administrators in schools. Regulations based on federal statute should be streamlined where possible and state and federal requirements should be aligned. SAANYS also supports the establishment of a two-year sunset provision whereby unfunded mandates must either be affirmed or discontinued.

Income Tax Break for Administrators in High Needs Districts

SAANYS seeks to provide state income tax reduction for individuals who choose to work in high needs school districts. High needs districts contain schools located in areas with high poverty rates and have high percentages of children who qualify for free and reduced lunches. By providing an income tax break for qualified administrators willing to take on the challenges facing high needs schools, the state will in essence create a recruitment strategy that will attract and retain innovative leaders with the vision and know-how to implement positive change and improve student performance.

Final Average Salary Enhancement

School leadership is the catalyst to student achievement. SAANYS advocates for providing certified administrators with an additional percentage towards their final average salary upon their retirement for every ten years they work consecutively. As with any field or profession, stability and continuity are the building blocks to success. Schools are not exempt from this theory. Not only is it imperative that the education system attract qualified leaders, but, equally important, schools need continuity and stability in their leadership and must retain experienced professionals to lead them through an evolving system. For purposes of the calculation of final average salary by the New York State Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS) for such school administrators may be calculated on a 1.2 bases or may be based on a 170 day work year.

Reducing the Probationary Period for Tenured Administrators

SAANYS seeks to reduce the probationary period from four to three years for school administrators currently holding tenure in one district who move to another district. A proposal such as this corrects an inconsistency in probationary periods between school teachers and school administrators when a district determines to offer tenure. An educator already awarded tenure in a district has satisfactorily proven his or her skills and abilities, thus, the shortened probationary period appropriately recognizes the individual's demonstrated knowledge and expertise.

Meaningful Principal Accountability

The Annual Professional Performance Review systems being established in school districts and BOCES across the State necessitate time consuming procedures, expansion of student testing and the consumption of scarce school funds. The system, despite being unpiloted, is designed to be "high stakes" for principals and teachers, directly impacting management decisions related to employment, tenure, compensation, and promotion. Therefore, SAANYS recommends that an independent evaluation of the State APPR system be conducted upon the completion of APPR procedures for the 2015-2016 school year. The study should address the extent to which evaluations are accurate and valid for decisions related to employment and compensation, comparable for implementation of the SED public disclosure requirements, and whether the evaluations result in the improved provision of training and support to principals thereby enhancing their effectiveness. The study should also depict the amounts of state and local fiscal and personnel resources consumed in implementation and render findings and recommendations related to revisions and continuation.

II. SUPPORT RETIREMENT EQUITY

Granting Out-of-State Service Credit

SAANYS advocates for allowing members of the Teachers Retirement System to claim credit for out-of-state service while their membership in New York State is still valid. Such action will have a positive impact upon school leadership retention and recruitment. Current law allows only Tier I status employees to claim this credit. SAANYS seeks to broaden the application of the law to allow all members of the retirement system to claim the out-of-state credit.

Recognizing Private School Service

SAANYS is in support of legislation that would allow members to claim up to five years service credit towards their pension for private school service. Many teachers and administrators begin their careers in private institutions where they learned valuable tools that they bring with them to the public school setting. The skills gained with their private school experiences continue to be utilized by teachers and leaders alike, and thus, should not be disregarded. The law should recognize the value of private school experience as it translates into strong and effective leadership.

Service Credit for Overpaid Pension Contributions

Similar to the Tier III and IV reimbursement, SAANYS seeks to enact into law a method of providing an additional one-month service credit for every year a Tier III and IV member has paid into the pension system after the required ten years. This proposal is a cost-savings method that would fix an inequitable flaw in the law by providing the additional service credit without adding a financial cost to the retirement system.

Early Retirement Program

Eligible school district and BOCES personnel did not participate to the extent projected in the early retirement incentive (ERI) programs enacted in 2010. One ERI program was restricted to personnel represented by NYSUT; the second program allowed for early retirement at the discretion of the school district or BOCES. This resulted in inequitable and limited participation by school administrators and CSEA personnel.

Representation on the Teachers' Retirement System Board

SAANYS seeks to amend the current law prescribing the make-up of the New York State Teachers' Retirement System's board of directors. Currently, there are teachers, superintendents, retired educators, and other financial and insurance industry professionals. The board lacks representation of the second largest segment of the educational system – supervisors and administrators. SAANYS seeks to add their voice to the NYSTRS board by requiring that an administrator be appointed to the board.

Reimbursing Employee Retirement Contributions

SAANYS would like to see members of the New York State Teachers' and Public Employees' Retirement System(s) receive a reimbursement for any payments made to the system after ten years of service. Current law mandates members to pay three percent toward their retirement for up to ten years. Prior to the cap, many members have paid toward their retirement after ten years. This proposal would fix an inequitable flaw in the law by reimbursing members who paid the system beyond the ten year limit.

III. SUPPORT CONTRACT NEGOTIATION IMPARTIALITY

Last Offer Binding Arbitration

SAANYS seeks changes to the Taylor Law to allow for a more equitable manner by which contracts for small bargaining units are negotiated. Current Taylor Law provisions do not provide school leaders finality in collective bargaining negotiations. This is a benefit police, fire, and correction officers unions are currently afforded. State statute allows administrators to utilize the mediation and fact-finding aspects of the Taylor Law but, when negotiations breakdown, they have no outlet to conclude the arbitration. This can lead to school leaders working without a contract for several years, especially in districts with small administrative departments. SAANYS' proposal would allow small bargaining units who have no more than ten members to have closure to the negotiation process if in fact the PERB process is exhausted and an agreement is not settled. SAANYS advocates for a process that allows all members to focus on providing leadership in their schools and not exhausting their energies on long, drawn-out contracts disputes.

IV. SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Expanding the Pool of Technical Professionals

SAANYS believes every child should be able to pursue whatever profession or trade they wish. Students seeking to enter the highly technical fields should have access to quality programs in their schools. SAANYS advocates for state aid to be available for partnerships between community colleges and area BOCES for advanced training and appropriate college level academic credits.

V. SUPPORT RETIREE PROTECTIONS

Adjusting the “Cola” Cap

Due to the COLA Act of 2000, SAANYS retirees no longer have to depend upon occasional “supplements” adopted from time to time by the legislature. SAANYS applauds the legislature for passing a COLA adjustment with regular increases into law. Unfortunately, the benefit has been eroded by inflation. SAANYS strongly urges the legislature and governor to adjust COLA to address the reduction in benefits as a result of the passage of time. SAANYS would like to see adjustments made to provide relevance to the current standard of living from \$18,000 to \$25,000.

VI. Oppose Mayoral Control

Mayoral control is being advanced as an educational reform initiative for some large and small city school districts. In many cases, such an approach (such as that proposed for the Rochester City School District in 2010) will add to the district’s administrative architecture and make education more “political.” It constitutes a *change for the sake of change* approach with no valid evidence or rationale upon which to expect improved educational performance and results. Any proposal to allow Mayoral control must provide measures to ensure that the system is responsive to the needs of students, parents, educators and the community. Furthermore, any such proposal must allow for public participation and provide transparency.

VII. Oppose Mandated School District Regional Consolidation

In response to current fiscal challenges, members of the State Education Department and State Legislature are considering large-scale school district consolidation. SAANYS opposes such consolidation, which in some cases may merge school districts located in more than one county. Such a system would be expected to further politicize education, diminish locally appropriate services, constrain community engagement, and may compromise travel safety and school responsiveness in emergency situations. Any proposal for consolidation must provide measures to ensure that the system is responsive to the needs of students, parents, educators, and the community. Furthermore, any such proposal must allow for public participation and provide transparency.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

SAANYS will work with its national affiliates (NAESP/NASSP) to ensure NYS administrators’ voices are heard in Washington. The SAANYS Government Relations Committee (GRC) will work diligently to develop positions on the reauthorization of NCLB with the focus on:

- Revising the calculation of high school graduation rates.
- Broadening the implementation of assessments to accurately reflect a student’s educational growth.
- Support Success in the Middle Act (H.R. 3006/S. 1362) to provide schools with middle grades additional fiscal resources for the proactive identification of students at risk of dropping out, the implementation of services to help them succeed, and the investment in proven strategies.