



**MEMORANDUM**

**June 21, 2017**

**TO: Members of the Board of Trustees**  
**FROM: Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor**  
**SUBJECT: SUNY TeachNY Policy on Educator Preparation**

**Action Requested**

The proposed resolution approves the SUNY TeachNY Policy, updating and replacing the State University's 2001 policy on educator preparation.

**Resolution**

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York is the nation's largest comprehensive public higher education system and a recognized leader in educator preparation, preparing nearly a quarter of New York State's teachers, and thousands of teachers, school and district leaders, and educational researchers and experts who serve communities across the country and around the world; and

Whereas educator preparation is an all-University responsibility; all SUNY campuses<sup>1</sup> contribute to educator preparation through their education of students who explore various disciplines to gain knowledge and experience along their path toward the professions of teaching and/or educational leadership, as well as through their education of practicing educators who return to institutions of higher education for further study in their fields; and

Whereas the teaching profession has suffered a decline in prestige and respect and SUNY can lift up the profession through a commitment to excellence to attract and retain outstanding candidates and practitioners; and

Whereas since *A New Vision in Teacher Education* was implemented as SUNY's policy for educator preparation in 2001, there have been significant shifts in the context of educator preparation—for example, the State has adopted a number of regulations that mirror aspects of *New Vision*, professional accreditation is now a regulatory requirement, and there have been, and continue to be, changes in public policy regarding P-12 education and higher education, including Governor Cuomo's *New NY Education Reform Commission* and the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*; and

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<sup>1</sup> All 30 community colleges send transfer students to senior institutions to pursue educator preparation; technical colleges have early child and transfer programs; and 16 of the university centers and comprehensive colleges have undergraduate and/or graduate programs leading to a recommendation for the issuance of a New York State teacher or educational leader certificate (University Centers: Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, and Stony Brook; Comprehensive Colleges: Buffalo State, Brockport, Cortland, Empire State, Fredonia, Geneseo, New Paltz, Old Westbury, Oneonta, Oswego, Plattsburgh, and Potsdam).

Whereas in 2013, SUNY implemented recommendations of Governor Cuomo's *New NY Education Reform Commission* with respect to admissions requirements and clinical experiences in educator preparation programs; and

Whereas in 2014, with unprecedented support from the New York State Education Department (NYSED), SUNY convened the TeachNY Advisory Council, a group of state and national experts and education leaders, to develop recommendations for SUNY's and New York State's consideration to further support sustained excellence in educator preparation; and

Whereas in 2015, the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), through which the federal government tasked states with developing plans to expand educational opportunity, improve student outcomes, and fully prepare all students for success in college, career, and citizenship; and SUNY plays a vital role in our state's efforts, particularly in ensuring student access to highly qualified teachers and examining pathways to certification to remove unintended barriers for promising candidates looking to enter the profession; and

Whereas upon the release of the TeachNY Advisory Council's *Report of Findings and Recommendations* on May 18, 2016 in historic partnership with NYSED, Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia and I launched a public campaign to lift up the teaching profession and solicited feedback through an extensive series of regional P-20 working sessions with practicing teachers, school/district leaders, SUNY faculty and students, policymakers, and other stakeholders, including those represented on the TeachNY Statewide Roundtable; and

Whereas the SUNY Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor was charged to convene a Steering Committee on SUNY TeachNY Policy with representation from across SUNY's campus sectors, including presidents, deans, faculty, and students to examine SUNY's existing educator preparation policy, *A New Vision for Teacher Education*, and develop recommendations for a renewed, enabling policy framework and action agenda; and

Whereas the regional engagements and work of the TeachNY Advisory Council, Statewide Roundtable, and Steering Committee have affirmed the following core principles reflecting SUNY's tradition of and ongoing commitment to excellence in educator preparation:

- Teaching is a practice profession requiring study that is academically rigorous, clinically based, content-rich, and informed by research, preparing candidates to apply the science and art of teaching and learning
- Teacher quality is the number one in-school factor contributing to student academic success; therefore, the preparation of, support for, and access to excellent teachers who inspire all students to learn, prepare them for college and career, and empower them to positively contribute to a democratic society as engaged citizens must be shared priorities and responsibilities
- Teachers, school/district leaders, and higher education faculty across disciplines are part of one profession of educators—a community of practitioners and scholars who take pride in and responsibility for their learning and practice, who benefit from learning from one another, and who hold themselves accountable for the principles and standards of the profession
- Educator preparation and the full continuum of professional advancement—from novice through expert—are embedded in collaborative endeavors supported by the entire academic community and occurring through

intentional, integrated, and mutually beneficial clinical partnerships that need to be well-resourced

- The best educator preparation programs are dynamic, evolving in response to knowledge gained through both professional practice and academic research, across varied teaching and learning contexts, and within regulatory and policy environments that enable experimentation and innovation; and

Whereas the Steering Committee—informed by the statewide listening tour and recommendations of the TeachNY Advisory Council—has met its charge; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that SUNY campuses and System Administration will work collaboratively to implement this TeachNY policy, a new standard of excellence for educator preparation that aligns with existing state and federal policies, the recommendations of the New NY Education Reform Commission and the TeachNY Advisory Council, and stakeholder feedback considered by the Steering Committee and refined by its members' collective experience and expertise, including commitments in the following four areas:

#### **1. Recruitment and Selection of Excellent Candidates for the Profession**

- Promote entry of a diverse and talented pool of prospective teachers and school/district leaders through comprehensive recruitment strategies that leverage both local and statewide assets, such as the following: intra-campus recruitment through the faculties of arts and sciences and other disciplines as well as campus-based programs (e.g., Educational Opportunity Programs); partnerships with P-12 schools (e.g., teacher academies in high schools); agreements with community colleges and technical colleges; and connections with business/industry and community-based organizations (e.g., related to those seeking to transition careers)
- Maintain high standards for each candidate's admission through multiple measures of readiness to engage in study—including a minimum GPA of 3.0 or top third of class, or comparable record of accomplishment, as well as other means for assessing cognitive and interpersonal skills; local admissions standards provide for flexibility articulated through campus policies and procedures that may include a path for candidates who do not meet admissions standards upon first application, but who demonstrate strong potential to do so with additional transitional supports early in their academic careers

#### **2. Preparation of Excellent Educators through Rigorous Academic Study and Clinical Practice**

- Develop candidates' deep content and pedagogical knowledge and skills, scaffolding learning throughout the curriculum (including foundational courses offered by community colleges) in the context of accomplished practice via rigorous clinical experiences with culturally and academically diverse students, across a range of educational settings
- Provide access to laboratories in which candidates can practice their skills as educators, prior to and concurrent with clinical practica in P-12 schools
- Provide culminating clinical experiences that are diverse and immersive, ideally over a full school year; such experiences may include affiliations with residency programs, professional development schools, the SUNY Urban Teacher Education Center, and other significant partnerships

- Establish or build on existing formal clinical faculty appointments, such as joint (including courtesy) appointments between P-12 and higher education, as a means to explicitly connect expert educators in the field with those on the campuses, and to recognize and reward clinical faculty for their role in the design and implementation of excellent educator preparation programs
- Develop candidates' information/digital literacy and skills to effectively deploy instructional technologies, applications, and resources that enhance differentiated instruction and expand student learning at both individual (personalized) and group levels
- Develop candidates' theoretical knowledge and experience using assessment of student learning to inform and enhance professional practice
- Strengthen and expand collaborative program offerings, to increase access and promote quality; leverage campus and system-wide resources to offer interdisciplinary, online, seamless transfer, multi-award (e.g., associate-baccalaureate, baccalaureate-masters) and/or multi-institution (e.g., jointly registered) programs

### **3. Provision of Excellent Professional Support throughout the Continuum of Practice**

- Foster simultaneous renewal of P-12 schools and institutions of higher education via interconnected professional practice and research opportunities, including through the facilitation of exchanges of teachers, school/district leaders, and higher education faculty (such as teachers-in-residence and professors-in-the-classroom)
- Engage with P-12 partners in the design and implementation of induction programs for new teachers and school/district leaders, as well as continuing teacher and leader education offerings for advanced practitioners
- Foster a culture of professional advancement by working with P-12 partners to support participation in programs such as National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Writing Project, Empire State Excellence in Teaching Awards, New York State Master Teacher Program, and district-sponsored programs; involve accomplished practitioners in the construction and implementation of educator preparation and ongoing support programs

### **4. Demonstration of Program Excellence and Impact on Professional Practice**

- Collaborate with NYSED, New York State Department of Labor, Regional Information Centers, and other partners in the development of a valid, reliable, and secure P-20 data system necessary for effective program assessment and planning
- Cultivate network improvement communities, within and across campuses, as well as with P-12 educators, to conduct collaborative and collegial peer assessment of program outcomes for the purpose of improving practices across all campuses
- Draw on programmatic distinctions and areas of expertise to serve in leadership roles—within SUNY and beyond—to advance education as a practice profession, such as through participation in the development of state and national education policies; development and dissemination of knowledge that connects education research, practice, and policy; and, informing the direction of professional education organizations; and, be it further

Resolved that in support of achieving a new standard of excellence for educator preparation, SUNY System Administration will:

- Work with campuses, NYSED, P-12 districts, and others to institutionalize partnership agreements and secure funding to initiate and sustain clinical experience placements for teacher and school leader candidates
- Collaborate with the Rockefeller Institute of Government, NYSED, the New York State Department of Labor, and regional partners to assess and project P-12 educator supply and demand for the purposes of providing actionable information to prospective candidates regarding employment needs and to the campuses in order to develop targeted outreach in identified shortage areas
- Work with campuses to seek external funding to support campuses in the development of laboratories and associated technologies that enable teacher candidates to practice and hone their skills
- Advocate for programs that support long-term professional growth for educators, including the development and demonstration of accomplished practice, such as National Board Certification, National Writing Project, Empire State Excellence in Teaching Awards, and New York State Master Teacher Program
- Work with NYSED to coordinate the review of program proposals so that campuses can more nimbly create new programs and revise existing programs to meet emerging needs; and, be it further

Resolved that by June 30, 2018, the president of each SUNY campus with an educator preparation program registered with NYSED will provide the Provost a brief summary of campus-wide strategies and initiatives that address the core principles and key areas of this TeachNY Policy framework, with subsequent periodic updates provided via existing regularized presidential reporting mechanisms; and, be it further

Resolved that the president of each SUNY campus will address their commitments and contributions to educator preparation and support as part of their respective campus strategic planning efforts and performance management system updates; and, be it further

Resolved that the Chancellor and designees will work with campus leadership, governance, faculty, staff, students, and others to implement SUNY TeachNY Policy and will regularly keep the Board of Trustees apprised of progress and any additional steps that may be needed to ensure the successful implementation of this Policy; and be it further

Resolved that SUNY's current educator preparation policy entitled *A New Vision in Teacher Education*, passed by Resolution No. 2001-78, is hereby replaced in its entirety with this SUNY TeachNY Policy.

### **Background**

SUNY has a proud history of educator preparation and continues to regard this commitment as an essential element of its statutory mission to provide the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population in a complete range of academic, professional and vocational postsecondary programs.

With the inception of SUNY in 1948, state teachers colleges, which originated as State-supported normal schools, formed the largest single sector in the system. By the end of the twentieth century, SUNY had grown to its current 64-campus size, including 30 community colleges where approximately 40% of

SUNY's baccalaureate degree recipients begin their post-secondary studies. Today, SUNY is a leader in the supply of P-12 educators within the State and nationally, and is a significant contributor to the advancement of the profession through its research on teaching and learning, as well as its support for practicing educators.

Given the dynamic landscape and the important role that policy plays in supporting excellence, in 2014 SUNY initiated discussions with NYSED to enter into a partnership to review existing educator preparation policies. This partnership gave rise to TeachNY. TeachNY is a multi-phase collaborative effort to lift up and better support the education profession. Thanks to a Race to the Top grant from NYSED, phase one began in 2014 with the convening of the TeachNY Advisory Council, a group of state and national leaders who met throughout the 2014-15 academic year, and culminated in the release of the *TeachNY Advisory Council Report of Findings and Recommendations* on May 18, 2016. This date signaled the start of the second phase of TeachNY.

One goal of phase two was to examine and revise as needed SUNY's current educator preparation policy, *A New Vision in Teacher Education*. To this end, the Provost's Steering Committee on SUNY TeachNY Policy (Steering Committee) was convened during the summer of 2016 and charged with reviewing existing SUNY educator preparation policy and making recommendations for new policy. The Committee was broadly representative of SUNY, both in terms of campuses involved and positions within these campuses, including presidents, provosts, deans and faculty from schools of education and arts and sciences, professional staff (field experiences administrators and teacher certification officers), and faculty and student governance. The Steering Committee also had representation from P-12 schools and various units within SUNY. The other goal of phase two, a close examination of New York State educator preparation practice, policy, and law, led to the creation of the TeachNY Roundtable, a group of leaders from a range of statewide organizations who were jointly convened by the Chancellor and NYSED Commissioner. This effort focused on aspects of educator preparation that extend beyond SUNY and require multi-organizational supports to enact change.

Informing both the Steering Committee and the Roundtable was a listening tour held throughout the State beginning soon after the release of the *TeachNY Advisory Council Report*. There were small-scale gatherings of various constituent groups and large-scale regional engagement sessions, with the latter held at six SUNY campuses (Cortland, University at Buffalo, Geneseo, Old Westbury, Empire State College, Plattsburgh) and, one in partnership with CUNY at its City College, with nearly 1,000 participants in total representing P-12 and higher education. At each session, NYSED was an essential partner. From these sessions, participant feedback was captured and used as a significant source of data to inform the work of the Steering Committee and the Roundtable.

In developing the SUNY TeachNY Policy on Educator Preparation, the Steering Committee established four working groups, echoing the structure of the *TeachNY Advisory Council Report*: Excellent Candidates, Excellent Educator Preparation, Excellent Professional Support, and Demonstrating Excellence. Each working group had two co-leads who participated in the Integration Team that developed the core principles and the policy framework.

Upon adoption of this resolution, the third phase of TeachNY will begin for SUNY, which is implementation of the core principles and key areas of the framework, as well as continued refinement of our policy on educator preparation. This policy builds on the trajectory of excellence of educator preparation within SUNY and is intended to carry SUNY forward into the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century.