

## New NY Education Reform Commission

On November 22, Governor Cuomo's Education Reform Commission convened in the Yonkers Public Library for their third and final public symposium: *Optimizing Resources for Student and School Success*. Commission members heard from national and local education experts who described New York State's current system of fiscal support for schools and students, and recommended revisions of varying magnitudes.

Four presentations were conducted:

- Marguerite Roza, Director of Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University – Ms. Roza described the current funding system as being unpredictable, inequitable, insufficient, unproductive, and inefficient. It was stressed that state finance reforms tend to last two decades, and therefore, any changes made now should make sense for schooling through to 2033. Her five systemic recommendations are to allocate funds on the basis of students and “student types” (e.g., students with disabilities); leverage local funds to enhance spending while maintaining equity; create transparency and measure productivity; incentivize innovation; and augment accountability.
- John Yinger, Trustee Professor of Public Administration and Economics at The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University -- Professor Yinger's presentation culminated with four recommendations. First, the education aid reforms of 2007 (i.e., Foundation Aid Formula) should be “embraced.” Second, the property tax cap should be reformed and linked to the foundation aid formula. Third, the STAR program should be reformed to include renters as well as homeowners. Fourth, data analysis should be improved and expanded to promote program evaluation and efficiency.
- Paolo DeMaria, Principal of Education First – Mr. DeMaria presented fiscal data across a range of states and school districts and posited that “systemic change is necessary to achieve better results,” and that exciting things are happening in New York State. He indicated that finance systems need to become more focused to ensure that they are student-centered, results-oriented, and reality-based.
- Bernard Pierorazio, Superintendent of Yonkers Public Schools – Mr. Pierorazio's presentation focused upon his school district's extensive need for school renovation/construction and the need for more instructional space to accommodate increasing enrollment. In this regard he urged that legislation be enacted to promote public-private sector partnerships (not privatization), especially for larger school districts.

The Yonkers Symposium was preceded by the May 21, 2013 Symposium – *Innovative Solutions for Restructuring Public School Systems* – held at the Albany Cultural Education Center; and the July 9, 2013 Symposium – *All Children Ready to Learn, All Teachers Ready to Teach: Building the Foundation, Raising the Bar* – held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. In delivering his closing remarks in Yonkers, Chairperson Dick Parsons indicated that the Commission would consider the information received during the three symposiums in order to develop a report of recommendations for the Governor's consideration. However, no target date for development and presentation of the report was mentioned.

Each of the four PowerPoint presentations is available at [www.NYPuttingStudentsFirst.com](http://www.NYPuttingStudentsFirst.com) by clicking on *Maximizing Resources for Student and School Success* in the Symposiums section. For more

information about the New NY Education Reform Commission, contact James Viola, Director of Government Relations, by e-mailing [JViola@saanys.org](mailto:JViola@saanys.org).