Governor Cuomo has made it his mission to ensure that all New York students receive a quality education. To retain our status as a world leader and strengthen our economic future, we must do more to meet the educational needs of our students—and we must do it better. We have made progress over the last two years, but there remains much work to be done.

New York’s education system has committed teachers and principals; it also has some of the nation’s highest-achieving schools. However, we still face many challenges. Although New York spends more money per student than any other state, New York’s overall performance levels trail the nation and fall short of
ensuring that all students are prepared for college and careers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Troubling Facts about New York’s Education System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Only 36 percent of New York’s 4th and 8th graders are on-grade-level in reading.(^7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Only 35 percent of 4th graders and 30 percent of 8th graders are on-grade-level in math.(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Of the Class of 2011, just one in three students graduated from high school ready for college and high-skill careers.(^5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> More than one in four students failed to graduate on time or did not graduate at all.(^6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This failure does not represent the best of who we are as New Yorkers and what we are capable of achieving when we work together to do more and better for our children.

In April 2012, Governor Cuomo convened the New NY Education Reform Commission.\(^7\) Governor Cuomo’s charge was clear and comprehensive: develop
an actionable course of reforms based on proven models of success from within New York as well as from other states and nations—to provide the level of educational excellence that New York’s children deserve, that our state’s future economy demands, and that our taxpayers can afford.

Building on the major improvements implemented to date including historic teacher evaluation and property tax cap reforms, the Commission brought together state and nationally-recognized education, community, and business leaders. The Action Plan recently presented to the Governor by the Commission provides a set of recommendations geared towards better educating students and preparing them to enter the workforce.

Governor Cuomo will begin to implement those recommendations with the greatest potential to help our children and youth succeed from cradle to career. Looking ahead, Governor Cuomo’s efforts will focus on:

- Extending learning time and opportunities for students;
- Providing quality full-day pre-kindergarten programs in the highest need communities;
• Strengthening support systems for children and families through Community School models;

• Expanding and replicating successful Early College High School models;

• Recruiting the best and brightest educators into our schools and instituting stricter standards for entry into the profession;

• Paying for performance of the highest-performing teachers;

• Establishing Innovation Zones to enhance the use of technology in teaching and learning;

• Creating a performance management system to improve accountability and transparency; and

• Incentivizing school district consolidation, regionalization, and shared services.

More Learning Time: Extending the School Day and/or Year

Research shows that students who have more time to learn have higher academic achievement than their peers.78 This is apparent in schools across New York State, where quality learning time has been successfully and creatively expanded, resulting in significant student performance gains, especially in low-income communities.
To help close the achievement gap, we must ensure that our students spend more time learning. As the Commission correctly noted, we cannot continue to run our schools under agrarian and factory traditions. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently stated that:

“If we are serious about closing achievement gaps, if we’re serious about turning around underperforming schools, we can’t just keep doing business as usual. The fact that our school calendar is still based upon the agrarian economy is stunning to me. And the fact that we have been so slow to move is just absolutely unacceptable.”

Chart 2.1. Length of School Days in Other Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Instructional Days in a School Year</th>
<th>PISA Reading Score/Rank</th>
<th>PISA Math Score/Rank</th>
<th>PISA Science Score/Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>205.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States*</td>
<td>179.9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*New York State law requires that there be at least 180 days in the school year in order to qualify for full State aid.

In New York, the Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) averages 30 percent more school time than the typical public school and has closed the achievement gap in
math and reading for elementary and middle school students. Based on the results of a recent study, the longer day at HCZ has also helped high school students achieve higher Regents scores, resulted in dramatically reduced pregnancy rates, and raised rates of college acceptance for students.\textsuperscript{83}

Massachusetts’ successful Expanded Learning Time Initiative, which added 300 more instructional hours annually for students, has significantly increased achievement for low-income students since its inception in 2006. Students from the 19 high-needs schools that participated in the Massachusetts initiative have seen a 20 percent increase in math scores, an 8 percent increase in reading scores, and a 9 percent increase in science scores.\textsuperscript{84}

In an effort to replicate successful models and adopt the Commission’s recommendation to provide an incentive for school districts to add more time to their school calendar for academic programs, Governor Cuomo proposes a new competitive grant program. This competitive program will be for schools that develop initiatives to improve student achievement with the following features:
• Like the successful Massachusetts model, we will leave the development of specific plans to the school districts based on rigorous criteria.

• Proposals must extend learning time by at least 25 percent and demonstrate that it will result in better outcomes for students.

• In addition to adding more time, extended learning plans will be part of a comprehensive initiative to transform the entire school day and make better use of the time taxpayers already pay for.

• Quality extended learning time requires school leadership and unions to re-imagine the way the school day is structured and how instruction is delivered, and to negotiate agreements to maximize the impact of more instructional time.

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Just as Governor Cuomo changed the paradigm in school funding to incentivize performance by awarding performance improvement and management
efficiency grants, an extended learning time competitive grant will continue this trend by investing in innovative approaches to boost student achievement, maximize our return on investment, and provide models for success.

**Full-Day Pre-kindergarten Program for the Highest Needs Students**

In order to increase student success, the State must support our children from the start by enriching the early years of their development. As recommended by the Commission, Governor Cuomo will propose investing in high quality, full-day pre-kindergarten for our state’s highest-need students.

Decades of research show that early childhood education has a major and long-lasting impact on children: narrowing the achievement gap, improving high school graduation rates, increasing wages, and reducing costs for remedial education, social services, health care, and incarceration. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that children who attend full-day pre-kindergarten:

- Perform 25 percent better on math exams by the second grade, and 20 percent better on English
exams than those who did not attend full-day pre-kindergarten;

- Are nearly 30 percent more likely to graduate from high school;

- Are 40 percent less likely to repeat a grade; and

- Are 32 percent less likely to be arrested as a juvenile.85

Decades of research show early childhood education has a major and long-lasting impact on children—narrowing the achievement gap, improving high school graduation rates, increasing wages, and reducing costs for remedial education, social services, health care, and incarceration.

New York State currently authorizes a universal pre-kindergarten program; however, most of these programs provide about 2.5 hours of learning time through half-day programs.86 Expanding to full-day, or at least 5 hours, will provide a better education success trajectory for the highest need students and reduce long-term costs to taxpayers.
Governor Cuomo will propose a robust full-day pre-kindergarten program for the Empire State that is targeted toward our highest need students in the lowest wealth districts and funded via a grant process limited to effective, research-based early learning models. These new resources will be invested in the communities and schools where they are most urgently needed to help close the achievement gap and to prepare our children earlier for success. Selected programs will maintain quality and performance measures, have capacity to implement early learning Common Core State Standards, and align with existing local school system efforts.

**Better Teachers and Principals**

As the Commission also noted, nothing we do to increase student achievement can surpass the impact of an effective teacher in every classroom and a qualified principal in every school. Research suggests that teachers account for one-third of a school’s total impact on student achievement and that principal leadership accounts for 25 percent.87
Effective teachers and principals are essential for student achievement. Therefore, we must recruit and retain only the best and brightest to educate our children, provide our teachers and principals with the support they need to be successful, and continue to recognize and reward them throughout their career.

Among the recommendations made by the Commission to help us achieve these goals are:

- Increasing admission requirements for all SUNY and CUNY teacher preparation programs, building off of leading countries like Finland that recruit teachers from the top of their graduating class;

- Requiring teachers to participate in more frequent and higher quality student-teaching in school settings before earning certification, thereby gaining real-world classroom experience; and

- Creating a “bar exam for teachers” to emphasize that teachers are professionals and should be held to the highest standards from the start. New York State is already revising its teacher certification test; we must double down with a commitment to re-examine our entry standards on an ongoing basis to respond to the expectations and demands for what teachers have to know and be able to do in order to be successful with their students.
As of now, 99 percent of school districts have submitted evaluation plans.

A Success Story: The Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

Maintaining the State’s commitment to advancing public education reform, Governor Cuomo will continue to require districts to implement teacher and principal evaluation plans. We will once again make a district’s school aid increase contingent upon the local adoption of the statewide teacher evaluation systems agreed to by school districts and union leadership.

Governor Cuomo’s groundbreaking evaluation system announced last year is based on multiple performance measures, including student achievement and rigorous classroom observations, and was accompanied by legislation to ensure that parents and the public have access to critical information about how the teachers, principals, and schools charged with educating our children are performing. Together, these accomplishments represent a historic step forward in
Better Teachers and Principals: Rewarding High Performing Educators

To demonstrate a commitment to retaining, developing and rewarding the highest caliber educators possible, Governor Cuomo will expand professional development opportunities and performance incentives for our top performing teachers in selected regions around the State. Jim Simons’ successful Math for America (MfA) program offers a model for how New York State can provide our best teachers with the opportunity to further develop their expertise, share best practices, and earn financial incentives.

Governor Cuomo proposes replicating the Math for America program in New York. The program will reward high-performing “master teachers” with $15,000 in supplemental income annually for four years. These “master teachers” will train other teachers to improve performance in the classroom.

With a mission to improve mathematics and science education in U.S. public secondary schools by making New York a national leader on educator accountability.
building a corps of outstanding STEM teachers and leaders, MfA attracts talented educators in high-need disciplines, provides them with additional stipends as they hone their craft, and creates a network of continuing professional development as participants collaborate even after they graduate. With nearly 600 corps members across its programs in New York City, Berkeley, Boston, Los Angeles, San Diego, Utah, and Washington, D.C., MfA not only enhances the professional experiences of those who participate in the program but also directly benefits the thousands of students that they teach.

**Integrating Social Services and Schools by Expanding Community Schools**

New York also has the opportunity to become a national leader in providing targeted, integrated services that address children’s health, nutrition, security, and family needs as part of a comprehensive strategy to increase achievement and provide New York’s youth with the tools for lifelong success.
Since the Cincinnati Public School system adopted a Community Schools model, 4th grade reading scores increased by 15 percentage points and 4th grade math scores increased by 18 percentage points between 2004-05 and 2010-11. In addition, the graduation rate of the Cincinnati Public School system has risen 10 percentage points from 72 percent in 2003-04 to 82 percent in 2010-11.89

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“The Harlem Children’s Zone, or HCZ, a 100-block community revitalization effort, was launched in 2001 under the premise that raising student achievement is impossible if more pressing health and socio-emotional needs are not being met.... HCZ health and wellness programs include an Asthma Initiative, Healthy Living Initiative, and foster care prevention and family strengthening programs.... President Barack Obama has called it ‘an all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck, anti-poverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children.’

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Here in New York, Commission member Geoff Canada is the driving force behind a national model called the Harlem Children’s Zone. In a recent study, the
Center for American Progress noted that “the Harlem Children’s Zone, or HCZ, a 100-block community revitalization effort, was launched in 2001 under the premise that raising student achievement is impossible if more pressing health and socio-emotional needs are not being met. HCZ health and wellness programs include an Asthma Initiative, Healthy Living Initiative, and foster care prevention and family strengthening programs. President Barack Obama has called it ‘an all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck, anti-poverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children.’”

In recognition of such successful efforts as those undertaken in New York and Cincinnati, the Commission recommended that New York State create a statewide Community Schools model to better integrate public, nonprofit and private resources and services, and use schools as hubs to bring essential support services directly to students and their families. Governor Cuomo will launch an effort that fuses the best aspects of successful programs such as Cincinnati Community Schools, The Harlem Children’s Zone, Say Yes to Education, and the Strive Network to achieve similar improvements in student performance and system alignment. We will provide competitive grant
Governor Cuomo will launch an effort that fuses the best aspects of successful programs such as Cincinnati Community Schools, The Harlem Children’s Zone, Say Yes to Education, and the Strive Network to achieve similar improvements in student performance and system alignment.

The competitive grant will be based on performance, requiring schools to get results and
supporting these efforts by realigning existing Federal, State and local resources and programs. Grants will enable communities to better coordinate students’ health and social service needs in schools, as well as encouraging local philanthropic and private-sector funding to ultimately sustain these efforts.

**Create a Performance Management System**

To support our efforts to increase student achievement and educator accountability, we need better ways to track our progress, identify areas of strength and weakness throughout our public education system, and increase our State’s return on investment. The Governor proposes creating a new and stronger performance management system in the upcoming year to fulfill our promise to do more and better for our children from cradle to career.

**Expanding Innovative Ways to Make Students College and Career Ready**

The ultimate goal is to ensure that every young person that graduates from high school is well-equipped and prepared for college and the workforce.
Early College High Schools (ECHS) and high-quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are successful models that have led students from underprivileged backgrounds to complete high school while simultaneously earning an associate degree or up to two years of college credit.

New York State is already a national leader in this area, with 23 ECHS programs educating 5,600 students across the state through various public-private partnerships. For example, New York City’s ECHS programs have been in existence for 10 years, serve a student body that is 90 percent minority, and have an average graduation rate of 85 percent.

The State currently spends $2 million annually on ECHS programs, which is matched by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funding. In the upcoming budget, Governor Cuomo will launch an Early College High School Challenge Grant to attract private support and replicate successful ECHS models. These resources will make it possible to continue existing successful programs and start new initiatives across New York State that prepare students for success in college and beyond.
Create Innovation Zones

Technology has transformed virtually every aspect of American life and can serve as a valuable tool in our efforts to do more and better in public education. Building on the Commission’s recommendation to improve the education pipeline through innovative use of technology, Governor Cuomo is proposing the creation of Innovation Zones to provide schools with transformative technology to increase student achievement.

Through a competitive grant awarded to school districts that propose innovative ways to use technology to enhance curriculum and to improve student learning, New York State will provide educators with the tools to personalize instruction, engage students, and create access to learning opportunities that would otherwise be impossible. Technology holds the potential to make learning more accessible to
students, expand educational experiences beyond the traditional school day and inform and engage parents as critical partners in the student learning process.

Continue to Find Efficiencies through Shared Services, Regionalization, and Consolidation

The New NY Education Reform Commission made clear that the State must continue to promote increased access to educational opportunities by encouraging school district restructuring through consolidation and regionalization. More than half of New York’s nearly 700 school districts educate fewer than 2,000 students each, and yet many have their own administration and back office functions, often leading to unnecessary duplication and expense.  

Governor Cuomo will empower citizens to consolidate and regionalize school districts in the same way he encouraged local government consolidations to streamline services under his New NY Government Reorganize and Citizen Empowerment Act. Moreover, Governor Cuomo proposes the review of existing incentives for consolidation to determine if they should be restructured or enhanced.
Another Round of NYSUNY 2020, and a New NYCUNY 2020

New York State’s world-class colleges and universities are a key part of Governor Cuomo’s strategy for attracting businesses and growing jobs here in New York State. Research shows that colleges and universities can strategically fill two critical needs for emerging industries:

- Advancing innovation with new technologies, new processes, new products, and new ideas that all fuel knowledge creation; and

- Providing knowledge transfer, housing a culture for employers and entrepreneurs to gain the tools, strategies, and supports needed to develop and refine their business.95

New York has been at the forefront of this trend with a long and fruitful history of university-industry collaborations. Governor Cuomo will continue to spur economic development through the State’s public higher education system with a third round of competitive NYSUNY 2020 grants. The first round of NYSUNY 2020 at each university center inspired new thinking and attracted large regional interest and private support, including:
• The University at Buffalo is dramatically expanding research while revitalizing downtown Buffalo with the relocation of the University’s medical facilities in coordination with the region’s largest hospital network.96

• Stony Brook University combined its grant with a $150 million gift from the Simons Foundation, one of the largest gifts to any public higher education institution, to build a Medical and Research Translation Building on top of their School of Medicine to greatly enhance cancer research and neuroscience.97

• Binghamton University will construct a state-of-the-art Smart Energy Research and Development Facility with an estimated economic impact of over $77 million annually.98

• The University at Albany will establish an Emerging Technology and Entrepreneurship Complex to capitalize on discoveries to be brought to market from a wide array of research specialties.99

Each plan encompasses a strategy for a rational tuition plan for students, enrollment growth, private support, expansion of diversity programing, and additional research and teaching faculty hires alongside their signature capital expansion plans.

The second round of NYSUNY 2020 attracted innovative submissions with an extraordinary amount
of collaboration between campuses across the SUNY system. NYSUNY 2020 Round III and NYCUNY 2020 will offer additional grants for 2- and 4-year colleges and universities within both the SUNY and CUNY systems. Projects will be selected in a competitive manner based on economic impact, advancement of academic goals, innovation, and collaboration. These programs will continue Governor Cuomo’s place-based regional economic development initiative, linking the knowledge and innovation of higher education to regional economic revitalization through large and small businesses.

This is what it will take to ensure our children’s and our state’s future. We can, we must, and we will get it done. With a renewed focus on student achievement from cradle to career, we will make New York State a national model for educational excellence and provide our children and youth with the tools and skills they need to be successful in life.
3. Progressive Agenda

New York has a long history of being a beacon for progressive change, from the birthplace of the movement for women's rights, to worker protections, to decent, affordable housing, intelligent environmental protection and safe energy sources; and the list goes on. A central goal of Governor Cuomo’s administration is to restore New York to its rightful place as the progressive capital of the nation. We will achieve this goal by drawing strength from the people of New York, and continuing to forge a path forward by engaging citizens in the process of governing every step of the way.

In June, 2011, New York passed the Marriage Equality Act, and became the largest and most influential state in the nation to extend marriage