

## A GLOSSARY OF EDUCATION TERMS

This glossary includes definitions of commonly used educational terms and acronyms. The majority of the terms are not discussed within this handbook but are provided here to familiarize new board members with their meanings.

**Academic Intervention Services (AIS)** – Services required of the school district to provide extra help to students who are not yet meeting the learning standards.

**Accountability** – Requiring school districts and states to ensure that schools meet their goals/standards.

**Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)** – An annual evaluation of teachers and principals that school boards and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) must ensure is conducted in accordance with law and the commissioner's regulations. Each school board and BOCES must adopt an APPR plan to be filed in the district or BOCES office and made available for public review by September 10 of each year.

**Appropriation** – An authorization from the board of education or voters to make expenditures and to incur monetary obligations for specific purposes.

**Assessed valuation** – The monetary worth of all property in the district as determined by the municipal assessor.

**Average daily attendance** – The aggregate days of attendance during a given reporting period divided by the number of days school is in session during that period.

**Basic Education Data System (BEDS)** – The State Education Department's system for collecting basic information on all the state's elementary and secondary schools.

**Block grants** – Federal or state funding distributed in a lump sum directly to states or localities to administer and direct programs.

**Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)** – BOCES are formed by a voluntary cooperative association of school districts in a geographical area that band together to provide services, such as special education and vocational programs, to their component local school districts.

**BOCES aid** – State funds to reimburse a district for part of the cost of BOCES services.

**Categorical aid** – State or federal aid which is intended to finance or reimburse a specific category of expenses or to aid a particular target group of pupils.

**Charter school** – An "independent and autonomous public school" established under state charter school law, eligible for funding from both private and public local, state and federal monies.

**Commissioner of Education** – The chief executive officer of the Board of Regents and the State Education Department appointed by the Board of Regents to enforce laws and policies relating to the state education system.

**Committee on Open Government (COOG)** – A statutorily created committee that pursuant to law issues regulations and advisory opinions on the state's Open Meetings Law, Freedom of Information Law and Personal Privacy Protection Law.

**Committee on Special Education/Committee on Preschool Special Education (CSE/CPSE)** – The team(s) established by the board of education in each school district that is responsible for, among other things, identifying, evaluating and recommending appropriate education placements and services for students with disabilities.

**Contingency budget** – The budget adopted by the board of education after a proposed budget or budget revote is defeated. A contingency budget is subject to statutory spending restrictions.

**Cooperative Service application (Co-Ser)** – A BOCES request to the commissioner of education for approval to operate a service.

**Core curriculum** – The body of knowledge that all students are expected to learn.

**Data-driven (or data-based) decision making** – Analyzing varied forms of data to identify educational strengths and/or weaknesses to plan for and implement improvements in student achievement as well as monitoring trends and using this information to make decisions about the effectiveness of continuation or changes in district practices, curriculum, programs, procedures and policies.

**Demographic data** – Information describing the students and citizens of a school district; usually includes characteristics such as race, age, gender, income, educational level and profession.

**Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)** – A state law which prohibits student harassment and bullying on the basis of certain protected characteristics.

**Distance learning** – A mode of delivering education and instruction via the internet without a student physically attending the class.

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)** – A comprehensive federal law adopted in 1965 establishing the conditions under which states and school districts can access federal funding for education.

**Equalization rate** – The percentage of full value at which taxable real property in a county, city, town or village is assessed as determined by the commissioner of taxation and finance.

**Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** – The most recent federal reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

**Executive session** – A portion of the school board meeting that is not open to the public.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** – A federal law protecting the privacy of, and access to, student records.

**Fiscal deficit** – The amount by which total expenditures exceed total revenues for the fiscal year.

**Foundation aid** — A state aid formula which provides that the majority of school aid is distributed by a clear and predictable stream of funding.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** — A FAPE consists of special education and related services provided to an eligible child with a disability at public expense under public supervision and direction.

**Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)** — A state law that gives the public access to government records, as a way to foster increased understanding of and participation in government. The law provides procedures for requests and a list of the kinds of records that are exempted. Part of New York's Sunshine Laws; see also Open Meetings Law.

**Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB)** — GASB sets the accounting rules for all governmental entities, including school districts.

**Inclusion** — Educating students with disabilities as appropriate in a regular classroom setting along with students without disabilities.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** — A federal law that affords students with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** — A written statement outlining the plan for providing an educational program for a disabled student based on the unique needs of that student.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** — Refers to the setting in which disabled students are educated and the obligation to ensure, to the maximum extent appropriate, such students are not placed in separate schools or classes and participate in the regular educational environment.

**New York State Learning Standards** — The level of knowledge, skills and understanding that students should be able to demonstrate over time as a result of instruction or experience. There are two types of standards, according to the State Education Department: content standards (what children should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their schooling) and performance standards (acceptable levels of student achievement).

**NYCRR (New York Codes, Rules and Regulations)** — The compilation of all New York State regulations.

**Open Meetings Law (OML)** — A law that governs the conduct of board of education meetings. Part of New York's Sunshine Laws; see also Freedom of Information Law.

**Parliamentary procedure** — A system of organizing a meeting to ensure an orderly, democratic process; Robert's Rules of Order is most commonly used in New York.

**Performance-based assessment** — Tests which measure students' abilities to perform tasks and solve problems rather than choosing answers from a number of possibilities.

**PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes)** — An agreed upon payment that is made in place of taxes by a property owner who would not otherwise be liable for taxes based upon the exempt status of the real property.

**Public Employee Relations Board (PERB)** — A state agency that administers and enforces the Taylor Law.

**Student growth model** — An accountability system that tracks student performance over time.

**Taylor Law** — The common name for the Public Employees Fair Employment Act, a part of the Civil Service Law, which is a comprehensive labor relations statute covering all public employees in New York State.

**Tenure** — Guaranteed job security, granted by state law to teachers after a period of satisfactory probationary service, which cannot be rescinded except for cause.

**Title I** — A federal aid program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to provide schools with a high percentage of low-income families with additional funds to improve academic achievement.

**Triborough amendment** — An amendment to the Taylor Law, part of the Civil Service Law, that requires the terms of an expired collective bargaining agreement to remain in effect until a new one is negotiated. Named after the 1972 Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority PERB decision.

**Voucher** — A way to allocate and distribute education money directly to parents to pay for their children's education in a public or private school.

**Wicks Law** — A section of the General Municipal Law that requires school districts to award separate contracts for plumbing, heating/air/ventilation and electrical work.