



PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR EDUCATION JUSTICE

aqeny.org/march | info@edjusticemarch.org

PEOPLE'S MARCH FOR EDUCATION JUSTICE PLATFORM

On March 4, students, teachers, parents and community members across New York will stand up for education justice.

We the people, the parents, students in our diversity will gather in cities across New York State to send a bold message to our national, state and local representatives that educational justice is racial justice. We are ready to stand together as sisters and brothers, centering and recognizing that all children should have access to equity through childcare for low-income families, fully funded public schools, access to higher education, positive school climates that are free from the criminalization of our youth, and end to the over reliance of testing and to send a message that public education is not for sale.

WE DEMAND:

- **Full & Fair funding for all Public Schools from Pre-K - College**
- **End the School to Prison Pipeline: Solutions, not Suspensions**
- **Increase Access to Early Care and Learning Opportunities for Babies & Toddlers**
- **End the state's over-reliance on high-stakes testing**
- **Protect Public Education: End of School Privatization**
- **Implement Culturally Responsive Curriculum**
- **Increase Supports for Students in Poverty**
- **Increase Supports for Immigrant Students & English Language Learners**
- **Protect the Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities**

Full & Fair funding for all Public Schools from Pre-K- College

The system of driving school funding based on zip codes and home values, perpetuates systemic racism through dramatic inequalities in educational opportunity. The racial inequality in school funding is exacerbated by the fact that New York State has the most segregated schools in the country. For over a decade we have yet to see a political will of urgency from New York State's elected leaders to reverse the racial and economic inequality for our children. Governor Cuomo and the State Senate Majority treat education like the Hunger Games, making schools districts desperately in need of funding compete with each other for money. This has created two types of public schools, the haves and have-nots. With more school funding, high need schools can reduce class sizes and increase access to art, music, sports and Advance Placement courses. We need to maximize higher education opportunities for students by having tuition free CUNY and SUNY for all. NYS must prioritize education at all levels in order to help students fully realize their potential.

End the School to Prison Pipeline: Solutions, not Suspensions

We need to end the discriminatory school policing and start protecting the civil rights of all students. President Donald Trump has called for more "law and order", "stop and frisk", and immigration raids in communities of color and has even called for arming K-12 teachers with guns. We need New York to be a leader in ending the criminalization of Black, Brown and immigrant students in schools. We want every school to have a positive school climate where students and educators feel safe and supported. We need to decriminalize students both in school and out. NYS is still one of only two states that prosecutes 16 year olds as adults. New York leaders need to raise the age of criminal responsibility.

Increase Access to Early Care and Learning Opportunities for Babies and Toddlers

Income inequality is on the rise in New York, a fact that is especially harmful to young children and families. The cost of quality early childhood education is simply out of reach. But it is essential to both preparing children for success in school and life and ensuring family economic security. New York needs to fund the promise for quality pre-K for all and increase investment in quality child care. These companion investments are essential for New York to ensure children and families succeed.

End the state's over-reliance on high-stakes testing

There is too much emphasis on high-stakes testing which results in too much teaching to the tests. Testing should be used to assess students' learning and diagnose where they need help. Instead, tests are focused on shaming schools and teachers and imposing negative consequences that impact our students. These consequences, including school closings, loss of local control and the potential firing of teachers, have damaging impact. Education practices should be built around teaching and learning, not testing and punishing.

Protect Public Education: End of School Privatization

The President, Donald Trump, Betsy Devo, the Education Secretary and NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo have largely supported charter schools, tax credits and vouchers, while supporting the diversion of public funds from already starved public schools. Both Governor Cuomo and President Trump are on record for calling our public schools "A monopoly". The privatization of public schools via charter schools, vouchers and credits is threat in NYS as well as on the federal level.

Implement Culturally Responsive Curriculum

Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) is a method of engaging, rigorous education that holds high academic expectations for all students; is grounded in students' experiences and interests; cultivates positive academic, racial and cultural identities; develops students' ability to communicate and connect across cultures; builds student leadership as agents of social change; and inspires students to fall in love with learning. CRE makes the classroom a place that students feel safe to express who they are, take risks and tell their stories.

Increase Supports for Students in Poverty

In New York State 42% of children are living in low-income households. These families are struggling to meet their most basic needs for food, housing, and medical care. Exposure to these stressful situations are debilitating to both adults and children. Many children raised in poverty enter school a step behind their well-off peers. High-poverty, high-minority schools have significantly less money than more prosperous school districts. With the recent spikes in the number of homeless students it is crucial that New York's leaders provide adequate and sufficient safety nets for children and families struggling in poverty. By investing in community schools and other research proven solutions we can ensure that our schools are a safe and supportive environment for all kids to learn.

Increase Supports for Immigrant Students & English Language Learners

English language learners (ELLs) are students who are learning English and mastering academic content at the same time. Some are newly arrived from other countries; others were born and raised in New York but do not speak English at home. We must help preserve children's access to and knowledge of their native language. This means more dual language, English as a New Language, and English as a Second Language programs, all the way from Pre-K to Grade 12. NYS needs to increase the availability of translation and interpretation services to allow parents with limited English can communicate reliably with school administrators and teachers. We also need our state legislators to enact the New York State Dream Act to allow unauthorized immigrants who meet certain qualifications to apply for the state's Tuition Assistance Program on the same basis as other students.

Protect the Educational Rights of Students with Disabilities

New York State needs to protect and promote the educational rights of students with disabilities. We need to improve educational programs, opportunities, and outcomes for students with disabilities and improve parent engagement. Creating systems to train and support teachers in using research-based methodologies to support reading and writing development for students who are struggling, including students with disabilities. Take steps to increase the use of alternative methods of dispute resolution, including mediation and facilitated IEP meetings. Strengthen and publicize the process for parents to obtain assistance with special education issues that require them to seek help outside their child's school.