

To Members of the WPTA:

Election day is coming close - November 4th, 2014. We urge our membership to vote. For your convenience, the WPTA's Political Action Committee has provided some helpful links and key points for each of the gubernatorial candidates' positions on education.

Know that your vote is critical! NYSUT's endorsements (regardless of party affiliation) reflect our advocacy and commitment toward public education, healthcare, retirement security, and the right to collectively bargain.

To find the endorsements for your local elections in your district, please visit the following: <http://www.nysut.org/resources/special-resources-sites/voter-guide/endorsements>

This year, NYSUT did NOT endorse any candidates for Governor. However, the candidates and their positions on education are outlined below:

Rob Astorino - <http://www.robastorino.com/astorinomoss-education-plan/>

Replacing Common Core

Reforming the Board of Regents

Increasing the availability of vocational training and STEM study in schools

Better preparing a child to succeed in college, career and in life.

Creating 3 new diplomas and giving students and parents more choices for school and for study

1. STOP Common Core and replace with better standards and curriculum developed by New York educators, with feedback and input from local teachers and parents, and greater control at the district level (one model could be the "Lost Standards" that were being developed by former Regent Saul Cohen's team from 2008-2010 before being scrapped in favor of Common Core and the federal money that came with it). Main reasons for Common Core opposition:

- The standards are experimental, conceived in secrecy with no public hearings on the draft standards, and never tested.
- Few, if any, K-12 teachers were involved in writing the standards.
- It is considered by many to be developmentally inappropriate in the early grades and not based on well-researched child development knowledge.
- It is education guided at the federal level - not the state and local level.
- It actually lowers standards according to many experts, including Dr. James Milgrim and Dr. Sandra Stosky - the two content experts on the Common Core validation committee who refused to affirm the standards.

2. Develop more accurate measures of student, teacher and school performance, reducing reliance on high stakes assessments, with a more balanced, portfolio approach.

3. Reform Board of Regents by creating an elected 13-member board (regional districts electing their own representative to the Board).

- This reform would shift the power away from the Assembly Speaker and to the people.

4. Governor appoints Education Commissioner who must be confirmed by the Board of Regents with a majority vote.

- This reform would shift more responsibility for education to the Governor who is accountable to voters every four years. His or her pick for Education Commissioner would work with the Board of Regents to determine education policy in NYS.

5. Increase availability of vocational training in schools for careers in home economics, carpentry, mechanics, electrical, etc.

- In recent years, schools have moved away from vocational training. This is a mistake as many students not interested in college would benefit greatly from learning a skilled trade and be ready to enter the workforce upon graduation from High School.

6. Increase coordination between community colleges, local school districts and local industry so students can be properly counseled on the present and future availability of jobs, the types of jobs, their pay and benefits, and the skills needed to do these jobs.

7. Increase Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in schools.

- There is a gap in the growing number of hi-tech jobs and careers and the number of Americans qualified and trained to do these jobs. To solve this, there needs to be a greater emphasis on STEM in schools.

8. Create three new diplomas, offering more choices to students and parents to better capture a young adult's motivation in addition to his or her talents and interests:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- STEM Regents
- Academic Regents

9. Ensure full funding for special education services.

10. Increase life skills training in schools.

- Nutritional literacy instruction in Middle School
- Financial literacy instruction in High School

11. Provide more school choices for parents of children in schools determined to be failing.

- Once accurate measures of school performance are determined allow parents in schools that have failed for consecutive years other school options for their child. Options can be a different public school or Charter school. Last option could be voucher to be used for private or religious school.

12. Pass the Education Investment Tax Credit.

- Governor Cuomo failed to deliver on his promise. The EITC would allow for more scholarships to private schools and more funding for public and private schools.

13. Create a new marketing campaign to encourage greater parental involvement in their child's education.

- Teachers will say, the best students are the ones with the most involved parent(s). Greater parental or guardian involvement needs to be encouraged.

14. Combat the problem of chronic absenteeism in New York schools.

- The first step to a good education is being in the classroom. Chronic absenteeism is a serious problem that leads to all other sorts of issues for the child and the community.

15. Begin foreign language instruction in elementary school.

- While mastering the English language will remain the priority, study of a foreign language is a critical step in building a well-rounded and global student. Starting in the early grades takes advantage of a child's greater capacity to more easily learn a language as the brain is developing.

Andrew Cuomo - http://www.ontheissues.org/Andrew_Cuomo.htm#Education

- Replace 1950s bureaucracy with 2020 performance organization. (Jan 2014)
- Tie 4% funding increase to teacher evaluation system. (Jan 2013)
- Additional SUNY Challenge Grants. (Jan 2012)
- Replace formula-based grants with performance incentives. (Jan 2011)
- Follows federal lead in education by emphasizing performance. (Jan 2011)
- Double the charter school cap. (Nov 2010)
- Vouchers undermine existing public schools. (Oct 2003)
- Universal 3-K: pre-school for all 3-year-olds. (Oct 2003)
- Mayor should be accountable for NYC schools. (Mar 2002)

Howie Hawkins - <http://www.howiehawkins.org/platform>

- Fully fund public schools with an equitable state aid formula.
- Eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment and the state-mandated local tax cap.
- 100% Foundation Aid for public schools.
- Fully funded, full day, and developmentally appropriate Universal Pre-K and Kindergarten with certified and unionized educators.
- Opt out of high-stakes testing for students, teachers, and schools.
- Opt out of Common Core and Race To The Top.
- Opt into common standards, curricula, and diagnostic tests written by professional teachers in the schools, not by outside corporate contractors.
- Opt into teacher and school evaluation based on collaboration.
- Opt into affirmative action to reduce school segregation by race and class, such as regional inter-district transfer programs.
- State legislation to reduce class sizes and case loads.
- Free Tuition at CUNY, SUNY, and Community Colleges.

Michael McDermott - Libertarian <http://votemcdermott.org/issues/>

An Education Plan By the People, For the People. The education policies currently in place under the current administration's leadership have stripped us of local democratic control of our schools and put it into the hands of private interests and bureaucrats.

Plan Points:

1. Repeal the Common Core Learning Standards. Replace Common Core with standards created by teachers and educational experts that:

- Offer differentiated and challenging learning for all students.
- Provide Art, Music, Gym, Social Studies and Science for every child.
- Put a halt to all new teacher certification tests aligned with Common Core and reinstate the former ones. This will allow for new teachers to enter into the profession trained in research based teaching methodologies.

2. End High Stakes Testing -

3. Protect Against Privatization

4. Full Equal Funding for Public Education -

5. Empower Local Communities and Parents

6. Parental Rights to Protect Student Privacy

7. Board of Regents Accountability