



CHRISTIE REFORM AGENDA 2011: THE YEAR OF EDUCATION REFORM

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Democrats & Education Leaders From Around The Country Echo Governor Christie's Call For Needed Tenure Reform

"We need to reform the tenure system and we need to set up a system where, first, teachers believe they're being effectively and fairly evaluated. ... The second half is teacher practice. ... Let's change our compensation system for teachers in order to reflect this new reality of evaluating their effectiveness. We should be paying good teachers more than we're paying them. In my view we don't pay our good teachers enough. We should be carrying those good teachers to school on our shoulders every day because they are gold and we should be paying them that way."

- Governor Chris Christie's Address to the Brookings Institute, 4/7/2011

PRESIDENT OBAMA AND U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

U.S. President Barack Obama: "... we need to make sure our students have the teacher they need to be successful. And that means states and school districts taking steps to move bad teachers out of the classroom. ... let me be clear: If a teacher is given a chance or two chances or three chances but still does not improve, there's no excuse for that person to continue teaching. I reject a system that rewards failure and protects a person from its consequences. The stakes are too high. We can afford nothing but the best when it comes to our children's teachers and the schools where they teach." (President Obama's Remarks to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, [The New York Times](#), 3/10/2009)

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan: "Excellence matters and we must honor it – fairly, transparently, and on terms teachers can embrace. The President and I have both said repeatedly that we are not going to impose reform but rather work with teachers, principals, and unions to find what works. Test scores alone should never drive evaluation, compensation or tenure decisions. That would never make sense. But to remove student achievement entirely from evaluation is illogical and indefensible." ("Arne Duncan Addresses RA Delegates," [NationalEducationAssociation.org](#), 7/2/2009)

NEW JERSEY DEMOCRATIC LEADERS

Senate President Stephen Sweeney (D-Gloucester): "This is something we need to look at," Sweeney said. ... "We are willing to talk about it." (John Mooney, "Gov. Christie's State of the State Puts Education Reform Front and Center," [NJ Spotlight](#), 1/12/2011)

Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver (D-Essex): "I think the issue of tenure and retention of jobs is something that not only legislators are willing to sit down and look at, but the representatives of the educators are willing to have that discussion, too," Oliver said. "I do not see that as some obstacle that cannot be overcome." (John Mooney, "Gov. Christie's State of the State Puts Education Reform Front and Center," [NJ Spotlight](#), 1/12/2011)

Senator Teresa Ruiz (D-Essex): "She was among those applauding the governor's call to eliminate tenure ... "There will always have to be due process, but what has happened over the course of time is that tenure has developed into something massively different than what purported at its inception."" (John Mooney, "Gov. Christie's State of the State Puts Education Reform Front and Center," [NJ Spotlight](#), 1/12/2011)

MAYORS FROM SOME OF AMERICA'S LARGEST CITIES

Newark Mayor Cory Booker: "Teacher tenure, as it currently exists, has become an obstacle to attracting talented educators to our public schools. If we are to truly improve our public education system, we must set a new standard for tenure that prizes effectiveness above all else. ... We desperately need a new system that rewards the best teachers, provides development and support to help every teacher grow and improve and ultimately removes those who are consistently ineffective from the classroom." (Cory Booker, "Teacher tenure is poisonous: Cory Booker, mayor of Newark, says it's time to put performance first," [New York Daily News](#), 3/10/2011)

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg: "New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg plans to overhaul how tenure is awarded in city schools and institute a system that grants job security based on performance. Beginning this year, teachers will be rated on a four-tier system, with those rated "effective" and "highly effective" eligible for tenure after three years, the mayor's office announced in a statement today. "This will transform the tenure system from one in which tenure is taken for granted, to one in which it must be earned through effective performance in the classroom," the mayor's office said in its statement." (Oliver Staley, "New York City to Replace Automatic Teacher Tenure With Performance System," [Bloomberg](#), 9/27/2010)

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa: "Current tenure and evaluation practices aren't just meaningless for parents and districts, they are equally meaningless for the dedicated teachers seeking to grow and improve. ... California has the opportunity to adopt a new system, one that is meaningful and based on a clear definition of teacher and school leader effectiveness. And we must start by making data on student performance — and student growth— a key indicator. To be meaningful, evaluations must include multiple measurements: Student growth over time, in-class observations, and reviews by students and parents, supervisors and peers. ... we cannot continue to automatically guarantee lifetime employment to all teachers, nor can we make decisions about assignments, transfers and layoffs solely on the basis of seniority. Tenure and seniority must be reformed or we will be left with only one option: eliminating it entirely." (Mayor Calls On Teachers Unions To Engage In Reform, [Mayor of the City of Los Angeles Press Release](#), 12/7/2010)

Chicago Mayor-Elect Rahm Emanuel: "In Chicago's schools, layoffs are typically done by seniority. I want to change that policy to ensure that those who are laid off are the least effective teachers, not the most junior," Emanuel told the Catalyst, a Chicago paper that tracks local schools. "This will require a new teacher-evaluation system based on a comprehensive assessment of instructional quality and student performance, not simply results from one exam," Emanuel added. He also said it should be easier to fire low-performing teachers who have tenure. "We simply cannot afford to leave our children in the hands of bad teachers. I am focused on teacher development and improvement, but we must have the flexibility to remove the worst teachers and ensure that our children are in classrooms run by effective leaders," he said." (Carl Campanile, "Chicago mayoral candidate Rahm also wants to end teacher seniority," [New York Post](#), 2/9/2011)

EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS AND EDUCATION LEADERS

National Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten: "... tenure should be earned, not given as a right. ... tenure needs to be reformed." ("Teacher Tenure Necessary, Says Teachers' Unions," [National Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten interview on NPR](#), 2/11/2011)

State Director of Democrats for Education Reform Kathleen Nugent: "New Jersey's teacher tenure system is not working for our children, and it's time to turn the page on our antiquated practices and begin a new chapter — where the interests of students are put first. ... Effectiveness must be the core criteria for gaining and retaining teacher tenure. Tenure should reward the most effective teachers with job security and increased pay; it should set clear expectations for performance and provide the support needed for teachers to develop themselves and meet those goals; and it should ensure that any consistently ineffective teacher is removed from the classroom." (Kathleen Nugent, "Effectiveness should be measure for tenure in New Jersey," [The Star-Ledger](#), 3/2/2011)

New Jersey School Boards Association Executive Director Marie S. Bilik: "For more than 30 years, NJSBA has sought replacement of lifetime teacher tenure with a system that would base employment decisions on job performance. ... "Tenure now serves as nothing more than a lifetime system of job protection that makes removal of an underperforming teacher difficult, time-consuming and expensive. "Teachers should not fear tenure reform," she continued. "The majority of our teachers are dedicated professionals, and state-to-state comparisons of overall student performance illustrate the high level of achievement in New Jersey." ("N.J. School Boards Association Backs Governor's Tenure Reform Plan," New Jersey School Boards Association News Release, 4/7/2011)

Executive Director of E3 Derrell Bradford: "The problem is that receiving tenure is like being on autopilot. It's granted way too easily and it's way too difficult to remove." (Lisa Fleisher, "N.J. Teachers Float Tenure Plan," [Wall Street Journal](#), 12/8/2010)

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