

February 28, 2022

**RE: Transfer of Oversight for Licensed Healthcare Professionals from SED to DOH and Oppose (S.8007/A.9007 – PART G) and Oppose Transfer of School Lunch Program from SED to the Department of Agriculture and Markets (S.8008/A.9008 – PART V)**

Dear Legislator:

As a constituent and a state employee in the State Education Department (SED) represented by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), I am writing in opposition to Governor Hochul’s proposal to transfer the oversight for licensed healthcare professionals from the State Education Department over to the Department of Health, as well as the transfer of the School Lunch Program from SED to the Department of Agriculture and Markets (DAM).

**Oppose Transfer of Oversight for Licensed Professionals from SED to DOH:** The State Education Department, under the direction of the NYS Board of Regents, regulates healthcare and other professions through the Office of the Professions (OP) and the State Boards for the Professions. The core function of the OP is to regulate the professions and to protect the public. To that end, it is appropriate for this function to rest with SED because education plays a key role in preparing licensed professionals and in ensuring their continued development. This long-established process helps to ensure the professional quality and integrity of each licensed profession.

While the OP has operated on a starvation budget for almost a decade resulting in fewer resources and significantly fewer staff, it continues to get the job done as evidenced by the excellent performance of New York’s health care workforce during this pandemic. The major benefit of having the professions regulated by SED, under the auspices of the Regents, is that licensure requirements and decisions are insulated from outside political influences.

**Oppose Transfer of Oversight for School Lunch Program from SED to DAM:** SED has and should maintain responsibility for the school lunch program as diet and nutrition are critical factors of educational outcomes and because the department has a responsibility to monitor and oversee all aspects of K-12 education. Removing this program from SED’s portfolio could impact the coordination of resources needed to address outcomes in low wealth districts that rely on the school lunch program to support at-risk students.

As my elected official, I ask that you work with the leadership in your house to REJECT the transfer of oversight for licensed healthcare professionals from SED to DOH (S.8007/A.9007—PART G) and provide additional resources and staff to the State Education Department and the OP so that it can continue to regulate healthcare professions effectively and efficiently. I ask that you also REJECT the transfer of the school lunch program from SED to DAM (S.8008.A9008—Part V).

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

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