



## **Education Reform Now New York**

### **TESTIMONY FOR THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL: ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Submitted to:

The Honorable Liz Krueger, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable Gary Pretlow, Chair, Assembly Ways and Means Committee

The Honorable Shelley Mayer, Chair, Senate Education Committee

The Honorable Michael Benedetto, Chair, Assembly Education Committee

#### **Dear Chair Krueger, Chair Pretlow, Chair Mayer, Chair Benedetto, and Distinguished Members of the Legislature:**

Education Reform Now New York (ERN NY) respectfully submits this written testimony in strong support of establishing a statewide High-Impact Tutoring (HIT) program. ERN NY thanks Governor Hochul for her leadership and for proposing \$9 million for High-Impact Tutoring in the Executive Budget. Building on this important commitment, ERN NY recommends a \$10 million statewide investment to fully support both high-quality tutoring delivery and the development of a sustainable tutor pipeline.

ERN NY urges the Legislature to support investment in High-Impact Tutoring (HIT) and to incorporate the core components reflected in bill A.2625 (Cunningham) / S.1820 (Fernandez) to ensure that any statewide program meets the definition of a true, evidence-based High-Impact Tutoring model.

For the past four years, ERN New York has led statewide advocacy for High-Impact Tutoring as a core academic recovery strategy and has worked closely with Assemblymember Brian Cunningham and Senator Nathalia Fernandez to advance a policy framework grounded in research, implementation fidelity, and equity.

#### **Ongoing Academic Need**

New York's students continue to face significant academic challenges, particularly in middle school, where learning gaps become more difficult to close over time. More than two-thirds of New York's eighth-grade students are not proficient in English Language Arts or mathematics. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only 31 percent of eighth graders statewide are proficient in ELA and 26 percent in mathematics, with proficiency rates falling to single digits in some high-need districts—particularly in upstate communities. Opportunity gaps for Black and Brown students reach as high as 40 percentage points in certain districts.

These outcomes persist despite substantial state education investments and underscore the need for targeted, evidence-based interventions that directly address unfinished learning.

## High-Impact Tutoring: Evidence and Results in New York State

High-Impact Tutoring is among the most rigorously studied academic interventions available. Research synthesized by the Stanford-based National Student Support Accelerator, drawing on meta-analyses of more than 150 studies, demonstrates that high-quality HIT can produce the equivalent of three to fifteen additional months of learning in a single school year, with particularly strong effects for students from low-income backgrounds.

Crucially, HIT is already delivering measurable results across New York State:

- **Rochester:** Students who completed 30 or more tutoring sessions gained an average of 0.7 reading levels in a single summer; students with higher attendance (82 percent) experienced significantly stronger gains.
- **Buffalo:** 100 percent of participating students improved in reading ability and fluency, and 99 percent demonstrated gains in critical thinking and social-emotional skills.
- **Syracuse:** 88 percent of students improved phonics skills, with kindergarten through third-grade students averaging two skill-level gains.
- **New York City:** More than 50 percent of students achieved over 1.5 years of growth in mathematics during the 2024–25 school year, and the share of students at or above ELA benchmarks increased by 12 percentage points.

These results reinforce a central lesson: attendance, dosage, and implementation fidelity drive outcomes.

## Guardrails Protect the State's Investment

The components of A.2625 / S.1820 serve as guardrails to ensure students receive high-quality tutoring that improves literacy and numeracy outcomes. HIT is most effective when implemented with clear standards, including:

- Tutoring at least three times per week
- Delivery during the school day
- Small-group instruction of four or fewer students
- Consistent tutors who build sustained relationships with students
- Alignment to high-quality curriculum and academic standards
- Rigorous tutor training, oversight, and data-driven progress monitoring

## Budget Considerations and Path Forward

ERN NY strongly supports the Governor's proposed \$9 million investment in High-Impact Tutoring and urges the Legislature to carry this funding through to the final enacted budget. To fully realize the promise of a statewide, evidence-based HIT program, ERN NY recommends a total investment of \$10 million, structured as follows:

- \$8 million to support the tutoring of approximately 3,750 students statewide each year, prioritizing districts with the greatest academic need
- \$2 million to recruit, train, and support tutors, strengthening New York's long-term tutor pipeline

Establishing a statewide High-Impact Tutoring program that includes the necessary components outlined in A.2625 / S.1820 is a vital and timely step to address persistent learning gaps and advance educational equity across New York State. Education Reform Now New York strongly supports this effort and urges the Legislature to build on the Governor's proposal by ensuring sufficient funding to deliver high-quality tutoring at scale and to strengthen the tutor pipeline.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony for the record. We urge the Legislature to fully fund a statewide High-Impact Tutoring program in the final enacted budget, ensuring that students with the greatest academic need receive proven, high-quality support.

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