

## Testimony of Reinvent Albany for the Joint Legislative Hearing On Elementary and Secondary Education

*Re: NYC should determine governance of its own schools,  
IDAs should not drain \$1.8 billion/year of school funding*

January 29, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on budget issues related to elementary and secondary education. Reinvent Albany advocates for open, accountable New York government.

**Today, Reinvent Albany urges the legislature to support or oppose the following education issues proposed in the FY 2027 Executive Budget**

- 1. Support NYC permanent control over its own schools**
- 2. Oppose IDAs draining \$1.8 billion/year in potential school revenue**
- 3. Support accurate reporting of tax abatements by school districts per statement 77 of the General Accounting Standards Board**

**First, support giving NYC permanent control over its own schools.** The Governor's Executive Budget in Part A of ELFA extends mayoral control for another four years, until 2030. The current system of temporary mayoral control, does not respect basic principles of home rule, is an intrusive overreach of state authority, and is kept forever in flux as a way of extracting political concessions from the City. NYC has [43% of the state's population](#), [contributes 54.5% of state revenues](#), and has a sophisticated and highly representative City Council. The people of New York City and their elected representatives in City Council and the Mayor's office should have the authority to determine how to govern their schools – not the state.

**Second, support legislation that stops IDAs from draining [\\$1.8 billion](#) a year in local tax revenue that would otherwise go to schools. Please include in your one house budgets [A4927 \(Bronson\)](#) / Formerly S132 (Ryan).** Parents and teachers have no way of stopping IDAs from reducing school revenue. The Governor even vetoed a bill last year that would have required IDA boards to consider the perspective of schools by requiring school and labor representatives sit on IDA boards, which is currently an option but not a mandate.

With New York State facing gaping budget gaps in fiscal years 2028-2030 of \$6 billion, \$9 billion, and \$12 billion respectively, it is important the legislature act now to protect school revenues from skyrocketing IDA abatements of the local property taxes that fund schools. These IDA abatements are eroding local tax bases across New York and further increase the dependence of public schools on state aid.

**Third, we urge the legislature to pass a bill instructing the State Department of Education (SED) to consult with the General Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and issue an updated guidance to local school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) that explains how to correctly report tax abatements that reduce their revenue per GASB Statement 77.**

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact info [at] reinventalbany.org.