

New York State Educational Conference Board



ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL
BUSINESS OFFICIALS



S.1046-E (Myrie)/A.6678-E (Walker) Statement of Concerns

After several amendments in the closing weeks of the 2022 Legislative Session, both houses of the Legislature once again amended S.1046-E (Myrie)/A.6678-E (Walker) over the holiday weekend.

After careful review of the current language, and thoughtful consideration of the gravity and importance of apolitical elections for school budgets and school board members, the members of the Educational Conference Board (ECB) have many questions and concerns as to how this bill will impact school budget, capital and merger/consolidation votes.

New York State education law governs school elections and provides a clear process, up to and including the role of the Commissioner of Education in resolving disputes regarding election results. This legislation, while laudable in its intent to ensure voter access in political elections, adds a layer of complexity to the current school election system, which, except for two large city school districts, has always been kept separate and apart from partisan elections in New York State. This legislation also fails to recognize the consequences that a challenge would present to ongoing school operations if a school budget or capital vote is called into question. A change of this magnitude requires significant deliberation with education stakeholders to weigh the ramifications and potential consequences.

As noted earlier, education law establishes and directs the rules pertaining to school elections. ECB stands ready to assist the Legislature in developing amendments to strengthen the Commissioner of Education's powers to respond to issues of voter irregularities, expand the democratic process and increase every New Yorker's access to a fair and unfettered ballot for their local school district budget, capital plan or school board election.

For the above-mentioned reasons, ECB members urge the Legislature to carve out school districts from S.1046-E (Myrie)/A.6678-E (Walker).