



Our Children Can't Wait for A Quality Education... Place a Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom!

Research confirms common sense: a qualified teacher improves student achievement. Instead of providing a qualified teacher in every classroom, schools in New York State are moving backward. Budget cuts are forcing districts to lay off qualified teachers, leaving students in the lurch. New York State's ability to guarantee a qualified teacher, certified in his or her subject area, in every classroom will become even more difficult in the years just ahead. New York's schools will need to find 100,000 new teachers in the next five to seven years. That will mean replacing nearly half our current teaching workforce. New York State needs to attract – *and keep* – the most highly qualified people for the profession of teaching.

- **Attract and Retain Qualified Teachers.** The 2002-2003 state budget must provide the necessary funds to pay for competitive salaries and to provide enough teachers in understaffed high need districts. **AQE supports increasing state aid by at least \$500 million to enable high need districts to build a qualified teaching corps that can be a force for standards, consistency and improved student achievement.**
 - ✓ High need districts are especially dependent on state aid, so their ability to attract and retain quality teachers is strongly affected by how well they fare in the state budget. Inadequate State funding has forced some districts to lay off teachers this year.
 - ✓ Large urban districts pay their teachers roughly 20 percent less than their suburban counterparts, making it difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers.
 - ✓ Students in large urban districts are two to four times more likely to have an uncertified teacher than their counterparts in low-need districts.
 - ✓ Increasing the number of qualified teachers will also help reduce class size and provide quality pre-K programs – two proven methods for improving student achievement.

- **Train New Teachers.** New teachers are thrust into the classroom with little opportunity to learn from more experienced teachers. **AQE supports \$140 million in funding for mentoring programs for all 1st and 2nd year teachers.** Mentoring has proven its value: it helps new teachers become effective practitioners and encourages them to stay in the profession.

- **Recruit Good Teachers for Our Weakest Schools through the Teachers of Tomorrow Program.** Increase the targeted incentives to get excellent teachers for our weakest schools by appropriating \$50 million to the Teachers of Tomorrow Program. Expand the program to provide financial support to help school paraprofessionals become certified teachers. They are excellent candidates for teaching jobs in high need schools: they know the schools, they know the children.

The **Alliance for Quality Education** (AQE) is a statewide coalition of almost 200 organizations of parents, children's advocates, schools, teachers, clergy, labor unions, business leaders and others who believe that every child in New York State deserves a quality education. AQE, 23 Elk Street, Albany, NY 12207; (518) 432-5315; (518) 432-9498 (fax); www.allianceforqualityeducation.org