



January 9, 2020

Memorandum of Support

S.7117 (Sanders)

The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) supports S.7117, a bill that removes the arbitrary 3.0 GPA requirement and restores institutional independence in determining admissibility into graduate-level teacher and education leadership programs. CICU represents more than 100 private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York State that educate almost 500,000 students annually.

Current law requires students to have a 3.0 undergraduate grade point average (GPA) at the time of application to graduate school in education. Obtaining a 3.0 undergraduate GPA is not an indicator of a student's ability or potential to be a great teacher or principal. A required 3.0 undergraduate GPA unfairly penalizes students who may have had a challenging semester or two with grades that pulled their GPA below 3.0, since under the current legislation it will prevent them from being admitted into a graduate-level teacher or school leadership preparation program. This also punishes students who have shown improvement throughout their college careers or students who have succeeded in education classes but may have struggled in others. In no other profession does the state establish an arbitrary GPA requirement for those wishing to pursue a certain career.

Prior to the current legislation, higher education institutions admitted applicants to their graduate teacher and school leadership preparation programs based on careful review of a number of criteria that assessed students' potential to be successful in their programs. CICU supports the proposed language that restores independence and discretion to graduate education programs that will enable institutions to take a fairer and more holistic view of applicants' backgrounds and potential.

Graduate-level teacher preparation programs and our educational leadership programs in the independent sector graduate approximately 10,000 students per year. And, collectively, the state's Independent Sector colleges and universities prepare 63 percent of all the teachers and school leaders who complete their certificates each year. We are all committed to making sure our state's teachers and principals are well prepared and achieve the qualifications and credentials they need to be successful educators.

For these reasons the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities supports this legislation and urges the legislature to pass it.