

YOUTH POWER!

A New York State Network of Young People with Disabilities and Social-Emotional Challenges

2010 Priority Agenda

YOUTH POWER! is a New York statewide network of young people with disabilities and experience in multiple state child-serving systems. Together we have decided to speak up about our experiences because we believe that no one knows what life is like for us better than we do. We are the voices of the future and there should be nothing about us without us!

Based on conversations and forums with youth all over the state we have identified the following New York State policy priorities:

Youth Involvement & Peer Support:

- Support creative funding opportunities for youth and young adult peer support, advisory councils, advocacy and empowerment training, and drop-in centers.
- Support and build opportunities for youth to maintain a voice in state policy making which directly affects them.

Education:

- Support a name change of the “Individual Education Plan (IEP) Diploma” through the NYS Education Department, to not call it a Diploma. For example it could be called an “IEP Certificate of Completion”.
- Support the restructuring of the new “IEP Certificate” to be more descriptive of students’ actual skill level when exiting high school.
- Support legislation requiring that Disability History Awareness be taught as part of the standard NYS Curriculum. Bill: A.2242, S.3159
- Support the addition of Youth Education Information Centers as part of the Parent Information Centers and rename them “Family Education Information Centers” to ensure youth have access to the information they need to take the lead in their education.
- Support NYS Education Department to enhance their Youth Transition Services to students with disabilities. Support outreach and training for schools to provide more effective transition training to students.

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Reduce and Eliminate Restraint and Seclusion Across Systems:

- Support federal legislation related to reduction and elimination of restraint in educational systems. House of Representatives Bill: HR.4247
- Support state legislation related to reduction and elimination of restraint in educational systems. Assembly Bill: A.1862
- Support funding for trauma informed care trainings to reduce restraint in the Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), Office of Child & Family Services (OCFS), and NYS Education Department funded and/or licensed services.
- Enhance the release of OMH restraint data to include monthly restraint and seclusion numbers with a trended graph of one year. Ensure that data released in report card is accessible and relevant to young people and their families.

Ensure services for young people are of the highest quality:

- Support state legislation to ban the use of Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) on youth under age 16. Assembly Bill: A.8779
- Reform the Juvenile Justice system to prevent the harm of youth in the system. Savings from downsizing the Juvenile Justice system must be reinvested in cross-system, youth-driven services for youth at risk. There must be peer advocates to support the youth in the facilities and an independent oversight agency that includes youth and families.
- Support and offer statewide cross-systems training based on the Child & Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) principles and the skills associated with them.

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