



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Commissioner of Education
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To New York State's Cultural Education Community:

As a native New Yorker who began her teaching career in Western New York, I am excited to be back and look forward to serving the people of our great state. In my new role, I wear two hats: Commissioner of the New York State Education Department and President of the University of the State of New York. The University is a uniquely "New York" entity, where all institutions of education, culture and knowledge are joined together under the leadership of the Board of Regents.

I'm looking forward to the opportunity to work with cultural education institutions statewide, hear your successes, listen to your concerns, and help grow the influence and importance of cultural institutions in the education of our students. New York State is home to some of the greatest cultural education institutions in the country – from museums and historic sites, to archives and libraries, to zoos, science centers and public broadcasting stations. Every cultural institution has education at the heart of its mission and is a learning place for every visitor – from elementary school students and young adults to parents and senior citizens.

I strongly believe whole community involvement is essential to making our students' education the best it can be. I understand, value, and support the vital role of cultural institutions in our children's education. Students benefit greatly when schools and cultural institutions collaborate; from developing lesson plans with teachers and integrating cultural resources into instruction, to hosting student visits and field trips. I applaud your efforts to work with schools and teachers to incorporate your institution's resources in the classroom. I look forward to seeing some of your partnerships with schools in action as I travel across the state.

I encourage you to visit <http://nyscultural.org>. The goal of this website is to provide a place where teachers and cultural institutions can share resources and collaborate. Please visit the website and participate by adding your own open educational resources and lesson plans.

Working together, we can bring the great resources of New York's cultural institutions to every student in this state. I know you'll continue to reach out to your local schools and ensure they are aware of the resources available at your institution and to ask teachers to advise you on how your programs can best serve them. The website above includes resources that may be helpful as you increase collaboration with your local schools. Please contact us if you have any questions or need assistance contacting your local schools. Please call the Education Department's Office of Cultural Education at 518-474-5976 or email ocemail@nysed.gov.

Thank you for all you do to make New York State a better place to live and learn.

Sincerely,

MaryEllen Elia
Commissioner