



DemocracyReady NY™

Prepare Every Student for Civic Participation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Statewide Coalition Aims to Ensure that All New York Students Graduate High School as Prepared, Active Civic Participants

New York, NY – The [DemocracyReady NY Coalition](#), a new statewide group working to secure the right of all New York students to a quality P-12 education that prepares them for effective civic participation, announced its launch today, a day when many are reflecting on the past, present, and future of our democracy.

The coalition of educational-justice organizations, civic-education leaders, and good-government advocates was forged by the [Center for Educational Equity](#) at Teachers College, Columbia University, following a year of consultation with stakeholder groups and leaders from across the state. DemocracyReady NY will help guide New York’s legislature and education policymakers as they advance their education priorities for the 2019 legislative session and beyond.

“The New York State constitution guarantees every student in the state the right to an education defined in terms of preparation for civic participation,” said Michael A. Rebell, the executive director of the Center for Educational Equity, and a professor of law and educational practice at [Teachers College](#).

“Far too many schools, especially those serving students in poverty and students of color, lack resources and support to fulfill this critical guarantee,” said Rebell, who successfully litigated the landmark educational-rights lawsuit *Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York*. “Given the current polarization of our civic life and democratic institutions, now is the time to make significant inroads on honoring students’ educational rights and improving civic readiness in New York.”

DemocracyReady NY Coalition members are educators, researchers, academics, students, parents, advocates, youth-development specialists, legal experts, and civic leaders. They are mobilizing expertise and perspectives from geographically representative, politically inclusive, and racially and socio-economically diverse groups working together to strengthen the state’s education policy and practice. The goal is to ensure that all New York schools are fully equipped and supported to deliver high-quality education to all their students and to prepare them for their important roles in our democracy.

“The Westchester Putnam School Boards Association has long advocated for a well-rounded, engaging educational experience for all students, with preparation for civic participation embedded K-12. The knowledge and soft skills they develop will help them feel empowered as a citizen of their school, community and nation, and give voice to those students who have been historically excluded.” (Lisa Davis, Executive Director)

The leadership and voices of young people are essential to DemocracyReady NY's work. Youth leaders, 11th and 12th graders from across the state, have been selected as the first cohort of members of the DemocracyReady NY Coalition Youth Leadership Initiative. As active participants in the Coalition, they apply their experiences, insights, and skills to guiding Coalition discussion and decision-making and developing strategies for broader youth engagement in Coalition efforts.

DemocracyReady NY promotes the right of all New York students to develop the knowledge, skills, experiences, and dispositions needed to become effective civic participants. The Coalition will raise awareness of students' right to effective civic preparation under the New York State constitution, and work to strengthen state education law, policy, practice, and resources to guarantee that right in every school in the state.

DemocracyReady NY Members (list in formation)

[Alliance for Quality Education](#)

[Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute](#)

[Capital Region Institute for Human Rights](#)

[Center for Children's Initiatives](#)

[Center for Educational Equity at Teachers College, Columbia University](#)

[Citizens' Committee for Children](#)

[Citizens Union](#)

[Democracy Prep Public Schools](#)

[Facing History and Ourselves](#)

[Generation Citizen](#)

[Inquiring Minds](#)

[League of Women Voters of New York City](#)

[League of Women Voters New York State](#)

[New York State Council for the Social Studies](#)

[New York State Council of School Superintendents](#)

[New York State Grange](#)

[New York State Parent Teachers Association](#)

[New York State Rural Schools Association](#)

[New York State School Boards Association](#)

[New York State Social Studies Supervisory Association](#)

[New York State United Teachers](#)

[Next Generation Politics](#)

[The Education Trust - New York](#)

[The LAMP](#)

[United Federation of Teachers](#)

[Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association](#)

[Women's City Club of New York](#)

Individuals

[Jason Clark](#), Metropolitan Black Bar Association

[Shira Epstein](#), The City College of New York

[Joe Karb](#), Springville Middle School

[Brett Levy](#), University at Albany/SUNY

[Ioana Literat](#), Teachers College, Columbia University

[Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz](#), Teachers College, Columbia University