

May 8, 2011

Dear New York State Board of Regents:

We, the undersigned parent and community leaders, urge that there be an open and transparent search for the new Commissioner of Education, and that you appoint a significant number of public school parents to the search committee, to ensure that parents have input into the final choice.

Over the next few months and years, the State Education Department will likely make critical decisions about the future direction of our children's schools, relating to school closings, charter schools, testing, graduation requirements, Contracts for Excellence and school funding, the possible elimination of seat time, and the expansion of computer-based testing and online learning.

The State Education Department is the primary government agency whose responsibility is to hold districts accountable throughout the state. Parents are the most important stakeholders in the school system, and yet, too often, the Department has not been accountable to parents, has not been transparent in its decision making, and has rarely consulted parents as to our views or priorities for our schools.

For example, the Department appointed a sixty-three member task-force to come up with a new system of principal and teacher evaluation, but failed to put a single public school parent on the taskforce.

It is critical that the next Commissioner of Education should be receptive to parent input, transparent in his or her decision-making, and hold all the school districts accountable to the law and equitable policies.

To ensure that this occurs, we believe that public school parents should be an integral part of the selection and appointment process.

Yours sincerely,

Leonie Haimson, Class Size Matters

Sue Dietrich and Ben Greene, co-chairs, Chancellor Parent Advisory Council, NYC

Dr. Hazel N. Dukes, President, President of the NAACP New York State Conference

NYC Coalition for Educational Justice (CEJ)

Alliance for Quality Education

Margaret Chin, NYC Council Member

Mark Mishler, Albany, Parents Across America -NY State

Mark Friedman, Mary B. Adams, Howard Eagle, Rochester Community Education Task Force

Patrick J. Sullivan, Manhattan member of the Panel for Educational Policy, NYC Board of Education

Susan Polos, SOS Katonah-Lewisboro, Parents Across America – Westchester NY

Michele Faljean, President, Staten Federation of PTAs, NYC

Ivette Alfonso, Capital District board member, Alliance for Quality Education

Parents to Improve School Transportation, NYC

Marge Kolb, President, Community School District 24 Presidents Council, NYC

Susan Williams, Parents Across America, Central New York Chapter
 Lisa Donlan, President, Community Education Council District 1, NYC
 Noah Gotbaum, President, Community Education Council District 3, NYC
 Marvin Shelton, President, Community District Education Council 10, NYC
 John Englert, President, Citywide Council on Special Education, NYC
 Sam Pirozzolo, President, Community District Education Council 31, Staten Island
 Judith Amaro, President, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Delores G. Jordan, member, Community Education Council 10
 Bryan Davis, Vice-President, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Paola de Kock, member, Citywide Council on High Schools, NYC
 Frank Squicciarini, 1st Vice President, Community District Education Council 31, Staten Island
 Tatiana Mahoney, member, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Toni Ann Barone-Franciosa, 2nd VP, Community District Education Council 31, Staten Island
 Khem Irby, member, Community District Education Council 13, Brooklyn
 Tatiana Mahoney, Secretary, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Michael Reilly, Treasurer, Community District Education Council 31, Staten Island
 Sarah Chu, member, Community Education Council District 2, Manhattan
 Paul Hovitz, Co-Chair Youth & Ed CB#1, Speaker Silver's Overcrowding Task Force, NYC
 Julissa Vargas Parent Member, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Steven Beck, Council Member, Community District Education Council 31, Staten Island
 Maggie Velez, Parent Member, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Jeannette Segal, Vice President, Community Education Council District 26, Queens NY
 Peter Calandrella, Council Member, Community District Education Council 31, Staten Island
 Jocelyn Chicon, Parent Member, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Ronald Selznick, President, District 31 Presidents' Council, Staten Island
 Belkis Poche, MBP Designee, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Lisa Giangrande, parent advocate
 Evelyn Suero, Parent Member, Community District Education Council District 6, Manhattan
 Angelic Sealy, Recording Secretary Community District Education Council 31 Staten Island
 Deborah Meier, NYU professor, educator and author
 Olaiya Deen, member, Community Education Council District 3
 Tricia Joyce, Speaker Silver's Overcrowding Task Force, Community Board 1*, NYC
 Shino Tanikawa, member, Community School Council District 2, NYC
 Tina Schiller, Speaker Silver's Overcrowding Task Force, NYC
 Michelle Ciulla Lipkin, President, District 3 Presidents' Council, NYC
 M. Pegye Johnson, President, Community Education Council District 16
 Patrick Wynne, member, Community Education Council District 10
 David Cohen, President, District 2 Presidents' Council, NYC
 Almeta Trammel, 1st Vice President, Community School Council District 7
 Marija Stroke, District 3 parent and member, Community School Council District 3
 Beth Cirone, member, Community Education Council District 2
 Janine Sopp, Parent Advocate of Child at PS132, Brooklyn, NY
 Kim D'Angelo, Recording Secretary, District 26 Presidents' Council, NYC
 Miles Chapin, MS 260 PA Co-President, District 2 Presidents' Council Vice-President
 Sean Grandits, parent, MS 51 Brooklyn
 Evy Castillo, Class Size Matters

Teri Schlesinger, parent, Districts 28 and 30
Zulma E. Villalba, H.S. Mathematics Teacher/Chapter Leader, District 8
Josh Karan, Manhattan Borough President appointee to the CEC6, 2005-2009
Marcella Farman, Parent
Ben Dietz, parent
Maja Lorkovic, NYC public school parent
Bill Stucklen, Founder/President, Marathon Consulting, parent of Pre-K Public school child
Laura Cavalleri, parent, Staten Island, NY
Sarah Porter, parent, SLT member PS132 and Parent Advocates for Public Schools
john m. wetherhold district 2 parent
Susan Kramer, Clinton School Parent Association member-at-large
Sabrina Olsen, District 2 (PS 126MAT)
Wendy Smith, public school parent, Brooklyn New York
Annette Evans, parent, Stuyvesant High School
Patricia Dobosz Teacher, District 14, Parent
Jane Hirschmann, Time Out From Testing
Susan MacDonald, P.S. 15 Guidance Counselor
Alane Salierno Mason, PS/IS 187 parent
Juliana Hawawini Johnson
Maria Ferrari, NYC parent
Marilyn Kaggen, teacher
Karen Eve Friedland
Eugene Falik, parent of a Wagner MS, LaGuardia HS, and Binghamton graduate
Sara Kimbell, Parent PS41/NYC Lab School
Patricia Connelly, Parent, MS 51/District 15 & The Beacon High School
Laura Nathanson, Educator
Ellen Raider, Independent Commission on Public Education
David Dobosz, Parent, Millennium HS, and retired NYC teacher
John Staniszewski, Teacher and Concerned NYS Parent
Bijou Miller, Former Co-President of District 2 and District 3 Presidents' Councils
Kiki Panos-Sperazza, parent, NYC high school students
Audrey Dennis, parent and employee of the NYC DOE.
Joan P Petrere, Concerned Parent, Queens NY
Rob Bowen, Interrelated Assessments and Resolutions
Larry Wood, Goddard Riverside Community Center
Lorraine Byrd, parent
Anne Marie Caminiti, parent / NYC resident
Deirdre McArdle
Teresa Boitel, public school teacher and parent, district 6
Rodney Deas, Parent, Coalition for public Education, Brooklyn Chapter
Stephanie Basch, district 2 parent
Alison Nelson, parent, West Village, NYC
Marie Pollicino, parent, District 26, Queens
Madeleine Sinor, parent
Patricia Pan, retired, 32 year teacher
Betsy Comber, parent advocate, Editor of Parentadvocates.org