

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE

ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



SENATOR MARK C. WALCZYK
49TH SENATE DISTRICT

August 10, 2023

Commissioner Betty A. Rosa
New York State Department of Education
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Re: "2023 Legal Update and Best Practices" document titled "Creating a Safe, Supportive, and Affirming School Environment for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students"

Dear Commissioner Rosa,

The guidance that your Department produced encourages schools to withhold important information about children from their parents. For example, page 16 states "some TGE (transgender and gender expansive) students have not talked to their families about their gender identity...and may begin their transition at school without parent/guardian knowledge." The document also encourages teachers, students and faculty to conform to the State Education Department's whims in numerous situations.

Parents know their kids better than the government does. They also pay the taxes that fund your department and our schools. They have a right to know what is going on with their kids. Directing faculty to hide highly personal and sensitive conversations from parents is wrong; prioritizing childhood perceptions over parental rights.

Earlier this year, your Department lowered its standards for students proficiency in math and English. I have to ask: what are you going to do to improve the academic performance of kids across New York State? I, and countless other parents, look forward to your response to this request in writing. I would like to see a best practices document that gives guidance on increasing graduation rates, test scores, proficiency in academia, and closes the education gap caused by government shutdowns. When will that be published?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark C. Walczyk".

Mark C. Walczyk
Senator
New York SD-49

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