



July 10, 2017

Commissioner MaryEllen Elia  
New York State Education Department  
New York State Education Building  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234

Chancellor Betty A. Rosa  
New York State Board of Regents  
New York State Education Building  
89 Washington Avenue, Room 110 EB  
Albany, NY 12234

**Re: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and its impact on Transfer Schools in NYC**

Dear Commissioner Elia and Chancellor Rosa:

We, the undersigned elected officials, represent a significant population of students who are over-age and under-credited who attend transfer schools throughout New York City. We are deeply troubled by the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) intention to designate all transfer schools that have a 6-year graduation rate below 67% as failing schools. **We believe that the State's proposed plan will greatly limit the ability of transfer schools to carry out their mission of supporting NYC's most vulnerable students.**

Labeling our transfer schools as failing because they do not meet the 67% standard will do nothing but discourage educators from developing innovative ways to address the complex needs of our students. **It will reinforce every message our students have received that they are "not good enough," "not smart enough," and that they "should just drop out."** These schools provide students individualized and rigorous instructional settings, robust student support services, career and post-secondary development, and more. In the last 10 years, transfer schools have played a significant role in the reduction of the drop-out rate for these students from 22% in 2005 to 8.5% in 2016.

**We understand that federal legislation specifically allows for consideration of different interventions for "a school that predominantly serves students who, based on their grade or age, are significantly off track."** We urge the State to move beyond the simplistic metric of a 67% graduation rate for transfer schools to create a well thought out approach that will truly help us improve how we serve our most vulnerable students.

**We recommend that NYSED and the Board of Regents consider transfer schools in a special category that recognizes the high need nature of these students while at the same time requiring vigorous accountability for academic standards.**

We look forward to continuing to work with NYSED on policy that fits the diverse and complex needs of students throughout our state.

Sincerely,



-----  
Senator Velmanette Montgomery



-----  
Senator Roxanne J. Persaud



-----  
Senator Leroy Comrie



-----  
Senator Kevin S. Parker



-----  
Senator Daniel L. Squadron



-----  
Senator Jamaal T. Bailey



-----  
Senator Brad Hoylman



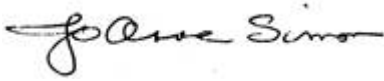
-----  
Senator Martin Malave Dilan



-----  
Senator Marisol Alcantara

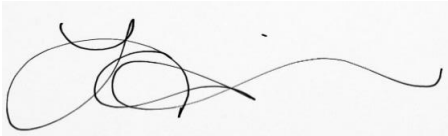


-----  
Senator Jose Peralta



---

Assemblywoman Jo Anne Simon



---

Assemblywoman Latrice M. Walker



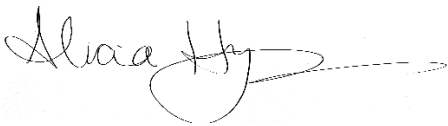
---

Assemblyman Robert C. Carroll



---

Assemblywoman Maritza Davila



---

Assemblywoman Alicia L. Hyndman



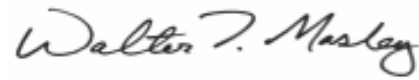
---

Assemblyman Michael A. Blake



---

Assemblywoman Tremaine Wright



---

Assemblyman Walter T. Mosley



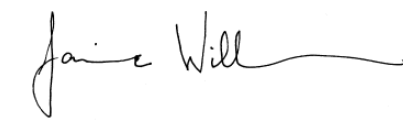
---

Assemblywoman Yuh-Line Niou



---

Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz



---

Assemblywoman Jaime R. Williams



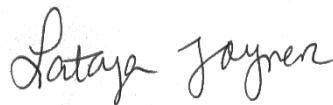
---

Assemblywoman Diana C. Richardson



---

Assemblyman Charles Barron



---

Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner



---

Assemblyman N. Nick Perry

cc: Members of the New York State Board of Regents  
Speaker Carl E. Heastie, Speaker of the New York State Assembly  
Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, New York State Senate Democratic Conference Leader  
Senator Carl L. Marcellino, Chairman – Senate Education Committee  
Senator George Latimer, Ranking Member - Senate Education Committee  
Assemblymember Catherine Nolan, Chair – Standing Committee on Education  
Chancellor Carmen Fariña, New York City Department of Education