

North Shore Schools

Discovering Your Dreams

March 17, 2015

Governor Andrew Cuomo
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We, the undersigned, stakeholders in the North Shore Central School District and on behalf of the district's 6,000 students, teachers, administrators, and parents, oppose your 2015 education agenda.

Your proposal to increase the weighting of state standardized tests to 50% of teachers' evaluations is a step in the wrong direction. This change will not improve accountability, nor will it produce meaningful assessment of students. The current system should be suspended so that appropriate stakeholders may be engaged to transparently create a fair and meaningful evaluation system.

Your charter school agenda calls for a substantial increase in the number of privately-operated charter schools. This is counter to the idea of consolidating school resources, especially in small districts. There are no established criteria for charter schools and they are not held to the same accountability measures as public schools. Charter schools will siphon funds from public schools already constrained by unfunded mandates, withdrawal of state aid, and the "2% tax cap." We strongly believe that there should be no obligation on the part of public school districts on Long Island to pay for unneeded charter schooling.

The Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) funds must be restored. School districts across NYS have suffered devastating cuts due to the state's withholding of critical education funding, with Long Island districts losing an estimated \$1.2 billion over the past 4 years. Had the GEA been eliminated for the 2014-2015 school year, Long Island's current school tax levy would be 2.6% lower than it is. We call on you and the Legislature to accept your responsibility to fund public education by completely eliminating the GEA this year.

Public education is the cornerstone of democracy. It is neither reasonable nor logical to underfund schools while increasing expectations and levying unfunded mandates. Please take action on these three critical issues to ensure that New York State continues to have strong public education.

Sincerely,



Dr. Herman A. Berliner, Ph.D
President
North Shore Schools Board of Education



Dr. Edward K. Melnick, Ed.D
Superintendent
North Shore Schools



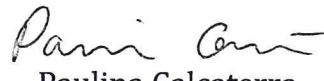
Bruce Fichtman
President, North Shore Schools
Federated Employees



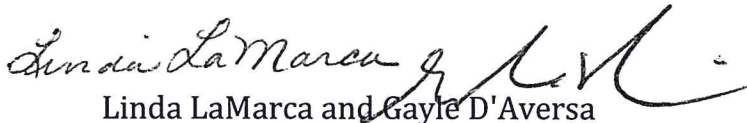
Carol Ann Smyth
President, North Shore Schools
Administrators' Council



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