March 16, 2015

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capital Building
Albany New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On March 6, 2015 you were quoted by the Albany Times Union as stating "I haven't met a parent in this state who has said they don't agree with me on my position on failing teachers." NYS PTA challenges that statement and we request the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the specifics of our challenge.

While we have objected to the tone and specifics of your proposals to reform education, NYS PTA has consistently done so not through objections alone but with proposals for concrete alternatives. We believe these alternatives will accomplish the same objectives you seek through your legislative proposals. While there are many examples we might cite in suggesting action that would address New York's public education challenges, I begin by referencing a letter addressed to Jim Malatras this past January (attached) in response to both his December 23, 2014 questions of Chancellor Merryl Tisch as well as to her response to those inquiries.

As representatives of nearly 300,000 parents across New York State, we conclude that there are common sense approaches to education reform that must include parents in the process. You suggest in your comments that parents agree with the actions you demand in exchange for funding. We categorically state that there are a great many that do NOT, even though some proposals are sufficiently interesting as to warrant further discussion.

You may not agree with the solutions we offer, but we believe you cannot know that unless we have an opportunity to discuss them with you. Your assertion - that parents agree with your "reform" proposals - is in direct conflict with what we are hearing from our members. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss this conflicting information in person.

Respectfully,

Bonnie M. Russell

Bonnie M. Russell
New York State PTA President

Enclosure