



December 15, 2021

Commissioner Dr. Betty Rosa
Chancellor Dr. Lester Young
NYS Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Commissioner Rosa and Chancellor Young,

The NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) is honored to represent the families of our 2.6 million school children and our nearly 250,000 members. It is our mission to make every child's potential a reality and support EVERY child with ONE voice.

We write to formally support your proposed waiver request to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) related to state accountability requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Title I School Improvement Funding.

As you're aware, the NYS Education Department waiver request proposes to eliminate certain accountability indicator requirements to identify schools for improvement in Fall 2022 based on 2021-22 school year results.

Further, the proposed waiver request also seeks to use Title I School Improvement funds to support certain schools in good standing which were previously identified as at risk of becoming identified as a Targeted Support and Improvement School prior to the pandemic, but were not identified due to pandemic-related changes to the accountability system.

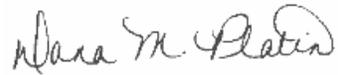
We fully support the aforementioned proposals. These continue to be trying times. Support for our students, our educators, and our schools is paramount. We continue to applaud all of our educators, our school leaders, and our school-related professionals for their tireless work in supporting children and their families. Now is the time that we must continue to support them.

Our students across the state have had varied academic opportunities since March 2020. Our students continue to deal with new and increasing mental health concerns, trauma, and uncertainty. Last school year, many students were full remote, many were hybrid, while some remained in classrooms – the disparities were endless. It would be wholly unfair to continue our current accountability system as is – sometimes penalizing schools themselves for having to operate in pandemic conditions, attempting to educate our student population equally while keeping all our of children safe in very different conditions.

Thus, for equity reasons, we request USDE approve the NYS Education Department waiver proposal, and fully support your efforts.

As always, NYS PTA stands ready to work collaboratively to support ALL children and families and we look forward to our future plans in family engagement. We are available at any time by contacting our Executive Director, Kyle Belokopitsky, at execdirector@nyspta.org or 518-452-8808 (office) or 518-817-3017 (cell).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana M. Platin".

Dana Platin, President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kyle McCauley Belokopitsky".

Kyle Belokopitsky, Esq., Executive Director

Cc: Dr. Kimberly Wilkins
Dr. James Baldwin