

May 23, 2011

Dr. John King, Jr.  
Commissioner  
NYS Education Department  
State Education Bldg, Rm. 111  
Albany, NY 12234-0001

Dear Commissioner King:

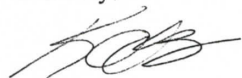
On behalf of *Winning Beginning NY*, the state's early care and learning coalition, we congratulate you on your appointment as State Education Commissioner and President of the University of the State of New York. We were very pleased that you were able to participate in our forum on Pre-K last spring following the release of our report. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff to take full advantage of every opportunity to strengthen early education in New York State.

As you well know, early education is a critical part of the education continuum. Seventy-five percent of brain growth and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills develop before age five. Children with access to quality early learning have twice the vocabulary, better social skills, and are better able to follow directions, all skills that are key to success in school and in life. Most importantly, those who enter kindergarten behind often remain behind. We have a chance to reduce the achievement gap and give every child a winning beginning.

As New York State strives to make Universal Pre-K truly "universal", implement QUALITYstarsNY in school- and community-based settings, and respond to the plan outlined in Race to the Top, *Winning Beginning NY* hopes to serve as a resource to you and the State Education Department (SED). Many members of our coalition sit on the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), where we work closely on early education issues with SED staff. This is a valuable and necessary collaboration.

Again, congratulations on your appointment. We hope that when you settle in, we will have the opportunity to meet with you and further discuss our collaborative efforts on behalf of young children.

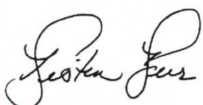
Sincerely,



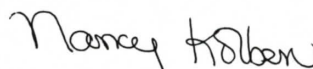
Kate Breslin  
President and CEO  
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy



Marsha Basloe  
Executive Director  
Early Care and Learning Council



Kristen Kerr  
Executive Director  
NYS Association for the Education  
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Nancy Kolben  
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