



January 6, 2012

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We listened to your second State of the State address today with great interest. In particular, we were intrigued by your proposal of an education commission. On behalf of *Winning Beginning NY*, the state's early care and learning coalition, we hope that you will include early learning and development experts and advocates at the table.

As you know, the earliest years are critically important to a child's success in school and in life, with 75% of brain development and 85% of intellect, personality and social skills developing before age five. Early education is proven to increase high school graduation rates by 30% and double the chances for a child to go to college. These are important facts to note since, as you pointed out, New York State is currently 38th in the U.S. in terms of graduation rates. High-quality early learning and development can lay the foundation for better outcomes down the line.

We look forward to working with you on this exciting new initiative to transform our education system and make it work for the most important constituency in education—the children.

Thank you.

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
of Young Children

Nancy Kolben
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cc: Katie Campos
David Wakelyn