



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

June 22, 2012

Dr. John B. King, Jr., Commissioner
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner King,

As noted in your School Improvement Grant (SIG) approval letter from last year, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has expressed concerns about the enrollment practices of the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), particularly as they pertain to the enrollment of Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and students who are performing below proficiency in our persistently lowest-achieving (PLA) schools. Over the course of this school year, NYCDOE has engaged in a series of pilot initiatives to seek to address some of the concerns raised in that letter, including changes to our over-the-counter enrollment practices, increasing access of seats through “de-screening” programs in higher performing schools, increasing access to all high schools for our special education students, and creating new selective programs in PLA schools.

To advance upon the pilot work done to date, NYCDOE is committed to working with NYSED to develop an action plan to further monitor and refine our enrollment practices to address your concerns about high concentrations of particular populations in high schools citywide. This action plan, which we will develop before the commencement of our next admissions cycle (October 2012), may include expanding upon the strategies we piloted in 2011-2012 and, where appropriate, extending successful strategies we’ve already agreed to pursue in our SIG-funded schools to other schools with high concentrations of high need students. The plan will include action steps to be taken in any priority or focus schools that as of BEDS day 2012 have a high concentration of high needs students. The metric to determine high concentration will also be developed as part of the analytic component of the action planning process (for example with current SIG schools we are using one standard deviation from district or borough average). NYCDOE is committed to working with NYSED to develop a meaningful plan that continues to address NYSED’s concerns and ultimately best serves the students of New York City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis M. Walcott".

Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shael Polakow-Suransky".

Shael Polakow-Suransky
Chief Academic Officer and Senior Deputy Chancellor