

February 4, 2022

New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Re: Coalition urges immediate action on June 2022 Regents Exam exemptions

Dear Commissioner Rosa, Chancellor Young, and Members of the Board of Regents:

On behalf of the of the Coalition for Multiple Pathways to a Diploma, we are writing to thank you for your recent vote to allow students to graduate without January 2022 Regents exams and to urge you to act quickly to extend these exemptions to include June 2022 Regents exams.

Students preparing to graduate this June have had their last three years of high school dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our coalition of more than 80 parents, educators and advocacy organizations are extremely concerned about the social and emotional toll this pandemic has taken on students and teachers. For better or worse, we have all learned much from this pandemic: about the actual needs of our youth and families, about the kind of learning that will prepare students for the world ahead, and about where educators' energies can most help young people through difficult times. It is evident to us that the Regents exams are not the most effective gauge of this learning.

Your swift action to decouple June 2022 Regents exams from graduation would enable students and teachers to focus valuable planning and instructional time on learning that is most essential for youth and families, rather than preparing for high-stakes tests in the midst of staffing shortages, temporary shifts to remote learning, and the intense anxiety and isolation brought on by this terrible pandemic. Such action would also bring New York into step with the vast majority of states that use ESSA accountability assessments to measure schools but not to determine individual students' readiness for graduation.

We appreciate that determining whether to *administer* June 2022 exams is more complicated -- requiring Federal approval in some cases -- and that a final decision in the matter may be months away. However, we ask that NYSED and the Board take action at the February Regents' meetings to waive these exams as *individual students' graduation requirements* and, instead, allow students to graduate if they have met their coursework requirements for those classes. Our proposed action is squarely within the Board's authority, as neither New York's ESSA plan nor ESSA itself require that accountability assessments be tied to graduation. Acting quickly to authorize June 2022 Regents Exam exemptions would allow students, teachers and other

school staff to plan for the remainder of the school year and would free up instructional time to utilize more innovative, authentic measures of student mastery.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact our coordinator, Ashley Grant, with any questions or to discuss this request further.

Respectfully,



Ashley Grant, on behalf of the undersigned

Advocates for Children of New York • Alliance for Quality Education • ARISE Coalition • Asperger Syndrome & High Functioning Autism Association • Big Picture Learning • David C. Bloomfield, Esq., Professor of Educational Leadership, Law & Policy, Brooklyn College and The CUNY Graduate Center • Bronx Independent Living Services • Brooklyn Defender Services • Brooklyn Center for the Disabled • Business Teachers Association of New York State • Campaign for Tomorrow's Workforce • Capital Region Refugee Roundtable • Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York • Citizens' Committee for Children of New York • Lisa Finnerty Coggi, Parent/Advocate • Community Service Society • Council for a Strong America • Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies • Valerie DeClara, Parent • Della DeKay JD, EdD • Max Donatelli, Family Advocate • Eskolta School Research and Design • Irja Estrella, Parent • Families Together in New York State • Candida Figueroa, Teacher • Ann Marie Fitzpatrick, Parent • ExpandedED Schools • Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project • Jennifer Ghidui, Parent/Advocate • Michael Godino, Advocate • Good Shepherd Services • Roberta Grogan, Parent/Advocate • Lorri Gumanow, Parent/Special Educator • Meghan Healy • HERE to HERE • Rochelle Hoot, Special Education Administrator • Katherine Hoy, LMSW • Shelley Hubal, Parent • INCLUDEnyc • Muronji Inman-McCraw • Internationals Network for Public Schools • Lawyers for Children, Inc. • Learning Disabilities Association of New York State • Legal Aid Society • Jill Lewis-Flood, Parent/PIP Member • April Leong, Principal, Liberation Diploma Plus High School • JobsFirstNYC • Long Island Advocacy Center • Jillian Mason, School Counselor/Advocate • Chris McNell, Special Education Supervisor/Principal • Diana Medina Mendez, Parent • Mark Anthony Mendez • Mental Health Association of New York City • Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools • Susana Montes, Parent • New York Council of Administrators of Special Education (NYCASE) • New York Immigration Coalition • New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation • New York Performance Standards Consortium • New York State Association for Bilingual Education • New York State Coalition of 853 Schools • New York State Community of Practice on Family, School and Community Collaboration • New York State Disabilities Advocacy Association and Network • New York State Independent Living Council, Inc. (NYSILC) • New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (NYTESOL) • NY Stop Grad HST • NYU Metro Center • Parent to Parent New York, Inc. • Evelyn Perez, Parent • Catherine Phillips-Russ, Baker Victory Services • Sharon Poole, Education for Everyone Consultant • Queens Community House • Michael Rothman • Lynn Russo, Parent • SCO Family of Services • Tracey Shannon, Parent • Bruce A. Shields, PhD, Associate Professor of Education, Daemen College • Sinergia Metropolitan Parent Center • Special Support Services • Starbridge • Amy Ming Tsai, Parent/Advocate for Special Education • Katherine Teasdale-Edwards, School Counselor • United Neighborhood Houses • United Way of New York City • United We Stand • Unity Preparatory Charter School of Brooklyn • Christian Villenas, PhD • Marcia Vogel, Parent/Advocate • Work-Based Learning Coalition of NYC • Randy K. Young, Long Island Communities of Practice/Partners in Inclusivity, Inc. • YOUTH POWER! •
