

To: NY Education Reform Commission

From: Jim Anderson

I thank Gov. Cuomo for setting forth this Commission, and I thank you all who have been selected to serve, certainly you have been entrusted with tackling a major and vitally important issue in the State of New York, that being education. I shall keep hope alive that you all will rise to this great moment wherein, delivering an onward and upward report, that will serve as a blueprint and guide for assuring a world class education in the still great and leading State of New York.

Structure:

The state funding of education must change to protect against the habitual cutting of funds from the education budget. Raising taxes on those earning over \$250,000 is a necessity of fairness in the light of the many years of tax cuts and loopholes allowed. No longer can the state benignly cut funding in educating our children.

Stop the charade that exist by which monies taken into the state via lottery destined for education doesn't really increase funds to education because the monies that the state would have provided is drawn back by state leaders. Both the state committed monies and the monies taken in via lottery should go into the education budget.

Spending in high-need districts has been insufficient both in amount of aid and in accounting for that aid reaching its target, part of the solution is for the state to staff the State Education Department with personnel needed to do the job effectively. The lack of enough staff to do the necessary monitoring is a problem.

For real education reform it must be understood that education starts at the community door, not the red brick house door. The investment of resources in educating our children must engage out in the community. Example, if a child can't read in public school, that same child can't read in Sunday School, Community Center, Block Club etc. thus districts need to share techniques at the community door that would enable teams within these entities to be cable to identify & intervene problem readers with basic assistance that could prove a bridge that helps a child more ready for the more in-depth educating that goes on in the red brick house. Imagine the effectiveness of that team of teachers in Sunday School, Community Centers etc after such exposure.

Consolidation and shared services must always be considered and erected where proof of the value in doing so exists. What needs to occur is identifying why districts aren't doing more of this collaboration, as well as trying some pilot tests.

To stop the tug-of-war between traditional public schools, and the new public schools known as charters. The funding streams need to be separated to stop the accusations thrown between these two different type of public school, and both need to funded at needs level.

Teacher & Principal Quality and District Leadership:

Again the community is where early engagement must occur to encourage, and recruit candidates to become a teacher, and new additional avenues must be established to get more diversity of persons. Schools of education need a model that is akin to pre-school

for recruiting possible teachers, the earlier the better. At least at this time where the need is great.

District leadership staff or board members can be a negative impact when they aren't willing to follow the law. The dislike and distrust toward the new public schools, 'Charters' is unfair. There is a need for the state to review and recognize this disconnect of some staff and board that act as obstructionist in violation of the law.

Student achievement is hampered by the not always subtle exclusion of community. Often the talk is of students and parents without opportunity for other enriching assets in the community to play a part. Not limiting the huge value of a parent involvement, we can't fail to allow the community's role.