



NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
TASK FORCE ON NEW AMERICANS

June 11, 2014

Merryl H. Tisch, Chancellor
Board of Regents
New York State Education Department
State Education Building
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Re: Blueprint for English Language Learners Success (ELLS)

Dear Chancellor Tisch:

On May 19, 2014 an opportunity became available to us to support a set of major initiatives that will address the ongoing crisis impacting English language learners in our State. The opportunity we are referring to came via recommendations presented to the New York State Board of Regents by the Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies.

The "**Blueprint for English Language Learners Success (ELLS)**" presented to the Board of Regents is the culmination of an assessment of the horrible graduation rates and low academic achievement of tens of thousands of students, many from the communities we represent.

This crisis was created by years of neglect due to the marginalization of this special population. Today, based on the huge number of students that are impacted, there is a critical mass of failure that has been reached and which threatens the future fiscal stability of our State.


As you and the other members of the Board of Regents know, New York State has a graduation rate of 74% and 31 states have higher graduation rates than us. But these numbers fail to show the crisis of the situation for English language learners who are dropping out of school in alarmingly high rates.

About 34% of ELL students graduate high school. This is an overall drop of 4% from 2012. There are over 214,000 ELL students in New York, speaking over 160 different languages. We understand the challenges to educational institutions that are presented by the vast diversity of these demographics but also know that the current situation can no longer be tolerated.

It is extremely important to us that the eight principles outlined in the "**Blueprint for English Language Learners Success (ELLS)**" are adopted as standard by the New York State Board of Regents. In our view, the data highlighted above combined with the inability of the system to find adequate bilingual teaching staff, should prompt all policymakers to prioritize this issue and use all tools available to reverse the failures allowed to fester with devastating consequences for individual students, our society and the economy of our State.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and working with the Board of Regents to improve the academic achievement of all our children.

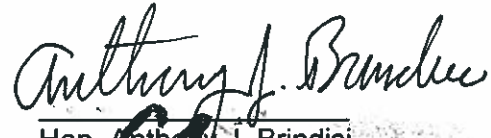
Sincerely,


Hon. Marcos A. Crespo


Hon. Karim Camara

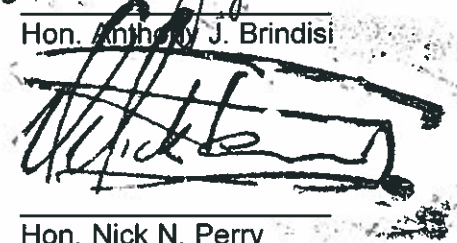
Hon. Ruben Diaz, Sr.


Hon. Jose Rivera

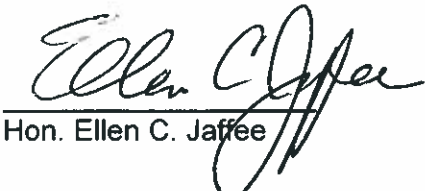

Hon. Anthony J. Brindisi


Hon. Martin Malave Dilan

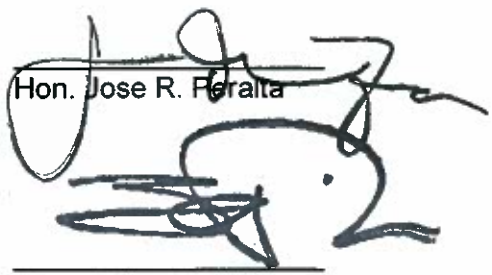

Hon. Philip Ramos


Hon. Nick N. Perry

Hon. Velmanette Montgomery


Hon. Ellen C. Jaffee


Hon. Sam Roberts

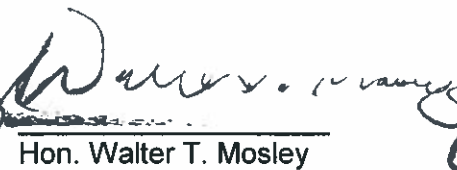

Hon. Jose R. Feralta


Hon. Steven Otis



Hon. James F. Brennan

Hon. J. Gustavo Rivera


Hon. William Scarborough


Hon. Walter T. Mosley

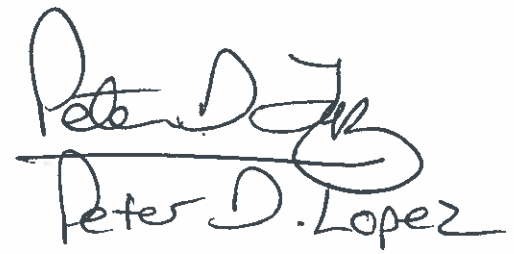

Hon. Jose Serrano


Hon. Victor M. Pichardo


Hon. Maritza Davila


Hon. Gabriela Rosa

CC: All Board of Regents Members
Commissioner John King


Peter D. Lopez