April 2012

Dear Fellow Children’s School Parents,

As we head into our testing season, now is a good time to let our politicians know that too much is relying on our children's performance on tests.

Representatives from the Children’s School SLT as well as a number of other parents and faculty from the Children’s School have been working with a group of parent representatives from 16 schools to lobby for amendments to the new Teacher Evaluation Law that was recently passed. These amendments will, among other things, protect teachers from having their data published in the press and will help us send a message that the emphasis on tests is creating unnecessary stress for our children, teachers and schools without making headway on the problems that they are purporting to tackle.

Attached to this note is a copy of the petition written by fellow parents at PS 321. If you are interested in supporting this cause, please sign this note and send it back in your folder as we will be collecting the signed petitions to pass on to our local legislators.

The petition on can also be found at the following URL:

 **[http://www.change.org/petitions/ny-state-officials-stop-the-high-stakes-testing-madness](http://www.change.org/petitions/ny-state-officials-stop-the-high-stakes-testing-madness%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**

Also, if you have a story to share about the impact of high stakes testing on your child's education, please go to this link:  **[http://www.beta.nycpublic.org/?page\_id=5](http://www.beta.nycpublic.org/?page_id=5" \t "_blank)**

Your story will give State Officials a sense of what their constituents are thinking, and help us make sure parent and student voices are part of their decision making process.

Please also take a look at the official statement “Why This is Important” from the parent group with regard to the petition letter.

Thanks so much!

**Why This Is Important**

New York State recently passed a Teacher Evaluation Law that links Teacher’s evaluations to their students’ test scores. Parents across New York City are concerned that the new law will be detrimental to their children's education. We believe that:

* The high-stakes of standardized tests within New York are already too high and have resulted in far too many resources and too much class time going to test preparation;
* The tests and test prep lead to an increased level of anxiety among many students;
* The standardized tests children take were not designed to evaluate teachers or whole schools, but rather to assess individual student progress and for instructional purposes;
* When these tests are used as a tool for teacher and whole-school evaluation it leads to inaccurate data and results in a further narrowing of the curriculum.

We want our children to have the opportunity to learn, to think critically, to engage in meaningful relationships with teachers, and to have positive school experiences. After witnessing the ways in which New York City's Teacher Data Reports used flawed data to make inaccurate judgments of teachers, and to publicly humiliate teachers, we are clear that we do not want this repeated on a state level.