



**Department of
Education**

Cathleen P. Black, Chancellor

March 11, 2011

Sally Bachofer
New York State Education Department
Office of Innovative School Models
89 Washington Avenue
Room 465 EBA
Albany, New York 11234

Dear Ms. Bachofer,

I am writing to respond to the findings in the PLA monitoring reports for New York City dated March 7, 2011. As you know, our district did not receive School Improvement Grant funds until January 24, 2010. I am happy to report that despite this significant delay in funding, each of our eleven Transformation Schools has made significant accomplishments since then. I wanted to highlight the progress that has been made since your visit.

Each of our Transformation Schools has rolled out New York City's new pilot teacher evaluation system. This system incorporates the use of performance-based task assessments and a four-tier rating system for teachers. The preliminary evidence suggests this new system will serve as a more robust tool to address the specific developmental needs of teachers.

We've deployed 37 Master and Turnaround teachers to raise the capacity of teachers in our Transformation Schools. These individuals have been working since September as a model of high quality instruction and providing support for the staff.

We're happy to report that we are in the process of deploying nine School Improvement Liaisons to assist schools with their transformation implementation. These individuals are based in our school district clusters and work collaboratively with our Children's First Network staff to provide guidance to principals and their leadership teams. These individuals have a wealth of knowledge in school improvement work, making transformation support a natural fit with their vast skill set. Now that we have the funds to ramp up our school improvement efforts centrally, we'll continue to add support specialists as necessary to drive this critical work.

Finally, two of our schools have written responses to the findings in their individual school reports. These responses have been forwarded to your office. Thank you for your continued support of our persistently lowest-achieving schools. We look forward to having your team visit our schools again in April.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Sternberg", written over a white background.

Marc Sternberg
Deputy Chancellor, Division of Portfolio Planning