



STACEY PHEFFER AMATO
Assemblywoman 23rd District
Queens County

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December 17, 2018

MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner
NYS Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Commissioner Elia,

I am writing to you regarding the recently released NYSED guidelines for non-public schools. These guidelines will particularly affect the multiple flourishing yeshivas within my district, and therefore I strongly urge you to halt the impending plans, and to first create a dialogue with non-public school leadership, as well as concerned NYS legislators such as myself to ascertain if any intervention is actually necessary.

NYSED's current guidelines are bereft of any true understanding of the Rockaway Peninsula yeshivas' successes. The yeshivas in my district have proven themselves to be educational institutions of the highest caliber, worthy of emulation on many levels. In our great, diverse state of New York, I would hope that guidelines would be designed based upon cultural sensitivity, and fully embrace the delicate balance which yeshivas have effectively demonstrated, rather than on insurgent opinion campaigns. Additionally, I will fight for any parents' constitutional right to send their children to the school of their choice.

You, along with NYSED leadership and administration must effectively communicate and collaborate with representatives of non-public schools, to ensure that the students' best interests and religious privileges are being respected. I look forward to hearing back from you regarding this critical and time-sensitive matter.

Sincerely,

Stacey Pheffer Amato
NYS Assemblywoman, 23rd District