

— AN OPEN LETTER TO — NEW YORK CITY'S PARENTS

FROM THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

AFTER YEARS OF FAILED EDUCATION POLICIES from Mayor Bloomberg, the United Federation of Teachers took the initiative and went to Albany to put a new teacher evaluation system in place. Why? Because teachers understand that one of the best ways to help them improve their skills is through an evaluation system that works.

You wouldn't know it from listening to some politicians these days, but the world's best public school systems use evaluations as a means to help teachers become better at what they do, not just as a mechanism to fire them. As *The Atlantic Magazine* said of Finland, one of the world's most successful and emulated school systems, "The main driver of education policy is not competition ... but cooperation."

In recent weeks, Mayor Bloomberg has said he'd rather close schools than work with teachers to create an evaluation system that will truly improve our city's public schools. He has said he'd rather remove teachers and risk losing millions of dollars in school funding than negotiate with us to create an evaluation system that will help students and teachers succeed.

WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, REFUSE TO GIVE UP ON OUR STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS. That's why we have spent countless hours in negotiations with the administration trying to hammer out the details of a new evaluation system. That's why we worked through the holiday season to try to finalize a new evaluation system for a group of struggling schools. And that's why – when the mayor's staff walked out on those discussions – we went to a neutral state board to have the city ordered back to the table to conclude these critical talks.

If the mayor would take the time to look around the country – and around the world – to understand what really works, he'd learn that an effective evaluation system:

- Helps teachers improve their skills continuously throughout their careers.
- Identifies teachers who are struggling and provides them with tools to improve – and, if that fails, those teachers must leave and find another career.
- Accomplishes this fairly and rationally, with a real opportunity for a rapid but independent review of disputed teacher ratings.

We stand ready to make this happen.

It's time for the mayor to join us.

Sincerely,



Michael Mulgrew
President
United Federation of Teachers

