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Commissioner MaryEllen Elia
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Commissioner Elia:

Over the past two years, the relationship between NYSED and the field has been notably stronger. Our relationship, based on a mutual and developing trust, is grounded in the notion that student success is our shared goal. For that reason, we write regarding the results of the June 2017 Regents Examination in Geometry.

On average, students on Long Island performed poorly on the 2017 Regents Examination in Geometry (Common Core). This is inconsistent with our history, especially in light of recent, high-level performance on other Common Core Regents Examinations in mathematics. Concerns about cut scores have been reported in the media. The resulting inconsistent levels of student achievement in mathematics have caused anxiety among students, parents and educators. We are concerned that parents may lose faith in the validity of Regents Examinations and that students may be discouraged from the study of advanced mathematics. Neither is an acceptable outcome and surely this is in conflict with our STEM-related goals for our students.

In addition to significant concerns about the cut scores, the quality of the items is a substantial problem. The wording of some items is awkward and the required level of mathematical ability is inconsistent with the standards. Three items have now had credit applied universally. While we recognize that this has boosted scores, it does not account for the impact poorly constructed items may have had on student performance. Further, we request a review of Item 11, as we believe that any of the answers are sufficient.

To be clear, we do not have concern with the rigor of the standards; however, we are concerned with the quality of this examination as we do not believe that the results are a true reflection of our students' achievement of the Geometry standards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Lars Clemensen
President
Suffolk County School
Superintendents Association

David Flatley
President
Nassau County Council of
School Superintendents

CC: The Honorable Roger Tilles, NYS Board of Regents
Dr. Laura Feijoo, President, NYS Council of School Superintendents