

PRINCIPALS' LETTER

As you are aware, a group of principals have created an organization called the "New York Principals" that has issued a policy position regarding the APPR, and through its website, is soliciting signatures of our members and others in support of the position paper.

We share many of the same concerns of this group and are glad to have other voices join in our efforts to arrive at a fair APPR system. Indeed, the foundation of NYSUT's lawsuit has been to prevent many of the Regents "top-down" imposed rules that were adopted in the face of opposite findings from the committee last winter. Indeed, some of these rules were even in direct opposition to the plain language of the §3012-c statute.

Thus, many of the objections raised by the Principals are those with which we are in agreement and have fought with actions, money and political capital all along.

However, there are three major areas raised by the Principals with which we are in disagreement from a matter of policy.

1. We are opposed to school-wide ratings in lieu of individual rating:
 - a. We completely understand the "at first glance" attractiveness of this concept rather than the individual one contained within §3012-c. Indeed, such an approach might take the onus off of individuals and distribute the findings across the building as a whole. However, consider what the reaction of the membership would be if one person's scoring resulted in the building's "ranking" going from a "4" to a "3."
 - b. On the other hand if enough individuals in a building scored "1" or "2," the possibility exists that results would skew the building grade to a point where a Central Falls, RI-type reorganization could be a possibility.
 - c. The idea of placing the entire burden for developing the "building score" on teachers in grades and subject areas that have standardized examinations of some form is the epitome of "unfairness." To have special area teacher scores based on areas completely outside their control is no more reasonable than having the scores for 11th grade math tied to art or music performance.

Thus, the Principals' conclusion that building-wide scores will reduce competition is simply wrong. It will foment competition and resentment between our members.

2. We are opposed to excluding any student from "mattering." Whether disability, language, health or any other disadvantaging reason, every child will eventually be an adult who will need the same support and nurturing as a student without

barriers to grow into a productive member of society. Obviously, from a day-to-day standpoint, our expectations of growth for these students and the manner in which our members' performance in deriving test scores from these groups is complex and should have some reasonable mitigating aspects included. However, direct omission or abdication of any responsibility towards the students cannot be the answer that any of us truly seek.

3. Year One Roll-out:

The Principals support a "pilot" approach in certain areas with it being phased in to the rest of the state. We believe it would be inequitable and unfair to have members doing the exact same job working under fundamentally different systems purely based on where they happen to work. Rather, we support that the APPR have a clear year one "hold-harmless" aspect so all stakeholders can learn first-hand from "best practices" of others and modify the respective plans for mutual benefit.

Despite the commonalities, based on these three major areas of difference, we are urging you to, and in turn, that you urge your members, not to sign on to the Principals position paper.