

Memorandum in Opposition

A. 5688 (Conte)

Winning Beginning NY, the state's early care and learning coalition, strongly opposes A. 5688, which would allow school districts to expend unspent Pre-K funds on approved K-2nd grade programs.

Nearly 450 of 677 school districts now provide Pre-K, including 53 that were new last year. Still, many districts have chosen not to create Pre-K programs because of insufficient funding or restrictions on the use of funds.

Currently, funding for Pre-K may only be used on part-day programs, a restriction that is problematic for many districts. Working families require full-day programs, which research shows have better outcomes than part-day programs. Therefore, some districts have been unable to fill classrooms and have passed on the state appropriation. *Winning Beginning NY* supports a proposal to allow districts to use Pre-K funds on both part- and full-day programs.

Unfortunately, the *Executive Budget* freezes funding at the level projected to be spent by districts in this current budget year—\$404 million, which is \$50 million less than appropriated last year. This means that the program will stall—there will be no new programs and no new children served. There will also not be any unspent funds to expend on program flexibility, whether for full-day Pre-K or for other things.

However, if there were unspent funds on the table, *Winning Beginning NY* would strongly oppose this proposal and continue to support its proposal of Pre-K dollars being earmarked for Pre-K programs.

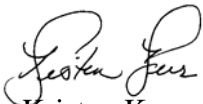
Sincerely,



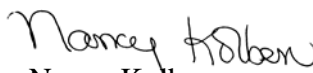
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February 26, 2009