April 5, 2013

Dr. John B. King, Jr.
Commissioner
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner King:

Winning Beginning NY, the State’s early care and learning coalition, is delighted the new State budget includes an additional $25 million funding for Pre-K expansion, starting in September 2013. Our coalition championed this new investment, with its emphasis on high-quality, full-day Pre-K.

We are eager to support the new effort, including the expeditious implementation of the RFP for this new competitive grant. We know the timeline is very tight and the expectations are high for this new expansion. But we also believe it presents an opportunity to engage the best thinking and most promising strategies for early education. We fully support the quality benchmarks in the legislation, including certified teachers, research-based instruction and quality learning environments. The new effort presents an opportunity to build on the significant work already underway across the state, in both public schools and community programs.

We are proud of the progress the State has already made in making Universal Prekindergarten available to nearly 100,000 children. We agree with the Governor’s Education Reform Commission that “the education pipeline starts at birth for students,” and believe the new Pre-K initiative is the next strategic opportunity in the State’s efforts to expand access to high-quality early education—as part of building out a “seamless education that supports a student from pre-kindergarten through college and then career.”

We look forward to learning more details about your plans and working with you and your team in the coming months to ensure the new initiative is a success and serves as a down payment for future investment and expansion. Please contact Diane Mastin, Winning Beginning NY Coordinator, with any questions at dmastin@scaany.org or by calling 518/463-1896 ext. 124.

Thank you again for your partnership and support of early childhood education!

Sincerely,

Susan Antos
Co-chair

Betty Holcomb
Co-chair