



September 23, 2019

Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As you are well aware, the New York State Education Department's Distinguished Educator Dr. Jaime Aquino determined that the Rochester City School District is in need of a "total reset" due to failures in its academic, operational, and fiscal health. Over the weekend, we received notice through news reports that the District discovered a \$50 million budget deficit with no explanation on its origin. Despite repeated requests, the District has refused to provide even preliminary financial details despite being in possession of this information.

As the District's financial backstop, the City of Rochester and our taxpayers are gravely concerned about the state of the District and the potential consequences to not only our children, but also the City's fiscal health. We are also concerned about our ability to complete critical infrastructure projects that have received your support, like ROC the Riverway, if there are fiscal consequences for the City of Rochester.

While we have tried to effectuate structural change in the District, the Courts have made clear to us that education is under the purview of State Education Law, NYSED, and the NYS Legislature. To that end, I ask that you work with your partners in government to completely sever the connection between the City and the School District, and empower it as a distinct entity consistent with how the vast majority of the State's 400-plus school districts operate. I also echo calls from our partners in government for the State to investigate the District's finances for the sake of our children and their families.

As you are well aware, the School District's misrepresentation to the City and the bond rating agencies could have a material effect on our ability to conduct business in the future on behalf of our residents. Given the recent Court rulings, and also given the urgency and importance of many critical projects happening in our city, we ask that the State act expeditiously and in accordance with the recent court decisions.

The hardworking taxpayers of our city deserve better and given this new revelation it is imperative that you and your colleagues act now to protect the City of Rochester. Together, we must ensure that not another child is lost to a broken system – a system that is indeed in need of a total reset.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (585) 428-7045.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lovely A. Warren".

Lovely A. Warren
Mayor

