

Christina Coughlin  
New York State Education Department  
State Office of Religious and Independent Schools

Dear Christina,

I am a yeshiva parent and a yeshiva graduate, and am writing to register my opposition to regulations proposed by the State Education Department.

I chose yeshiva education for my \_\_\_ children because I want them to receive an education steeped in the tradition and values of my Jewish heritage and faith. I want my children to receive an education that focuses on Jewish texts as well as Jewish traditions, Jewish history as well as Jewish culture, and Jewish ideals as well as Jewish ideas. In other words, what I want from them is an education that they cannot receive in the public schools.

I pay dearly for this privilege. Private school tuition is not cheap, I pay it on top of the income, real estate and other taxes that we all must pay to fund the local public schools, and I do not even receive a tax deduction for it.

These proposed regulations would undermine my ability to give my child the education that I chose for him. It would have the government set the educational priorities for my child, instead of the administration of the private school that I chose.

These regulations would require that the private school I chose for my child mimic the local public schools by teaching a long list of required courses -- up to 11 for some grades -- and even sets the length of time those courses must be offered each week. If I wanted government to dictate my child's course list and class schedule, I would have chosen the local public schools.

The school that I chose for my children has a long school day with an intensive focus on Jewish studies. Government is not qualified to evaluate our Jewish studies classes, yet these proposed regulations empower them to do just that.

The proposed regulations infringe on my right as a parent to direct the education of my children, and on the school's right to set its own educational course and mission.

That is neither legal nor necessary.

It is not legal because parents have the right to direct the education of their children, and to choose private and religious schools for them.

It is not necessary because private and religious schools have a long and proud record of achievement. Their attendance and graduation rates are high, and their students go on to lead successful lives.

I myself am a yeshiva graduate. I want my children to experience the same rich education environment that I did.

Every day, my children learn the critical thinking, problem solving, language, literacy, and computational skills that are necessary to prepare them for success. I am confident that they will graduate with the skills necessary to function as successful members of t society.

These proposed new regulations will undermine my ability to provide my children with the education that I have chosen for them.

I urge you to respect my ability as a parent to choose the educational direction for my children and to reject these proposed new regulations.

Sincerely,