



**Closing Session Speech by
Dr. Robert J. Reidy, Jr., Executive Director
September 27, 2011**

Good morning. Thank you, Marilyn, for your kind introduction. It is a pleasure to see all of you here this morning. Thank you for coming. I would like to give a quick note of thanks to all of you assisting in leading your communities through our recent natural disasters. A testament to the fact that superintendents leadership impacts more than schools...you lead communities!

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce my colleagues – THE COUNCIL staff - to you. They are a group of highly dedicated and competent people. I would ask them to stand as I introduce them. Please hold your applause until I have finished my introductions.

Council Staff:

Rina Greco – Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director

Bob Lowry – Deputy Director, Advocacy

Kelly Masline – Senior Associate Director & Director of LEAF

Theresa Wutzer – Associate Director & Director of Marketing & Communications

Jacinda Conboy, Esq. – General Counsel, Legal Services

Bob McClure – Superintendent-In-Residence

Deb Orsini – Assistant Director for Finance and Human Resources

Kyle Belokopitsky, Esq. – Assistant Director of Government Relations

Vren Banks – Programs & Resource Development Associate

Kacey Feldman – Program Associate

Dena Gauthier – Senior Graphic Designer

Deidre Hungerford – Program Associate

Karen Dooley – Membership Services Coordinator

Joanna Douglas – Administrative Assistant

Colleagues – Thank you for all you do!

I would also like to thank Past President Bob Christmann, President Marilyn Terranova and the entire Executive Committee for their unwavering support this past year...and what a year it was!

- Senior leadership changes in State Government and at SED
- Property Tax Cap
- APPR
- Common Core
- January Regents Exams off and on again
- Superintendent Salary Cap Proposal
- Unprecedented involvement of the private sector in public education

And the list goes on and on...

We, who serve at THE COUNCIL, have one over-arching goal – to support and contribute to your success in any way possible. Our agenda for this year is clear. The adopted tax cap has permanently changed the educational landscape. Without significant immediate Mandate Relief and Systems Regulatory change, many school districts will face financial ruin. To paraphrase key points addressed by 2010-11 Superintendent of the Year Bernard Pierorazio in his presentation to a Joint Legislature Budget Committee this past year:

[It is illogical and unfair to demand current and future strategic reform...without Mandate Relief and Regulatory changes to our systems...The time has come to allow school district leaders to truly lead...]

Bernard's remarks are prophetic and he is correct. Your leadership has never been more important. Given the current environment, it is critical for THE COUNCIL to develop a specific and detailed platform for Mandate and Regulatory Relief.

We continued this work on Sunday with our House of Delegates yesterday, with our Legislative Committee and it will be addressed this afternoon with our Executive Committee. We will never truly have the opportunity to continue to pursue the commitment and promises we have made to our children and communities without state government and SED officials aggressively pursuing and achieving Regulatory and Mandate Relief. We will have to face difficult and perhaps controversial decisions, which we are prepared to do.

It will take great political courage on the part of our policy-makers to make the changes required, and I hope they will be able to muster the political will to do so! We are going to do all we can to assist in strengthening their political will by:

- Presenting clear and specific Regulatory and Mandate Relief proposals to them and keeping the issues in front of them
- Building support through partnering with groups we can find common ground with on the key issues
- Connecting with on-going initiatives around the state, with which many of you are involved
- And by harnessing our most powerful and knowledgeable resource...YOU - the membership, working together with THE COUNCIL's Advocacy team

We all owe this effort to the children we serve and to our communities. The time is NOW!

Finally, I want to make one last point. THE COUNCIL is dedicated to the Superintendency and I want to remind all of us that the Superintendency transcends each of us as individuals. This was always a humbling thought for me when I served. We must remember to bring honor to the superintendency every day.

You are in the eye of the storm every day.

There is no more important work than the work you do.

There is no more complex work than the work you do.

On behalf of the children of New York State, thank you. I am honored to be your Executive Director.