**SAMPLE PARENT LETTER**

February 2017

The Honorable Chris Christie

Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie:

I am writing to urge you to STOP action on proposed amendments to fiscal rules (NJAC 6A:23A-18) for private special education schools. These amendments, proposed by your Department of Education, will affect much more than accounting. They will have a direct impact on children like my (son/daughter) NAME.

NAME attends NAME OF SCHOOL. Describe your child and the services and supports he/she needs. Describe why the private school matters to you.

The amendments will make it harder for private schools to provide the services and supports children with complex disabilities need. These are just a few of my concerns:

1. Proposed salary rules and a seven year ‘freeze’ will make it hard for schools like NAME OF SCHOOL to hire and retain the best staff. We need specialists because our children have needs that cannot be met in a typical school. We are losing staff not only to public schools, but also to hospitals, clinics and private centers that do not have salary caps.
2. Rules that make it harder for schools like NAME OF SCHOOL to provide specialized training to staff are damaging to children. Our educators work with some of the most challenging students – they need training and support that other educators do not need.
3. Schools like NAME OF SCHOOL that might re-locate should be allowed to take all of the gains from the sale of property and put it into a new school. The new rules would prevent non-profit schools from keeping and using the full amount of gains to buy a new school, forcing tuition rates to soar. The rules are also silent on an important issue: many non-profits have used private dollars to purchase or improve buildings, saving taxpayers millions. It would be unfair if gains had to be sent to school districts.
4. Schools like NAME OF SCHOOL use food as part of instruction. Food in a private school might be used for children to learn to swallow, or tolerate new textures. It can also be used as part of a school wide system of positive behavior supports. Food at a private school is part of learning, and it is unfair to exclude it from tuition.

I understand that MANY groups and organizations have asked the NJDOE to please delay action on these proposed rules that will make it harder for private schools to operate. I join them in asking that you direct the NJDOE to hold the proposed rules and rule amendments to NJAC 6A:23A-18 to allow for more discussion and review. I would also invite you to visit my child’s school to learn more about the unique work being done at New Jersey’s state-approved private special education schools.

Thank you,

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

Cc: Mr. Mark W. Biedron, President

New Jersey State Board of Education

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