



BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

HAROLD O. LEVY, *Chancellor*

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

110 LIVINGSTON STREET - BROOKLYN, NY 11201

April 3, 2000

The Honorable Richard P. Mills
Commissioner
The State Education Department
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Mr. Mills:

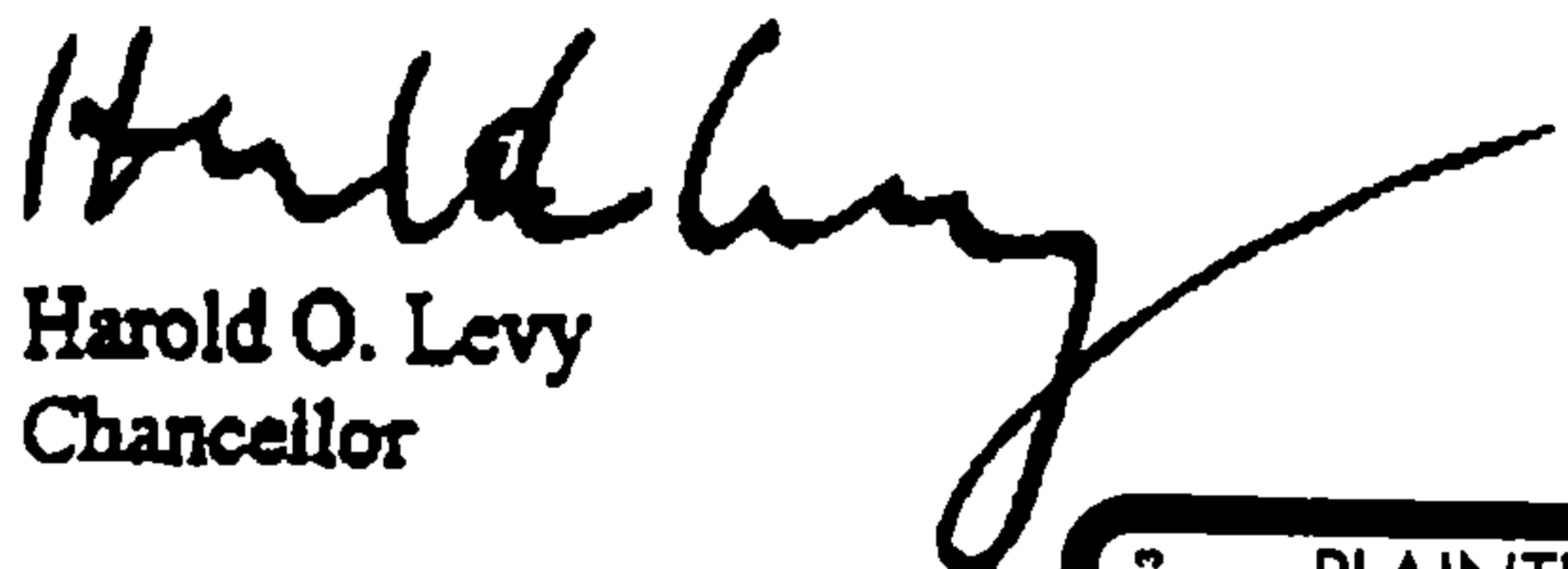
I write in response to your letters of January 28 and March 22, 2000. You have asked that I provide you with, among other things, an assurance that by August 1, 2000 appropriately certified staff will be hired and assigned to fill all anticipated vacancies in SURR schools for the 2000-2001 school year, and an assurance that all subsequent vacancies will be filled only by appropriately certified staff. I am unable to provide you with the assurances you request as I have no confidence that the SURR schools will be staffed as you indicate the Regents require.

The reasons for the Board's inability to staff the SURR schools as you and I both would prefer are straightforward. First, the Board pays less than the market wage rate that is necessary in this part of the State to attract an adequate pool of certified candidates. This school year, 58% of the over 8,000 teachers we have hired citywide were uncertified. Second, the age structure of the Board's teaching force will require us to hire a particularly large number of new teachers in the next three years. Third, despite the Board's now paying somewhat higher wages in so-called Extended Time Schools ("ETS Schools"), that increment, although helpful, has not sufficiently increased the number of certified teachers in SURR schools. Fourth, all of the staff's prodigious recruitment efforts - several of which you personally have assisted us on - are not likely to enable us to meet the Regents requirement. The legislative and gubernatorial efforts regarding teacher recruitment, while also extremely helpful, will not have been in place long enough to attain the results you have indicated that the Regents require by August 1.

I had hoped to be able to report to you by this date that a new contract was in place for the summer that might begin the process of attracting more certified teachers to our 15 hard-to-staff districts, where most of the SURR schools are located. These negotiations were a prelude to collective bargaining on the overall contract. While both the City and the United Federation of Teachers have acceded in the discussions to the idea of paying higher wages to certified, experienced teachers, I regret to report that the negotiations regarding the summer are now at an impasse.

In conclusion, the prospects for having SURR schools hire only certified teachers under current circumstances are slim. Please be guided accordingly.

Sincerely,


Harold O. Levy
Chancellor

HOL:dmc

Blumberg No. 8113
PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
P3776