SIX THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT PUBLIC EDUCATION FROM ANDREW CUOMO AND BETSY DEVOS

1. Consider whether your middle school child should take or refuse the upcoming New York State tests. Refusing, or "opting out," is a clear and effective form of resistance. If you are ready to take that step, along with hundreds of thousands of other New York families—including many, many here at ICE—there is an opt out letter in your packet. Want to read more before deciding? Read Why to Continue Opting Out in 2017 (scroll to bottom of this page for download link) and What Has Opt Out Accomplished?—also in your packet.

2. Let the governor know in no uncertain terms that his proposed budget will starve New York City’s kids and that its support of charter expansion at the cost of public schools is one Betsy DeVeros would be mighty proud of. The most effective way to do this is a call (518-474-8390)—should take only a minute or two) or by plugging in to his contact form (google “Contact Governor Cuomo”). Or you can send an email via the Network for Public Education, possibly less effective than a direct appeal but easy. Tell all your friends to do this, too.

3. While you are online, take an extra minute to sign the petition that seeks permission for teachers to be able to read the standardized tests they administer to children. Yes, believe it or not, this is a thing.

4. Lace up your shoes and hit the pavement for the March for Educational Justice on March 4. Simultaneous marches are being planned in many NY cities. Let’s drum up a contingent from ICE! Contact 7th grade parent Janice Bloom (Janice.bloom@gmail.com) to represent.

5. Join ICE PAC! We specifically need: 6th, 7th, and 8th grade parent reps to coordinate our opt out campaign and —new position!—Betsy D Watchdog: someone who will keep his or her eye on news and actions regarding the new Secretary of Ed so we aren’t caught off guard. Contact kemala@nycpublic.org

6. Stay informed by reading about the latest news and actions from the perspective of public education activist groups. If you Facebook, look for and/or join the pages of any or all of these organizations: NYC Opt Out, Change the Stakes, New York State Allies for Public Education, Network for Public Education, Class Size Matters, Public School Watchdogs. If you tweet, ditto. Most of these groups also have e-mailing lists you can subscribe to, if you prefer. Also: noidcny.org for IDC info.