



## **“Waiting for Superman”**

*by 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Kathryn Conley*

October 21, 2010

Dear Students,

I was one of the lucky 500 Rhode Islanders who attended a movie premiere, put on by RI CAN, last night for a documentary film called “Waiting for Superman,” by director Davis Guggenheim and producer Lesley Chilcott. It was a film that featured 5 children from different areas of the United States. Each of these students had something in common; their families loved them greatly and wanted them to have a safe place to get an excellent education. They wanted them to learn to read, write, do math, and learn science and social studies, so they could someday become anything and everything!

As I watched the movie, I was filled with deep sadness that many children were not in an environment that fostered their personal and educational well-being. Although I knew this prior to watching the movie, it was brought into full focus that too many students are being failed by our educational institutions. The education a student receives should not be based on their economic status, where they live, or by a lottery system. As a new parent, I was overly touched by the worry and fear that these families had for their children. We all know that students deserve a high level of education and security!

You, Paul Cuffee students, are some of the fortunate children. Everyday you come to a nurturing setting where teachers, staff, and administrators love you; where your learning is based on your needs; where you can grow educationally and emotionally; where you are encouraged and challenged to reach your highest potential.

This movie has changed me as a parent, teacher, and mentor. I am inspired to *be more*; to work harder with and for you as my children; to encourage and support other teachers; to have better communication with your parents to let them know how you are doing and feeling and how they can help you at home; to reach out to other teachers and schools to work together; to vote for officials who believe in the need for a change in education; to take an active part in the national goal of improving our educational system in the United States!

I am writing this letter to you for a few reasons. I want to encourage you, challenge you, inspire you to be the best students that you can be. I want you to take advantage of the wonderful environment that you come to everyday... to appreciate it, embrace it, and honor it. I want each and every one of you to improve your reading and math scores this year. I am going to hold you to higher standards and push you harder. I am going to push myself harder to make learning more exciting and rigorous. I want you to invest yourselves in your education and be responsible learners. I want you to take your learning home and share it with your families. I want you to do extra outside of school to improve your skills! You must work the hardest that you can, so that someday YOU can be anything and everything!

I love each and every one of you! I know with all of the hard work that WE are going to put into our learning, that each and every one of us can boost our skills!

Thumbs up for a challenge!

Love, Mrs. Conley