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Dear Friends,

This is a short note to express my thanks for partially supporting my participation in this year's Van Leer Education Conference. The conference theme this year is "From Regulation to Trust: Education in the 21st Century." This conference theme is especially related to my current work on education in the United States, and as a result, I will be giving a talk at the conference entitled, "Trusting Teachers in an Era of Accountability: Notes from the United States." In my talk I will discuss the trend in the United States toward new forms of teacher evaluation, especially teacher evaluations that are more frequent, that include systematic data from classroom observations and student achievement data systems, and that are being proposed for use in high stakes personnel decisions in schools, such as tenure decisions, decisions about reductions in force, and in some school systems, merit pay.

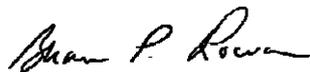
There is currently much controversy within the education community about the forms and uses of these new teacher evaluation systems, but as I will note in my talk, the American public—while trusting teachers—supports teacher evaluations based on judgments of quality, including judgments based on student achievement data. As a result, I will argue that U.S. schools have little choice but to move forward with such efforts, and my talk will describe what I think are some basic principles for doing so—principles that will build (rather than erode) trust in teachers while at the same time providing the public with the information they need about teaching quality in American schools.

In addition to speaking at the conference, I also will be participating in the Director General's workshop, which brings top-level education officials from around the world together to discuss topics of education policy. Having participated in last year's workshop, I know from experience just how useful this part of the Van Leer Conference is. It is a chance for education officials from many different countries to discuss

common problems of policy and organization, and to learn how each country goes about addressing these common problems in unique ways suited to each country's culture and political traditions. This year, I especially look forward to learning how the different countries participating in the Director General's Workshop are thinking about—and addressing—common problems of teacher evaluation. I am sure that wherever that discussion leads, it will be informative to me as I think about current trends in teacher evaluation policy in the United States.

In conclusion, thanks once again for supporting my participation in this year's Van Leer Education Conference. It is a wonderful chance for U.S. educators like me to form new friendships with Israeli colleagues, and to share insights about education theory and practice with colleagues from around the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian P. Rowan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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