



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Nearly 900 Turn Out for Forum on Common Core Curriculum at Mineola High School

Jack M. Martins

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ISSUE:

- [Education](#)
- [Local Government](#)

COMMITTEE:

- [Local Government](#)



Representatives From The 7th Senate District's Fifteen Area School Districts Seek Answers From State Education Commissioner

New York State Education Commissioner, Dr. John King, held a three-hour forum on Wednesday, November 13, 2013 at Mineola High School to field questions on the roll out of the controversial Common Core curriculum from the residents of the Seventh Senate District.

Senator Jack M. Martins (R-C-I, Mineola), who coordinated the forum along with the superintendents from each of the fifteen school districts in the Seventh Senate District, moderated the discussion in order to give parents, students, and educators the opportunity to directly question the Commissioner and express their concerns about the New York State Education Department's roll out of the Common Core curriculum, teacher evaluations, testing and student privacy.

Nearly 900 parents, students, teachers, administrators and school board members attended the forum. In addition, more than 2,000 concerned residents watched the forum via live webcast.

"Thank you to all the parents, teachers, students, school board members and administrators who participated," said Senator Martins. "Clearly, more needs to be done to address the universal concerns of all of our stakeholders. I hope the Commissioner was able to come away with the real concerns we all have for education in New York State and the well-being of our children."

Dr. Michael P. Nagler, Superintendent of the Mineola Union Free School District, said, "Mineola UFSD was proud to be the venue for such a well organized and frank discussion of the current State of public education in New York State. I would like to thank Senator Martins for moderating a respectful forum that allowed people's voices to be heard. I remain optimistic that common ground can be found to ensure that we never lose sight that a child's love for learning must always be at the forefront of everything we do."

Superintendent Al Harper of the Elmont Central School District said, "This was a tremendous opportunity for residents of the seventh Senate District to hear directly from the Commissioner. I want to thank Senator Jack Martins for his efforts in putting this forum together and running it in such a succinct and orderly manner. This forum was extremely important to all communities and especially to Elmont in the areas of funding concerns and the implementation of APPR and the roll out of Common Core."

Laura Ferone, President of the Floral Park-Bellerose School Board and Trustee for the Sawanhaka Central High School District said, "I thought the forum was excellent and the decorum, compared to other forums shown in the media, was outstanding. For that, I commend Senator Martins for the job he did as moderator. Although we appreciate the drive and increased rigor on the part of the State Education Department, we still believe the implementation and the pace in which the Common Core curriculum was rolled out could have better planning. There still appears to be a big gap between the theory and the actual implementation with the additional strain of limited resources."

Dr. Thomas P. Dolan, Superintendent of the Great Neck Union Free School District, said, "I'm not convinced that the Commissioner heard very much of what was said tonight. I heard very poignant and compelling narrative from the community that asked him to respond and he did not. He does not hear the frustrations expressed by the students, teachers, parents, administrators and boards of education. On several occasions, I heard people look for compromise, not surrender, on the part of the Commissioner and the State Education Department. We are willing to compromise. We need help. We need a response, not a sound bite."