



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

With no response yet from NYSED, Senator Kennedy follows-up with renewed call for community forum in Buffalo

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 4, 2013

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION**



Senator Kennedy wrote to Education Commissioner on November 15 to demand a community forum in Buffalo, but NYSED has not yet responded or scheduled a forum in Buffalo.

Kennedy wants NYSED to ensure Buffalo parents have the chance to learn more and ask questions about new Common Core standards.

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy, D-Buffalo, is still waiting for a response from the New York State Education Department following a letter he sent November 15 urging

Commissioner John King to schedule a community forum in Buffalo to ensure local families have the opportunity to hear more and ask questions about the state's new Common Core standards.

The only response from NYSED came in the form of [a quote in The Buffalo News](#). A NYSED spokesman said, "We will definitely be holding a forum in Erie County before the end of the year."

With the end of the year quickly-approaching and no forum scheduled yet, Kennedy followed up with NYSED yesterday demanding a forum be held in Buffalo. Currently, the only forum scheduled in Western New York is planned for today, December 4, in Jamestown – an over hour-and-a-half drive from Buffalo.

"We wrote to the Education Commissioner on November 15, and he still has not responded to our request for a community forum in Buffalo," said Senator Tim Kennedy. "Western New York parents are rightfully frustrated that no forum has been scheduled anywhere in Erie County. They are eager to discuss their concerns and ask Commissioner King questions about the state's implementation of Common Core standards. It's hard to believe that NYSED would expect Buffalo families to drive over an hour and a half away on a school night to participate in a forum about the future of our schools.

"NYSED said they'd schedule a forum in Erie County before the end of the year, but the end of the year is quickly approaching and no details have been released yet," Kennedy added. "Many parents work late into the evening and require advance notice to make sure they will be available to attend. I urge the State Education Department to announce a community forum in Buffalo as soon as possible and ensure parents, educators and community leaders in Western New York are heard when it comes to the quality of education throughout the state."

In Buffalo, parents have long expressed an interest in meeting with Commissioner King to share their children's first-hand accounts of their educational experiences. Kennedy believes the State Education Department needs to follow through on their previously-planned meeting for Erie County to give area parents the chance to raise concerns with senior education officials about local schools.

In his letter to the Commissioner, Kennedy demands NYSED give Buffalo parents the chance to be heard. He writes, "As a state, we need to pursue solutions to the challenges our schools face. The second largest city in the state, home to thousands of children and far too many struggling schools, should not be excluded from these critically important conversations. I urge you to find a time and date to come to Buffalo to speak with parents about the Common Core changes coming to New York State. At the very least, you must hold an event much closer than 70 miles away from Buffalo."

Previously, Commissioner King canceled, then rescheduled a series of town-hall meetings across the state. King was expected to appear in Williamsville for an October 24 forum prior to the cancellations, but NYSED has not yet scheduled a new forum in Erie County.

The full text of Senator Kennedy's letter is below. [You can view his original November 15 letter to NYSED by clicking this link.](#)

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the town of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.

FULL TEXT OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S LETTER IS BELOW:

December 3, 2013

Dear Commissioner King:

I write to follow-up on a letter I wrote to you over two weeks ago, dated November 15. In the letter, I requested that you schedule a community forum in the City of Buffalo. I am still awaiting your response.

As you know, the only community forum scheduled in Western New York will be held December 4 in Jamestown, which is about 70 miles – or more than an hour-and-a-half drive – away from Buffalo. Many local families will miss out on the chance to meet directly with you. Soon after I wrote my letter, your spokesman told *The Buffalo News* that you “will definitely be holding a forum in Erie County before the end of the year.” The end of the year is fast-approaching, and a Buffalo forum has yet to be scheduled.

As a state, we need to pursue solutions to the challenges our schools face. The second largest city in the state, home to thousands of children and far too many struggling schools, should not be excluded from these critically important conversations. I urge you to find a time and date to come to Buffalo to speak with parents about the Common Core changes coming to New York State. At the very least, you must hold an event much closer than 70 miles away from Buffalo.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. If you have any questions, please contact me in my district office at 716.826.2683. I have enclosed a copy of my original letter.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Kennedy

New York State Senator, 63rd District