



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Common Core Changes Needed

JAMES L. SEWARD December 12, 2013

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ONEONTA, 12/12/13 -- State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today joined State Senator John J. Flanagan (R/C/I – East Northport), chairman of the senate education committee, in calling on the New York State Education Department to rework the Common Core Learning Standards and associated testing.

“Parents, school administrators, and teachers have expressed to me a wide range of concerns over the Common Core learning standards and related testing requirements that students are now enduring,” said Senator Seward. **“I have taken part in a number of forums at schools throughout**

my district as well as formal senate education committee hearings that have clearly illustrated the need for immediate changes as well as long-term fixes to the poorly conceived curriculum. This is a positive first step.”

A report issued today includes findings and recommendations related to the senate education committee’s recent series of statewide public hearings entitled: The Regents Reform Agenda: “Assessing” Our Progress. The report includes an overview of the testimony heard by the committee, strong recommendations of administrative action that can be taken immediately by the State Education Department (SED), and several pieces of legislation that will address additional concerns.

Senator Flanagan said, “The recommendations contained within this report are a good first step in addressing the concerns heard by the committee which overwhelmingly revolved around the issue of over-testing. Setting rigorous academic standards to ensure that all students are college and career ready should always be an important goal to attain. However, it must be balanced by a fair and even implementation of those new standards to allow our children to adjust and adapt appropriately.”

“Teachers and parents need to be an integral part of the process moving forward. Had Commissioner King and his fellow bureaucrats at SED not sidestepped these key groups, students wouldn’t be suffering unnecessarily through the failed rollout of the new standards.

“It has long been my objective to partner with our schools in providing students with the tools they need for success in the classroom and in life. The Common Core standards, as they are now being implemented, are not helping reach that goal, and changes are needed to get us back on the proper educational path,” added Senator Seward.

The recommended administrative actions that can be taken immediately by the State Education Department (SED) to address concerns regarding the department's flawed implementation of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) include:

- Expediting waivers from the federal government (US Department of Education) to relax onerous and rigid testing restrictions placed on certain students, such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL);
- Producing all missing or incomplete curriculum modules immediately;
- Aligning assessments proportionally to curriculum actually implemented;
- Delaying operation of the Education Data Portal (EDP) for one year; and
- Increasing funding for the professional development of teachers.

The report also calls for legislative action on several bills including:

- “P-2 Bill” – which would ban standardized testing on students in Pre-K through 2nd grade;
- “Unnecessary Testing” Bill – which would require the Commissioner of Education to expedite a review of APPR plans solely to eliminate unnecessary student assessments;
- Privacy Bill – which would strengthen protections of personal information stored on the state-wide data portal, establish significant civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized disclosure of personal information and create independent oversight within SED on matters related to privacy; and
- Truth-In-Testing Bill – would require the Commissioner of Education to report on the effectiveness of common core tests and require an independent audit to review and evaluate the common core testing program.

The report will be submitted to the New York State Board of Regents, Commissioner of Education King and Governor Cuomo.

“We need to hit the pause button and get it right. Greater professional involvement through staff development and community participation - keeping parents up to speed, are steps that must be taken if we are to make certain students are receiving the education they need and deserve,”

Seward concluded.