



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senator Jeff Klein Hosts Education Town Hall Meeting with State Education Officials to Address Concerns Regarding the Common Core

JEFFREY D. KLEIN February 24, 2014

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BRONX, NY – Senator Jeff Klein (D- Bronx/Westchester) hosted a town hall meeting at P.S. 24 this afternoon to establish a constructive dialogue between local school districts and state education officials on the most important issues surrounding new Common Core standards. Roughly 75 local educators participated in the event, which was moderated by Senator Klein and Chancellor Merryl Tisch. The town hall format provided an opportunity for attendees to voice their concerns over a variety of issues, including the ability to share student data with outside third-parties and learn more about the implementation of the new Common Core Learning Standards.

Dr. Merryl H. Tisch, Chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents, along with Bronx Regent Betty Rosa and several officials from the State Education Department (SED) attended the event, including Dennis Tompkins, External Affairs Chief; Ken Wagner, Deputy Commissioner for Curriculum Assessment and Education Technology; and Nicolas Storrellicastro, Governmental Relations & Special Projects.

Senator Klein said: “We all want our children to receive the best education possible in accordance with the highest standards. At the same time, I think we have identified clear shortcomings in the implementation of Common Core that should be addressed on a statewide basis. We need to do everything we can to invest in not only our students, but also in our teachers, so that they can meet the demands of this rigorous new curriculum. I’m pleased that the Board of Regents has recently adopted some important changes to the Common Core implementation and I’m hopeful that today’s discussion will provide another opportunity to incorporate constructive suggestions in to the implementation.”

The New York Board of Regents formally adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010 and fully implemented these learning standards in the 2013-2014 school year for Pre-K through 8th grade. However, parents and educators have been concerned with its initial rollout.

In response to these concerns, Chancellor Tisch established a Regents Work Group that was responsible for providing a review of the first three and a half years of Common Core implementation in December 2013. On February 10, 2013, the group released its report, which offered adjustment options that reflected concerns raised by parents, experts, and educators during previous education forums held across the state. Recommendations included additional funding for professional development and extending a phase-in for Common Core-aligned Regents exams, so that the first class required to pass new exams in English and mathematics would be the class of 2022.

"The state faces many educational issues including how and when to implement common core. But I have other concerns as well. How much time is spent taking standardized tests? How much instructional time is spent preparing for those tests- and teaching to the tests? What basic skills; including learning cursive writing and memorization of multiplication tables, are not required parts of the curriculum? Our children need more instructional time on basic skills in order to deal with the higher standards of common core,"

said Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz (D-Riverdale)

Bronx Regent Betty Rosa said: "I'm grateful to the Senator for creating an opportunity for the communities that he represents to engage in a dialogue about the challenging issues that we are facing. The opportunity for an intellectual exchange of ideas help us all focus on our children. It is clear that his priority and focus are on our children.

Peter Giarizzo, Superintendent of Pelham Public Schools said: "Thank you Senator Klein for arranging for this important dialogue. It is so important to have a forum where we can speak openly about the importance of public education. We are staunchly dedicated to providing our students with a curriculum and assessment program that improves teaching and learning. I look forward to our continued dialogue in both the short and long term."

Donna Connelly, Principal at P.S. 24 said: "I applaud Senator Klein for hosting this informative meeting with our community and working to make certain that every parent, teacher, and student has a seat at the table. There are clearly many areas we can improve upon to make Common Core work better. We want our input to be heard loud and clear by the policy makers in Albany. It's in everyone's interest to provide enough feedback to our decision makers so that they can work with us to strengthen student performance without jeopardizing our ability to educate our children."

Senator Klein has routinely met with educators and parents who have been advocating for changes to the Common Core Learning Standards. Earlier this month, the Senator called for the Board of Regents to delay the operation of the Education Data Portal for at least one year, which had raised privacy concerns among parents and students. Shortly thereafter, the State Education Department announced it would delay releasing student information to inBloom, the nonprofit organization that has been tasked with collecting and storing such data for school districts.

