



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy announces public comment period on teacher evals, reducing testing

TERRENCE P. MURPHY April 15, 2015

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YORKTOWN, NY - One lawmaker feels that both opponents and supporters of data-driven instruction deserve the chance to be heard by policy-makers as they implement new regulations on teacher evaluations. State Senator Terrence P. Murphy, author of the Parental Refusal Act in the State Senate, today said people have the opportunity to be heard during a newly-announced public comment period called for under the recently passed state budget.

"Thanks to Washington and Albany, our children are faced with the constant pressure and stress of wave after wave of 'one size fits all' mandated testing," Senator Murphy said. "I opted my kids out, and have sponsored the only opt-out bill in the Senate. Now we have another opportunity to let the bureaucrats hear our voice with this public comment period that I fought to have included in the budget."

The budget establishes numerous education reform initiatives which require the Board of Regents and the State Education Department (SED) to establish new requirements for teacher and principal evaluations. As chairman of the State Administrative Regulations Review Commission, or ARRC, Murphy is charged with reviewing these proposed rules. He is asking residents to submit their public comments by email to SED at eval2015@nysed.gov and his commission at arrc@nysenate.gov.

Thanks to changes secured by Senator Murphy and others, SED, rather than the governor, is now charged with setting set weights or range of weights of tests and scoring bands on the components of the evaluations in two categories, Student Performance and Teacher Observation, as well as their subcomponents.

Under the law creating this new process, SED is also required to accept public comment and recommendations regarding adoption of regulations.

The legislation also requires a "Testing Reduction Report" which mandates the Chancellor of the Board of Regents review testing requirements and report to the Legislature and the Governor. The report must include recommendations to reduce the amount of state and local student testing and improve the quality of those tests and is due by June 1, 2015.

The regulations will be developed by a diverse group of experts that includes stakeholders

from students, parent-teacher groups, administrators, special educators and others.