



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Marc Panepinto

Senator Panepinto Joined By Public Education Community To Call For Local Input In Governor's Common Core Review

MARC PANEPINTO September 15, 2015

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Panepinto: “A ‘one-size fits all’ approach would only serve as a further detriment to our parents, students and educators.”

BUFFALO, N.Y. - Five months after first calling for a more unified and pragmatic public education system, Senator Marc Panepinto (D-Buffalo) once again stood with community education stakeholders to discuss New York State’s Common Core program. This latest call comes in the wake of Governor Cuomo’s announcement that he will

convene a special commission to review curriculum, guidance and testing related to Common Core. Given this necessary step, a local education coalition comprised of parents, teachers, administrators and Senator Panepinto spoke with a unified voice Friday to call for valuable local input in the review process and recommend corrective steps to the program moving forward.

State Senator Marc Panepinto said, “New York State’s vast public education system is as diverse as the residents themselves. That’s what makes it great. While a committee dedicated to the review of the Common Core program is a vital first step, the effectiveness of such a committee is only as good as its members. A “one-size fits all” approach would only serve as a further detriment to our parents, students and educators. A committee inclusive of local stakeholders with first-hand experience of the program’s hurried implementation and problematic testing and evaluation systems is not only best qualified to deliver the changes our students and teachers need - but the changes they deserve. My sincere thanks to Governor Cuomo for taking the steps necessary to address this issue. I am looking forward to a solution stakeholders locally and across New York State can have confidence in moving forward.”

The Common Core program is now in its third year of implementation in New York State’s education system. One of only two states to have three years of testing under the program. Since its initial rollout and flawed implementation, Common Core has served as a source of frustration for parents, teachers and students, placing much of the focus on ill-vetted, high stakes ELA and Mathematics testing. Following its implementation, initial test scores were and have remained low three years later leading many defeated parents and students to “opt-out” of standardized testing.

According to the State Education Department, more than 200,000 students chose to “opt-out” of Common Core tests in the Spring 2015 semester, negatively impacting graduation rates, teacher evaluations, and vital federal funding.

Dr. Bret Apthorpe, Ed. D., Frontier Central Schools Superintendent said, “The hurried and deeply flawed implementation of the common core has only resulted in 56% of Frontier students refusing to take State exams and mass confusion amongst teachers and parents. The implementation has created a disjointed learning environment which threatens to negatively impact our 90% graduation rate. Our WNY coalition is passionate about providing the very best education to all our students and the revisitation of the Common Core implementation process could result in a much better process if it includes the stakeholders in our school communities.

Joy LaMarca, Grand Island Central School Board Trustee said, “It is my hope that the Governor’s newly formed review panel will focus on a commitment to creating an atmosphere in our schools that emphasizes a well-rounded education, one that allows our educators the ability to provide our children an individualized, robust education, and finally, one that is inclusive of the voice of our parents, teachers, administrators, superintendents, school board members, and other community-stakeholders here in Western New York in the advising of corrective action moving forward.”

“Education is the key to unlocking doors that would otherwise be impassible but today's students have to successfully manage a maze with moving walls in hopes of reaching that magic key,” **said Paula Eastman, John T. Waugh Elementary Principal in the Lake Shore Central School District.** “Their future is our responsibility - let's have those directly involved be a larger part of the process.”

“Any commission established by Governor Cuomo must include parents from WNY and across the state,” **said Chris Cavarello, a parent in the Ken-Ton Union-Free School District.** “Parents have done their research on common core, state tests, and the teacher evaluation system. They refuse state and local assessments which are tied to developmentally inappropriate standards and teacher evaluations. Any commission established must also include an independent, thorough critique of the standards by experts in the field of education. Focusing solely on the implementation will divert attention from the standards themselves. We need to include all stakeholder and consider their thoughts and perspectives on common core and testing. If the governor, the state education department, and the board of regents are truly listening to parents, they will look at current reforms objectively and make changes which reflect our concerns and desires.”

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