



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy puts local school districts back in charge

TERRENCE MURPHY June 15, 2016

ALBANY, NY - Senator Terrence Murphy struck yet another blow at Common Core today when it was announced the Board of Regents would adopt regulations requiring superintendents to make a local determination as to academic proficiency for students with disabilities. Those students who struggle with the state-mandated tests could still be allowed to graduate with a local diploma under the new regulations.

"Our kids are more than a test score," Senator Murphy said. "State assessments, even for with testing accommodations, should not be the sole determining factor if whether someone can graduate, especially kids with learning disabilities. Today's ruling will put local educators back in charge of these decisions."

Earlier this year, the Board of Regents succumbed to pressure by education reform advocates and Senator Murphy to roll back the controversial Common Core standards. Legislation passed by Murphy led to the implementation of a flexible timeline to create a new, locally-driven curriculum to replace the failed Common Standards by 2019.

Mary Fox-Alter, Superintendent, Pleasantville Union Free School District said, "It's been something we've been advocating for. It's important to have local control. It increases the possibilities for kids with disabilities to get a diploma. We think this is taking special education in the right direction."

Lakeland School District Superintendent George Stone said, "Utilizing the expertise of our staff, we work hard to help our students meet their academic requirements. We genuinely appreciate the need for a safety net for some of our special education students. The new policy will certainly help the students we have identified in the district that need the support."

Dr. Dennis W. Creedon, Mahopac Central School District said, "I think it's a wise decision. The problem with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is that the individual would have a diploma that is no good outside of the state of New York. An autistic child might be a good carpenter but without a high school diploma he might not get a job. A diploma is still the gateway to better employment."

Under today's decision, beginning with students with disabilities who are otherwise eligible to graduate in June 2016 and thereafter, a school superintendent or nonpublic school principal will have the responsibility to determine if a student with a disability has otherwise met the standards for graduation with a local diploma when such student has not been successful, because of his/her disability, at demonstrating his/her proficiency on the Regents exams required for graduation.

The superintendent must ensure that every student with a disability who does not meet the graduation standards through the existing appeal and safety net options is considered for the superintendent determination. This option does not need to be formally requested by the student or parent.