

THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY**  
**SENATOR, 63<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT**

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November 15, 2013

Dr. John B. King, Jr.  
Commissioner of Education  
New York State Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner King:

I write to request that you include an event in the City of Buffalo in your Community Forum Schedule. It has been brought to my attention that, currently, the only event scheduled in Western New York is set to take place in Jamestown on December 4. I certainly appreciate you traveling to as many regions, and holding as many forums, as possible, but it is imperative that you do not ignore the largest school district in Western New York in favor of an event that is about 70 miles – or more than an hour-and-a-half drive – away from Buffalo.

Considering the high cost of travel and the large number of Buffalo families who rely on public transit, many parents will be forced to pass up their only opportunity to meet directly with you. I urge you to schedule a meeting in Buffalo and give families here the chance to attend one of your community forums.

Buffalo Public Schools are in the midst of a crisis, and parents are rightfully concerned about major changes to their children's education. While I am sure that an event held in Jamestown would inevitably draw a large contingent from the City of Buffalo, parents should not be forced to drive over an hour on a school night to hear from, and address, the senior-most education official in the state about an overhaul to their child's curriculum. I am sure that Buffalo Public Schools would be happy to host you in any location in the city, and there are plenty of large auditoriums throughout the district.

In the City of Buffalo, 80 percent of schools are rated as "Consistently Low Performing." This makes it even more important that you to come to Buffalo and explain the changes that we can expect in the coming months and years to our statewide education system. If, as we've been told, these changes are going to improve educational outcomes, then a struggling district like Buffalo ought to have been the first stop on your Community Forum tour. Again, I hope you will find a time and date to come to Buffalo to speak to parents about the Common Core changes coming to

New York State. At the very least, you must hold an event closer than 70 miles away from Buffalo.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter, and I hope to see you soon in Buffalo. If you have any questions or if I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me in my district office at 716.826.2683.

Sincerely,



Timothy M. Kennedy  
New York State Senator, 63<sup>rd</sup> District