

TESTIMONY – PUBLIC HEARING ON REGENTS REFORM AGENDA

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- ***Rushed implementation of Common Core curricula and associated assessments.***
 - New York is the only state to have administered the Common Core Assessments at the end of the same year that the new standards and curricula were first implemented.
 - You cannot place a test in front of children who have not been comprehensively prepared with the skills that are being tested.
 - Administrators and teachers throughout our district and most others have been involved in training throughout the year.
 - In New York, samples of the curriculum and modules trickled out during the course of the school year and well into the spring.
 - In our district, we worked with them diligently. Learning takes time, even for adults.
 - This year, teachers and administrators and others were buried in new Common Core Standards, new evaluation systems, and diminished resources.
 - No time to learn...just to do.

- ***The volume of and time spent on testing takes time away from providing authentic learning experiences for our students.***
 - Our Board of Education passed a resolution this past summer calling upon the federal government to reduce testing mandates and support the role of and focus on multiple measures of student learning and school quality in accountability systems.
 - While the implementation of Common Core curricula may ultimately help students, teachers, and teaching and learning, the growing reliance on and misalignment of standardized testing is eroding student learning time and jeopardizing the rich, meaningful education our students need and deserve.
 - Despite the fact that research recommends the use of multiple measures to gauge student performance and teacher effectiveness, the state's growing reliance on standardized testing is adversely affecting students across all

spectrums. The morale of educators has also been negatively impacted and the already scarce resources have been further drained.

- ***While we understand that the new scores represent a new “baseline,” it is very difficult to explain to students and parents why scores/levels dropped so significantly.***
 - The Commissioner made it very clear that teacher and principal evaluations statewide would remain essentially unaffected. Additionally, conversion charts were constructed to ensure that the volume of mandated AIS services remained close to the level from prior years.
 - Nonetheless, student scores still dropped significantly. One might say that this new baseline falls on the backs of the children.
 - Furthermore, the issue is less the level of assessment difficulty and more about where the cut scores were set. Cut scores appeared preordained at a level 30% or more; lower than those from the prior year.
 - The fact remains that these are our students, not the State Education Department's. It is our responsibility as a district to communicate and explain. It may be more difficult for some students and parents than for others. It will be a challenge to convince some students they have not learned less nor should they be wearing a badge of failure.
 - Releasing score information immediately prior to the onset of the new school year also has a harmful effect on student and teacher morale, as does releasing individual score reports in mid-September.

- ***The new assessments may widen the achievement gap and more adversely impact English language learners and students with disabilities.***
 - Although new ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) waiver-based accountability system does account for individual growth, there is a concern that absolute performance will prompt gap widening.
 - Absolute performance of ELL's and SWD's are less likely to represent a true measure of their abilities and the contributions of their teachers and schools.