



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

## NYS Education Chairman Flanagan Calls For Immediate SED Action on Common Core and Unveils a Package of Legislative Actions

JOHN J. FLANAGAN December 12, 2013

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Today, Senator John Flanagan (2nd Senate District), Chairman of the New York State Senate Standing Committee on Education, issued a [report](#) of findings and recommendations related to the Education Committee's recent series of statewide public hearings entitled: The Regents Reform Agenda: "Assessing" Our Progress.

[Please click here to view the entire press conference.](#)

The five hearings – held in Long Island, Syracuse, Buffalo, New York City and Albany – gathered extensive testimony from a broad cross-section of educational stakeholders around the State on concerns related to the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) by the State Education Department (SED).

The Committee heard a variety of concerns from witnesses that included the over-testing of students, inadequate professional development funding for teacher training, incomplete and missing modules (i.e., curriculum), the use of test questions that were neither age-level nor developmentally appropriate, and the security of student, teacher and principal data that will be stored on the statewide Education Data Portal (EDP).

Common Core Learning Standards were adopted in New York by the Board of Regents in 2010. In the 2012-13 academic year, the State Education Department began aligning curriculum and assessments to the implementation of these new learning standards in all grades, Pre-K through 12. The implementation has been admittedly flawed and a significant subject of controversy and criticism for parents, teachers and administrators. The professional development funding for teacher training, incomplete and missing modules (i.e., curriculum), the use of test questions that were neither age-level nor developmentally appropriate, and the security of student, teacher and principal data that will be stored on the statewide Education Data Portal (EDP).

The Senate Education Committee was the first official body to hold public hearings to allow stakeholders to express their concerns and offer recommendations for making improvements. The five hearings produced over thirty hours of testimony, 115 witnesses and close to 1000 pages of written testimony which were all included as part of the official record. During the hearings, the Committee heard heartfelt, emotional testimony from parents about their children experiencing severe stress, anxiety and frustrations as they struggled to understand the new curriculum, while also trying to learn in a whole new way.

Teachers expressed exasperation over the lack of time and resources given to professional development training in order to adequately prepare lesson plans before teaching and testing their students.

Privacy experts and school administrators raised serious concerns about the ability of unauthorized third-parties to access personally identifiable information (PII) of students, teachers and principals that will be collected on the state-wide EDP.

“There was no shortage of opinions from the witnesses testifying at these hearings,” stated Senator Flanagan. “It was a robust and thoughtful discussion on the many important issues

and problems related to the implementation of the State's new learning standards. Some of the most passionate testimony came from parents who, at the end of the day, all want the same thing for their children regardless of where they live – a good education. Our state's most basic obligation is to provide the funding and resources to ensure that every student has the best chance at success.”

The report being issued today will include an overview of the testimony heard by the Committee and strong recommendations of administrative action that can be taken immediately by the State Education Department (SED) to address concerns regarding the Department's flawed implementation of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).

Those administrative actions include:

- Expediting waivers from the Federal government (US Department of Education) to relax onerous and rigid testing restrictions placed on certain students, such as Students With Disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL);
- Producing all missing or incomplete curriculum modules immediately;
- Aligning assessments proportionally to curriculum actually implemented;
- Delaying operation of the Education Data Portal (EDP) for one year; and
- Increasing funding for the professional development of teachers.

The report will also include action that the State Legislature can take on several pieces of legislation, including:

- “P-2 Bill” – which would ban standardized testing on students in Pre-K through 2nd grade;
- “Unnecessary Testing” Bill – which would require the Commissioner of Education to expedite a review of APPR plans solely to eliminate unnecessary student assessments;
- Privacy Bill – which would strengthen protections of personal information stored on the state-wide data portal, establish significant civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized disclosure of personal information and create independent oversight within SED on matters related to privacy; and

- Truth-In-Testing Bill – would require the Commissioner of Education to report on the effectiveness of common core tests and require an independent audit to review and evaluate the common core testing program.

“The recommendations contained within this report are a good first step in addressing the concerns heard by the Committee which overwhelmingly revolved around the issue of over-testing,” stated Senator Flanagan. "Setting rigorous academic standards to ensure that all students are college and career ready should always be an important goal to attain. However, it must be balanced by a fair and even implementation of those new standards to allow our children to adjust and adapt appropriately.”

The report will be submitted to the Board of Regents, Commissioner of Education and Governor.

[Please click here to view Senator Flanagan's Press Conference](#)

[Please click here to view the announcement on News12](#)

[Please click here to watch Cablevision's Peter Kohler discussing Senator Flanagan's proposals](#)

#### **Legislative Actions Proposed By Senator Flanagan:**

[S6006 - Unnecessary Testing - APPR Legislation](#)

[S6007 - Privacy Protection Legislation](#)

[S6008 - P2 Testing Legislation](#)

[S6009 - Truth In Testing Legislation](#)

