



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senate Education Committee Hearing Assessing the Regents Reform Agenda

BRAD HOYLMAN October 30, 2013

On October 29, the State Senate Education Committee held a hearing in Manhattan to review the impact and effectiveness of the reform agenda recently launched by the New York State Board of Regents.

New York State Board of Regents Chancellor Merryl Tisch admitted the state's roll out of the Common Core Standards has been flawed. I am dismayed about the lack of meaningful engagement with parents and educators before or after these standards were adopted. I questioned the Chancellor about the State Education Commissioner's disappointing decision to leave New York City off the initial list of school districts where forums will be held for parents and educators to discuss the Common Core Standards and other recently approved education reforms. The Chancellor assured me that in early November the Regents would announce three or four such forums in New York City.

I also raised concerns about student data privacy, particularly in light of the State Education Department's decision to contract with the third-party, non-profit inBloom Corporation to provide a cloud-based student database; objected to the overtesting of our kids, including allowing private companies to use them as guinea pigs to try out prospective test questions; and questioned the extent to which students are doing poorly on the new tests not for lack

of proficiency but because the stress of the high-stakes testing made it impossible for them to finish (see video below).

It is my hope that the Regents will heed the concerns raised and will reassess the implementation of the new curriculum, data systems and evaluation methods. I am also exploring legislative remedies. I currently co-sponsor legislation that would protect student data privacy and support legislation to reduce excessive testing, including prohibiting standardized testing for schoolchildren in pre-kindergarten through second grade.