



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terry Gipson

INDIVIDUALIZATION. NOT STANDARDIZATION: MY THOUGHTS ON THE COMMON CORE CURRICULUM

TERRY GIPSON November 13, 2013

by Senator Terry Gipson

Providing a quality education for our children has always been a top priority of mine. With this comes a strong personal belief that the strength of our education system cannot be measured by test results alone. The future of job creation and economic growth here in the Hudson Valley lies in the innovative ideas and creativity of our next generation. The next medical advancement or technology boom is not going to emerge from standardized testing or standardized teaching. In fact, history has shown that our greatest innovations come from those who refuse to think in standardized terms. I want to encourage our children to dream big and to use their imaginations to engage in creative problem solving.

Before entering office, I noticed an alarming trend in our education system marked by the introduction of Common Core, leading us towards standardization rather than individualization. That is why earlier this year while the Senate was in session I introduced the Truth about Testing Act (S4764) that would eliminate standardized testing assessments for our youngest of children in Kindergarten through 2nd Grade. I also co-sponsored bipartisan legislation (S4284) that would protect the privacy of our children by prohibiting the release of personally identifiable student information to third parties without the expressed permission of their parents.

Although the federal program Common Core has admirable goals, it often relies on a cookie cutter approach in a world where every child learns differently. For this reason, the parents and educators who know our children and community best deserve to have input in how education policy is implemented in our local schools.

Like many of you, I was disappointed by the result of the recent Common Core Educational Forum held at the Spackenkill High School in Poughkeepsie. Even more unfortunate was the decision by State Education Commissioner John King to cancel these much needed public forums for communities across New York State. While I'm pleased to see that the State Education Department has resumed these necessary forums, I want to make sure that parents, students, and teachers all have their voices heard as we work together to provide the best education possible to our children.

As a public official, my responsibility is to help bring parents, teachers, and education officials together to work on ensuring that all of our children receive a world-class education. That means taking a closer look at the way we educate to make sure we are focusing on what is best for our children rather than data mining and arbitrary one-size-fits-all standards. We are all depending on each other to help make the Hudson Valley and New York State a better place to call home.

I encourage all of us to continue to participate in this process going forward. I am committed to working with local, state and federal officials to meet the goals of Common Core while implementing it in a way that allows local parents, students, and teachers to have a say in how our children are educated. Most importantly, I will continue fighting to empower future generations with the tools they need to become innovative, creative members of society who will revitalize our economy and create the jobs of the future.

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