



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

STATEMENT FROM SENATOR RITCHIE ON COMMON CORE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

PATTY RITCHIE December 11, 2015



Thursday's release of recommendations made by the State's Common Core Task Force—a group made up of educators, parents and state leaders charged with identifying ways to reform the way we teach students—represents a step in the right direction when it comes to addressing the issues related to the state's flawed roll-out of the Common Core educational standards.

I applaud the Common Core Task Force's recommendation of developing new standards that improve age appropriateness, reduce the emphasis placed on testing and increase flexibility so curriculum can better meet the needs of New York educators and students. In addition, I am pleased to see the Task Force recommend increased educator and teacher involvement as new standards are developed. These are the people who know our students and their abilities best, and by making them more engaged in the process, we can increase transparency and ensure all students are given the best shot at achieving success.

These recommendations echo the sentiments expressed to me by hundreds of local educators, parents and students—that the state's new educational standards focused too much on testing; causing anxiety not only for students, but also for educators who felt they were losing valuable classroom time to “teaching to the test.” By reducing over-testing and improving transparency when it comes to test questions and scores, we can make sure that tests serve as teaching tools that measure student achievement in an appropriate way. In addition, I applaud the Task Force's recommendation of postponing the date in which Common Core aligned test scores affect teacher evaluations. Placing such a significant emphasis on test scores when the new standards were initially rolled out, without giving teachers the time they needed to adjust was simply unfair, and I am pleased to see this addressed in the Task Force's report.

I would like to thank those who made this report possible, including the Task Force members, as well as the many parents and educators who submitted their suggestions for improving public education. The millions of children in classrooms throughout our state are our future, and our hardworking educators have the very important job of helping them to achieve success. I look forward to continuing to work together to create brighter futures for students and to ensure New York continues to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all.

