

Linda Mallalieu, Parent

"I was honored to speak at a Long Island stop on the former Education Commissioner King's "listening tour" two years ago. I brought my concerns to Dr King and Dr Tisch on that day, about over testing of students, narrowing of curriculum due to testing pressures, and the unreliability of test scores for evaluating teachers, principals, and schools. It is disheartening that after hearing the similar, heart felt outpourings of the same sentiments from parents across the state, nearly nothing was changed. Instead, policies have been doubled down, with increased testing due to SLOs required for APPR data needs, the pervasive use of shoddily put together EngageNY modules, and the recent increase of standardized test score weight from VAM-based evaluation scores. The tsunami of poorly thought out, non-research based changes to our state education has now reached our high school students. The new common core versions of high school regents exams in several subject areas are spreading confusion, uncertainty, and significant worries about plummeting grades on student transcripts. I can only describe the current state of public education in NY State as CHAOS. Teachers and parents are blind-sided on a regular basis, with new, unfunded, and untested mandates. The common core curriculum has, without doubt, narrowed the curriculum in our schools to the tested subjects, ELA and math. Because students and teachers are unable to keep up with the unreasonable pace dictated by the EngageNY modules and the accompanying tests, schools are scrambling to schedule children in double ELA and double math periods. Of course, loss of those extra periods means something must be cut from the children's education, namely enriching classes like public speaking, technology, foreign languages, home and careers, and the arts. This perfect storm of standards, testing, and APPR MUST be halted - immediately. The children don't have several more years for the adults to get it right. Scrap the untested common core standards. Go back to the "lost NY State standards" developed by actual educators. Drop the mandated inclusion of test scores in teacher evaluations, and give evaluation decisions back to local districts. Cut drastically back on standardized testing, decouple them from evaluation scores, and go back to the tried-and-true NY state tradition of tests developed by educators, not by profit-driven corporations. I urge the task force to take these bold actions now, and return sanity to our once great NY state school system. Confidence in our system must be restored to parents and students in order for us to fully participate."