

**Denise Toscano, Administrator, NY Ed Voice Fellow, High Achievement NY, James Boyd Intermediate School**

Good afternoon Ms. Evelyn and Senator Marcellino. I thank you for affording me the opportunity to share my voice with the Common Core Task Force. My name is Denise Toscano. I have a Doctorate in Education and I have been in the field of education for 24 years, serving as both a teacher and administrator. I am a New York Ed Voice Fellow and a member of High Achievement New York.

I would like to commend the Task Force in reflecting on the issues of the Common Core and working to improve education for students. The one good thing that came out of the Common Core Movement was National Learning Standards. The Common Core National Learning Standards afford students throughout the nation with a consistent rigorous academic program that will prepare them to compete in the world market. Although we may need to tweak the standards, we would be taking 10 steps backwards in our growth if we were to get rid of them. For decades, students in different states have been taught different material at different rates and held to radically different standards. Raising standards for education is always a good thing.

As I look at your task force I see a wide variety of professionals. However, I am a true believer that when we bring in specialists of certain areas, we become a better team, to complete task of truly meeting our student's needs. It would be prudent to add a literacy and mathematical specialist to review and assist in making sure the assessments are aligned with standards. In addition I believe a well-versed psychologist or a psychiatrist that specializes in child development would benefit the Force in making sure the assessments are cognitively and developmental appropriate for students ages and brain development.

Just like you, I believe in the importance of assessments to inform instruction. The new assessments are in their infancy stage. The assessments that have been developed, with good intentions to raise standards, have really not been vetted and were rolled out in a high-stakes environment where there were various mistakes, and at times were cognitively and developmentally inappropriate for students. I ask you as our leaders to take your time creating good strong assessments, however not placing such high-stakes demands on a product that is not finished yet and that is only one snap shot of a student's abilities. In our haste, we unfairly placed teachers and principals jobs on the line using these measurements. I would like to thank you again. Senator, you have long been a supporter of teachers and leaders. Before there was Facebook, Twitter and Leadership 2.0, you found funding for the leadership list serve to all Long Island Administrators to maintaining a professional learning community to grow as professionals. I ask that you both know we appreciate your work and efforts and hope that you seriously consider these concerns and continue to support educators. Working together will allow us to continue to provide the students of NY with a quality academic and social education.

