

Good afternoon. My name is Melanie Ward. I am the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in the Pittsford Central School district. I am here today speaking on behalf of Pittsford's advocacy team which is comprised of the Superintendent, myself, and representatives from our School Board, our Teachers Association, our Administrators association, and our PTSA.

We are not here to argue against the Common Core standards. Yes- we do agree that each standard should be assessed for developmental appropriateness. This review is long overdue but we thank you for taking this on. However, it is difficult to talk about the merits of common core standards without also discussing the use of these standards to measure teacher and principal effectiveness.

Here is what we want you to know: Our school district put a hold on wonderful initiatives, things that are really great for children, in order to prepare for the common core learning standards. We worked tirelessly to revise our curriculum while attending many workshops to fully understand the shifts that were needed. At the same time that we were attempting to gain a better understanding of the common core learning standards, a new teacher and principal evaluation was set into motion. This resulted in District administrators attending multiple trips to Albany to understand this process; including the parameters surrounding student learning objectives. All of which were moving targets. We were then faced with negotiating the APPR mandates, training our lead evaluators while still maintaining professional learning opportunities for our teachers and principals relative to the Common Core and our revised curriculum. In 2011, this not only cost us time, and forced us to place district initiatives on hold, but we also spent \$200,000 in the process. Additionally, we were challenged with confusion stemming from poor implementation and communication, we faced morale at an all time low, and relationships became strained and tested. Four years later, the training continues, spending continues, changes continue and assessments that were derived for district accountability measures are instead used to evaluate individual teacher and principal performance.

We are headed in the wrong direction with a one size fits all reform agenda. We, the members of the Pittsford Central School District Advocacy Team, would respectfully ask that while reviewing the standards, you also review how the common core state assessments are used. It is our belief that without decoupling these assessments from teacher and principal scores that the standards, regardless of the changes made, will not do what they are intended to do; better prepare our children for their future.

Thank you for your time.