

**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES****October 30, 2015**

**Attendance:** Laura Schulkind, Deirdre d'Albertis, Rick Walker, Joe Phelan, Marvin Kreps and invited guest, Ed Davenport.

**Electives at RHS**

Dr. Davenport met with the committee to share his perspective on the wide range of electives now being offered at the high school. He brought enrollment data from this year and the five years previous (not including the many AP and honors courses that may be counted technically as electives). Electives, broadly speaking, are courses that students take for personal interest or enrichment; they are not required by the state or the school in order to graduate. What trends can we see? As Rick pointed out, we have spent a lot of time on the core offerings this year and last—it is good to understand this part of the district's curriculum as well.

As a general trend we see tremendous interest in Psychology. Art courses tend to be smaller; there may be some thought given to creating different pathways to more specialized offerings in the art department. Clubs and electives might be more closely connected and some teachers have expressed interest in making such connections explicit.

Dr. Davenport outlined the extremely complex task of creating a master schedule each year for the high school. He pointed with some pride to the school's attempt creatively to address conflicts whenever possible, stating that guidance has been flexible in accommodating student requests. With the first run of scheduling about 65% of students are set. That means that many requests are received and that many changes to the initial schedule are in fact made. "Singleton" (one section) courses with the highest level of demand are scheduled first. Of course there are always students who are frustrated in their attempt to take all the courses they desire. Again, guidance tries to find solutions. Language faculty, for instance, have agreed to allow students to attend every other day through a half credit course so as not to have to abandon Spanish or French due to schedule conflicts. Late requests are harder to accommodate once the master schedule is up and running.

Members of the committee noted that this process is not well understood by parents. The fact that the schedule is tailored each year around student demand is worth communicating widely. Being driven by student requests makes the master schedule hard to predict from year to year. Students are known only by their ID numbers as this process unfolds, not by names. No student receives preferential treatment, in other words. The schedule is predicated and built upon identifying the fewest number of conflicts for the good of all.

There was some discussion of AP courses and how the open or modified open enrollment system functions in Rhinebeck, as well as courses that MAY be added at some point in the future. Deirdre asked about exploring the option of APs organized in tandem with nearby schools; this is something that BOCES, in theory, should be able to provide to all districts in our county. Demand has remained high and consistent in Rhinebeck High School for AP coursework. Close to 180 AP exams are administered each year.

This year's junior class will be the first to graduate under new requirement that students must successfully complete four years of both math and science.

Following on our discussion, Dr. Davenport departed with a promise to include specific details about construction of the master schedule in his January or February newsletter home to parents.

#### **Update on BMS Computer Lab**

Marvin reported that Laurie (sp?) Keating just completed a day-long visit to BMS. Progress with the curriculum for the new lab has been interrupted by the MAPP testing that was conducted in that space (two weeks of instruction time lost). The room itself is nearly finished, wiring is being completed. Curriculum materials have been set up correctly and are aligned. The next "big lift" will be to get the "container" projects connected to the curriculum. Keating will return in late November or early December to work with faculty on these challenges. Adherence to best practices is, as Marvin puts it, "a work in progress." We are making measured steps towards the goal. Keating is helping our teachers to create "a tech rich experience" phase by phase this year—due to a late start with the grant itself, Marvin reminded us, this is to be expected. There have been glitches, an expected challenge with new technology. Reliability is much higher now (in terms of stability of the system) and our hard-working tech staff has become ever more rapid in responding to calls for support in the classroom. Teaching TO the problems that arise with technology is part of the point—empowering teachers and students to "build capacity" is crucial. Marvin expects to keep the process moving while managing expectations even as the district works to "deliver what was promised."

#### **Agenda**

- How can this committee interface most productively with CDEP?
- Possibility of cross-district planning with BOCES (Dr. Hooley will be visiting the board soon)
- In an extremely austere fiscal climate, how can the district preserve the academic program? Are there cooperative arrangements/practices that could be tried in Rhinebeck?

**Next Meeting (subject to change): November 17**

Respectfully submitted,

Deirdre d'Albertis

**RHINEBECK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE****Minutes of Meeting of November 4, 2015**

**Present:** Diane Lyons, Rick Walker, Lisa Rosenthal, Joe Phelan, Tom Burnell.

The Committee discussed the following topics: (1) the status of negotiations with the Rhinebeck Administrators' Association; (2) employment conditions of certain district employees who are not members of any bargaining unit; and (3) superintendent evaluation process.

1. **RAA Negotiations:** Joe informed the Committee that an initial negotiation session had been held between representatives of the RAA, and himself and Tom. The balance of the discussion involved the specifics of contract negotiations and, accordingly, is confidential.
2. **Non-Unit Employee Employment Conditions:** This discussion involved the employment histories of particular persons and, accordingly, is confidential.
3. **Superintendent Evaluation Process:** Joe distributed to the Committee materials he had obtained during the recent NYSSBA convention concerning this topic. Due to the length of the discussion of the previous items, the Committee decided to adjourn the meeting at this point, review the materials on their own, and engage in further discussion of this topic at the Committee's next meeting.

**Next Regular Meeting:** November 17, 2015 at noon.

**Dated:** November 5, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Rosenthal



4.2.3.2

SEPTEMBER 28, 2015 Albany, NY

## **Governor Cuomo Announces Launch of Common Core Task Force**

Task Force to Perform Comprehensive Review of Learning Standards, Instructional Guidance and Curricula, and Tests to Improve Implementation and Reduce Testing Anxiety

Governor Cuomo: “The State’s learning standards must be strong, sensible and fair, and parents and teachers should be able to have faith in those standards. This Task Force will ensure that this becomes the reality.”

### **Governor Launches Task Force Website to Encourage Public Participation**

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today launched the Common Core Task Force – a diverse and highly-qualified group of education officials, teachers, parents, and state representatives from across New York that is charged with comprehensively reviewing and making recommendations to overhaul the current Common Core system and the way we test our students. The Task Force will complete its review and deliver its final recommendations by the end of this year.

The Task Force will include members of the Governor's successful New NY Education Reform Commission, which played an instrumental role in developing a blueprint to improve the quality of education for all students through its final report in January 2014. Richard Parsons, who chaired that Commission, will return to lead the Governor's Common Core Task Force. Mr. Parsons is Senior Advisor, Providence Equity Partners Inc. and former Chairman of the Board, Citigroup Inc.

**Mr. Parsons said:** "We can all agree that our students deserve every opportunity they can to learn and grow – and having tough, fair standards is crucial to ensuring that they receive those opportunities. I am happy to serve as chair of the Common Core Task Force, because I believe that this is the opportunity we need to fix New York's education standards and improve the lives and learning outcomes of students across the state. By performing an in-depth review of everything from curriculum to testing, we can lay out exactly what needs to be done to fix the Common Core. I am grateful to Governor Cuomo for asking me to lead this important endeavor, and I am eager to get to work."

Governor Cuomo believes that the learning standards should be strong, accurate and fair, because having the highest standards is critical to ensuring that students are educated and prepared for their futures in college or the workforce. However, the Common Core program's flawed rollout by the State Education Department has caused disruption and anxiety that must be fixed, including testing aligned to the standards.

With that in mind, the Governor has charged the Task Force to:

1. Review and reform the Common Core State Standards;
2. Review New York State's curriculum guidance and resources;
3. Develop a process to ensure tests fit curricula and standards;
4. Examine the impact of the current moratorium on recording Common Core test scores on student records, and make a recommendation as to whether it should be extended;
5. Examine how the State and local districts can reduce both the quantity and duration of student tests, and develop a plan whereby districts include parents in reviewing local tests being administered to analyze those tests' purpose and usefulness; and
6. Review the quality of the tests to ensure competence and professionalism from the private company creating and supplying the tests.

The Governor has directed the Task Force to conduct its process as transparently as possible and to solicit and consider input from regional advisory councils comprised of parents, teachers and educators across the state. A new website ([ny.gov/CommonCoreTaskForce](http://ny.gov/CommonCoreTaskForce)) has been launched to encourage participation, including by allowing visitors to submit comments and recommendations to the Task Force. The Task Force's report will be issued publicly by the end of the year so that it can be reviewed by all and changes can be implemented quickly and effectively.

**Senate Majority Leader John J. Flanagan said:** "The State Senate has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure that education in New York is more student-centric and parent-centric, and that every classroom is led by a professional teacher of the highest quality. Earlier this year, we passed several key pieces of legislation that addressed the unease related to Common Core and the over-testing of students – following up on statewide hearings and a report we had previously issued. In addition, Senate Republicans have worked extremely hard to completely eliminate the GEA, an unfair scheme that hurt our schools.

The overall issue is worthy of additional debate and discussion, and creation of this new panel is another positive step forward. We look forward to working with Governor Cuomo, parents, teachers and other educators to address additional concerns about Common Core, and I am pleased that Senator Marcellino, a former teacher, school board member, and Chairman of the Senate's Education Committee, will play a key role in this comprehensive review."

**Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie said:** "The Assembly Majority has heard the frustrations of parents and educators alike regarding the Common Core implementation in New York State. We remain confident that our public education system and our students will be best served by a collaborative effort of policy makers, parents and educators to determine the reforms that will maximize the historic investments we have made in educating our children. We stand ready to work with the Governor, our state education officials and the new Common Core Task Force to strengthen public education in New York."

### **Representation**

The Task Force includes representation from a broad group of stakeholders, including educators, teachers, parents, State Education Department officials, teachers' union officials, and bipartisan legislators from the Assembly and Senate. Those representatives include:

**Richard D. Parsons, Senior Advisor, Providence Equity Partners, LLC and Former Chairman of the Board of Citigroup, Inc.**

Richard Parsons is a Senior Advisor at Providence Equity Partners, Inc., a

leading private equity investment firm specializing in media, communications and information companies. He is the former Chairman of the Board of Citigroup, Inc., and was the Chairman of the Board and CEO of Time Warner, Inc. Mr. Parsons has held various positions in the private sector as well as state and federal government and served as Chairman of Governor Cuomo's New NY Education Reform Commission. He is also a board member of several private companies and nonprofit organizations.

### **Heather Buskirk, Mohawk Valley Master Teacher; Science Teacher at Johnstown High School**

Heather Buskirk has been teaching for 10 years. She teaches physics and math at Johnstown High School, and is an integral part of designing and teaching at the Learning Project, a STEM academy for Johnstown students. In addition to her school responsibilities, Mrs. Buskirk is an instructional coach in the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery P-TECH program where she works with students and provides support for teachers using project based learning to design and deliver curriculum. Within the New York State Master Teacher Program, Mrs. Buskirk is a member of the Project-Based Learning Professional Learning Team and facilitated a workshop for her peers entitled "Project Based Learning 101." She is also a member of the Master Teacher Program Delegation to the TeachNY Advisory Council, through which the State University of New York has convened state and national experts to ensure that there are clear policies in place that both enable and help sustain exemplary teacher and leader preparation practice and address persistent challenges throughout the education pipeline for students.

### **Geoffrey Canada, President, Harlem Children's Zone**



From 1990 to 2014, Geoffrey Canada served as the President and Chief Executive Officer for the Harlem Children's Zone and is known around the world for his pioneering work helping children and families in Harlem, and as a thought leader and passionate advocate for education reform. Today he continues to serve as President of the HCZ and Promise Academy Boards. Mr. Canada served on Governor Cuomo's New NY Education Reform Commission in 2012 and on the Smart Schools Commission in 2014. In 2011, he was appointed to the New York State Governor's Council of Economic and Fiscal Advisors. In 2006, Mr. Canada was selected by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to serve as co-chair of the Commission on Economic Opportunity, responsible for formulating a plan to significantly reduce poverty. He is also an advisor to and board member of several nonprofit organizations.

#### **Carol L. Conklin-Spillane, Principal, Sleepy Hollow High**

Carol Conklin-Spillane has been Principal of Sleepy Hollow High School since 1994. The school serves a socio-economically and ethnically diverse community in Westchester County and in 2015 was identified as a School of Opportunity. She serves as a consultant to public school districts through Northern Westchester BOCES, specializing in enhancing leadership at the middle and high school level, supporting English language learners, improving school climate, making the shift to block scheduling and providing opportunity through open enrollment. Prior to her tenure in the Public Schools of the Tarrytowns, she was an assistant high school principal and junior high school principal, beginning her career as a special education teacher in 1979. Ms. Conklin-Spillane has been recognized nationally for her achievements in developing school programs and practices that lead to high graduation rates. Under her leadership, in 2008 Sleepy Hollow High School was identified as A

Best Practices High School by The Magellan Foundation; one of three New York State high schools featured as model schools whose practices and outcomes align with research on high school reform and achievement. In 2014 ASCD released a DVD “Common Core Insider HS Math” which tells the story of how Sleepy Hollow High School is transforming teaching and learning to meet new challenges and support student success for all.

## **MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner of the New York State Education Department**

On May 26, 2015, the New York State Board of Regents voted to appoint MaryEllen Elia as Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York (USNY) and she began in her new position on July 6, 2015. USNY comprises more than 7,000 public and independent elementary and secondary schools; 270 public, independent and proprietary colleges and universities; 7,000 libraries; 900 museums; 25 public broadcasting facilities; 3,000 historical repositories; 436 proprietary schools; 52 professions encompassing more than 850,000 licensees plus 240,000 certified educators; and services for children and adults with disabilities. Prior to coming to New York State, Ms. Elia served as superintendent in Hillsborough County, Florida from 2005 to 2015, where she is credited with successfully raising standards and raising student achievement. During her 10-year tenure, Ms. Elia partnered with teachers to develop a comprehensive, multiple measure evaluation system for teachers called Empowering Effective Teachers. Hillsborough County public schools were recognized in Florida and nationally for developing the system, and both U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten have praised the system for the extensive supports it provides for teachers and its

pay structure that incentivizes teachers to take on more challenging positions.

### **Constance Evelyn, Superintendent, Valley Stream School District**

Constance Evelyn assumed the role of Superintendent of the Valley Stream School District in July 2015. She came to Valley Stream from the Auburn Enlarged City School District, where she served as Superintendent of Schools since August 2012. Ms. Evelyn was previously Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction in the Ithaca City School District. She has also served as Middle School Principal in both Oswego and Rome City Schools; as Assistant Principal at Rome Free Academy; and as a Learning Specialist and Special Education teacher in the Bedford Central School District. Ms. Evelyn was selected to serve on Governor Cuomo's Smart Schools Commission in 2014.

### **Catalina R. Fortino, Vice President, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)**

Catalina R. Fortino was elected a NYSUT vice president in April 2014 and before that served as the vice president for education and the director of the United Federation of Teachers' Teacher Center. Ms. Fortino is a nationally recognized expert in professional development, curriculum, assessments and program development in the teaching profession and has distinguished herself among the educators who specialize in school reform for high-needs schools. Before turning her focus to professional development and the Teacher Center, Ms. Fortino was an early childhood teacher, a teacher of bilingual early childhood special education and a bilingual educational evaluator. She has been the chair of the NYSUT Bilingual Committee of Practitioners, the co-chair of the New York State Professional Standards and Practices Board for

Teaching, a member of the New York State Committee of Title I Practitioners and a member of the American Federation of Teachers English Language Learners Taskforce.

### **Kishayna Hazlewood, 3rd Grade Teacher at P.S. 156 in Brooklyn**

Kishayna Hazlewood is a proud public school teacher in her 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. Born and raised in Brownsville Brooklyn, Ms. Hazlewood is strongly committed to the children and families of the community. Her entire teaching career has been in the community, and for the last nine years she has taught third grade at PS 156, a Community Learning school in Brownsville. She serves on P.S. 156's Community Learning School advisory board and is co-chair of the vertical planning team. As a strong believer in equity of education and opportunity for all children, she is highly committed to the success of all of our students. She is also a mother of two sons who are products of the public school system. As a parent she served on her children's School Leadership team. Her oldest son is a recent college graduate and her youngest is in his last year of high school. Ms. Hazlewood holds New York State teaching certifications in both childhood education and special education and is currently a candidate for National Board Certification.

### **Tim Kremer, Executive Director of the New York State School Boards Association**

Tim Kremer has been the executive director of the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) since 1998. Before joining the NYSSBA, Mr. Kremer was employed by the Ohio School Boards Association for nearly 20 years. As NYSSBA's chief executive officer, Mr. Kremer leads the Association's staff of 56 professionals in fulfilling its mission of providing advocacy,

information, leadership development programs and customized consulting services for the state's nearly 700 school boards. Mr. Kremer's areas of expertise include association leadership, legislative advocacy, school board governance, executive recruitment and development, organizational change and public relations.

### **Senator Carl Marcellino, Chair of the Senate Education Committee**

Senator Carl Louis Marcellino was elected to represent the Fifth Senate District on Long Island on March 14, 1995. He is Chairman of one of the Senate's senior committees, the Senate Education Committee and Vice Chairman of the Transportation Committee. Senator Marcellino also serves as a member on the Senate Committees on Rules, Finance, Banks, Consumer Protection, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, Environmental Conservation, and Labor. From 1995 to 2008 he served in the capacity of the Chairman of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee.

### **Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee**

Catherine Nolan represents the 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Queens County, which includes the historic New York City neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Ridgewood, Long Island City, Queensbridge, Ravenswood, Astoria, Woodside, Maspeth, Dutch Kills and Blissville. She was first elected to the Assembly in 1984. Assemblywoman Nolan was appointed Chair of the Assembly's Committee on Education in 2006. She has spearheaded efforts to achieve class size reduction, universal pre-k, middle school initiatives, improve high school graduation rates, student data privacy protections and other measures that will ultimately mean success for the more than three million school

children in New York State. As a parent of a public school student, Assemblywoman Nolan brings a parent's perspective to the ongoing education dialogue. Assemblywoman Nolan was also selected to serve on the New NY Education Reform Commission in 2012 and on the Common Core Implementation Panel in 2014.

### **Samuel Radford III, President, District Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo**

Samuel Radford III currently serves as President of the District Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo, an organization responsible for representing parent interests within the Buffalo Public Schools District. As a matter of public policy, Mr. Radford's interests lay at the intersection of parent engagement, student academic achievement and district-level education policy. A native of Buffalo, Mr. Radford excelled in both public high school and college, served honorably in the United States Marine Corps following his high school graduation. As a teacher, he has taught math at Buffalo's Stepping Stone Academy and has been involved in public school activism since 1990, when he became Chairperson of the Overall Policy Council for Head Start of Western New York. Currently he is Co-Chair for the Millions More Movement Buffalo Local Action Committee and recently participated in President Obama's White House Community Leadership Briefing and served on the White House Community Leadership Council for Education. He is Director of Buffalo's Masten Resource Center of the Community Action Organization of Erie County and the recipient of many community awards.

### **Carrie Remis, Rochester Area Parent & Founder of the Parent Power Project**

Carrie Remis began her career in education in 1994 as an advocate for New York State's community college system, representing both the college presidents and boards of trustees in Albany. A native of Rochester, she returned home to serve on the administration of the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music and the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education. It was as a parent leader in the Rochester City School District that Ms. Remis became concerned about inequities within the public school system and the limited opportunities for meaningful community participation to address these systemic problems. In 2006 she co-founded the Rochester Fund for Educational Accountability, an all-volunteer organization providing technical assistance and training to communities invoking their rights under federal education law. In 2009 she founded the Parent Power Project, aimed at building the advocacy capacity of parent organizations across the state. In 2012, Governor Cuomo appointed Ms. Remis as the parent representative to his New NY Education Reform Commission. Ms. Remis has been a vocal proponent of greater transparency and parental involvement in education policy discussions. In 2013, Ms. Remis co-chaired Mayor Warren's Early Learning Council which recommended city-wide measures to eliminate barriers to high quality early childhood education.

### **Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFL-CIO**

Randi Weingarten is president of the 1.6 million-member American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, which represents teachers; paraprofessionals and school-related personnel; higher education faculty and staff; nurses and other healthcare professionals; local, state and federal government employees; and early childhood educators. Prior to her election as AFT president in 2008, Ms.

Weingarten served for 12 years as president of the United Federation of Teachers, AFT Local 2, representing approximately 200,000 educators in the New York City public school system, as well as home child care providers and other workers in health, law and education. Ms. Weingarten holds degrees from Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the Cardozo School of Law. She worked as a lawyer for the Wall Street firm of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan from 1983 to 1986. She is an active member of the Democratic National Committee and numerous professional, civic and philanthropic organizations. Born in 1957 and raised in Rockland County, N.Y., Ms. Weingarten now resides on Long Island and in Washington, D.C.

### **Nancy L. Zimpher, Chancellor, State University of New York (SUNY)**

In June 2009 Nancy L. Zimpher became the 12th Chancellor of the State University of New York. With nearly 463,000 students and 64 colleges and universities, SUNY is the nation's largest comprehensive system of higher education. Chancellor Zimpher is active in numerous state and national education organizations, and is a recognized leader in the areas of teacher preparation, urban education, and university-community engagement – including as a leader of Higher Ed for Higher Standards, which serves as a vehicle for mobilizing support of the Common Core Standards. Prior to coming to SUNY, Dr. Zimpher served as president of the University of Cincinnati, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and executive dean of the Professional Colleges and dean of the College of Education at The Ohio State University. She has authored or co-authored numerous books, monographs, and academic journal articles on teacher education, urban education, academic leadership, and school/university partnerships.



**A transcript of the Governor's video remarks is available below:**

Hi, I'm Andrew Cuomo, your Governor and more importantly I am the father of 3 great girls and I have sat at the kitchen table with them many a night reviewing their tests and homework. So I know public education is one of the most important roles that government performs.

This country is in the midst of an education revolution, as is this state. I have spoken to parents, teachers, superintendents, and school boards, all across the state and I know that the situation is critical – I have heard the message clearly: we must take action and we must take action now to fix our schools. And we will.

Let me give you some history on the matter. First in 2009 government and educators nationwide began developing a new manner of teaching. The goal was to ensure that all students have access to high standards that prepare them for college and for the workforce and that every child, in every zip code, has a quality education. These became known as common core standards. The federal government then made funding contingent on accepting these or similar standards. It also made funding contingent on teacher evaluations that used test data along with other measures of practice. This became known as the federal Race to the Top program.

In 2010 our State, like most states in the country, adopted the Race to the Top program. The program was to be implemented by the State Education Department, which is referred to as SED. This new system dramatically overhauled the status quo. These were massive changes in public education that would have been difficult to enact even if perfectly administered – which they were not. Now, I believe the goal is the right one – high standards in

education – we all want that. But the way it was instituted failed.

My father used to say, “there are a lot of good ideas – the key is making them work.” The implementation of common core just did not work.

Like other people nationwide, our students, teachers, administrators, and parents are confused and anxious. The evidence of failure is everywhere. Today many teachers and superintendents across the state will rightfully point out errors in the program. They will point out that they did not receive enough support to fully understand and implement this dramatic transition. It is time to overhaul the common core program and also the way we test our students.

As a parent I believe our education system tests our students too often and for too long, and we should relieve the unnecessary pressure on our children that detracts from the time spent learning. There is no doubt that tests or assessments have a role in education – I understand that – but I think the number of tests should be reduced, including the number of local tests.

Last year, to lessen the anxiety of students, last year we passed a five year moratorium on test scores because we didn’t want artificially low scores recorded on our student’s academic records. We passed a law to improve transparency by directing SED to release the tests to the public and end the secrecy around the system and to make sure that teacher evaluations accounted for the different demographics of our schools – we have schools with different poverty levels, different types of students, different types of language proficiencies, et cetera. Now, I believe these were all good changes, but they weren’t enough and we must do more to reform the system because there is still too much disruption, anxiety and confusion.

Other states are also reevaluating the common core standard. We must do the same in New York. Today I am formally announcing a new Task Force comprised of members from my education commission, headed by commission chair Richard Parsons. The Task Force will include educators, teachers, parents, officials from the State Education Department and the teacher's unions, and bipartisan legislators from both the Assembly and the Senate. It will also represent every corner of the state of New York.

The agenda of the Task Force is straight forward and clear: to overhaul the common core system – to do a total reboot. Specifically the charge to the common core Task Force is as follows:

First, we need to complete a top to bottom review and where necessary reform the common core standards. Everyone agrees we want higher standards – including, by the way, the teachers unions and the education reformers – but the strategy must be relevant to our state. There is nothing common about our state. We should have New York standards developed by New York state and local professionals for New York's students. These changes should not be made in name only but in substance. We should make sure that those standards ensure students educated in New York State schools can compete in college, or for jobs, or with students from any other state or any other city across the world.

Second, the Task Force will review the state's curriculum guidance to the make sure it fits the standards. Importantly this review must focus on and ensure that SED provides teachers with the appropriate and sufficient support they need to instruct their students. Before a student can be presented with new material, the teacher must first understand it and feel comfortable with it

– and that did not happen here.

Third, the Task Force must develop a process to ensure student tests fit the curricula and standards.

Fourth, the Task Force will examine the impact of the current moratorium on Common Core grading to see whether or not it should be extended.

Fifth, the Task Force will consider how the state and local districts can reduce the number of tests in the state and also reduce the amount of time students spend taking the tests, because some are absurdly long. Also, the Task Force should develop a plan with the local districts to review all tests – state tests and local tests – to go through them with the parents to analyze the tests' purpose and usefulness with the goal of reducing the total test burden.

Sixth, the Task Force will review the quality of state tests themselves to make sure the private contractor the state is using is doing a professional and competent job.

I have asked the Task Force to make the entire process as transparent as possible. It must communicate with parents, teachers, and educators all across the state. The Task Force will issue its report by the end of the year so we can make these positive changes as quickly as possible. The report will be publically available so it can be reviewed by all.

I believe teaching is an important and a hard job. At the same time we must maintain accountability in our system. Teaching is a hard job. Now, don't be confused by what you have heard from disagreements with Albany lobbyists. There's no doubt I have my differences with the lobbyists. I have for a long time but that is a different story and that has nothing to do with how I feel

about the state's teachers. My mother was a school teacher. I have the greatest respect for the occupation and the dedication teachers have for their students and their craft. I believe teachers who are performing well should be incentivized and should be given bonuses. We are enacting the first teacher bonus system in the state. This January I will propose giving teachers tax credits for the money they spend on classroom supplies out of their pockets. It is also critical that teachers who need assistance should be given the support they need. While the teacher evaluation systems are nationally recognized as a step in the right direction, I believe it must be done correctly and fairly. It is critical that teacher evaluations support teachers in improving their practices, not punish them. At the same time we should ensure all students have access to high quality teachers.

This year's transition has weighed especially heavy on the teacher in the classroom, so by law we have directed SED to implement a new teacher evaluation system that doesn't force the teacher to teach to the test but rather tests the student on what they learned in the classroom. The evaluation should be fair to the teacher and the student and should include observations of the teacher's classroom performance from other trained educators. SED's evaluation process will also provide the teacher with the right to appeal an evaluation under circumstances where the evaluation is flawed or unfair. No one – no one – wants an evaluation system that is inaccurate or unfair.

SED has a new commissioner who has traveled the state meeting with parents and teachers and administrators. I have spoken with her and I think she gets it and I am hopeful the new evaluation system will work fairly and effectively for all.

There is no doubt that our education system should grow and evolve. I understand that. The way I was taught in elementary school is not the way it is today. However, I also understand that change is hard especially in a very complex system and it must be carefully enacted. That did not happen here. We must fix it and we must fix it now.

My friends, my goal and I'm sure your goal is to have the best education system in the country for all our children. New York must complete a transition into the modern education era and this transition must happen in a way that instills confidence and not anxiety in our students and parents and makes teachers feel supported and rewarded, not criticized. I am eager for the Task Force to begin its work. I urge parents and educators to participate in the process because this is about our children's future and their education to determine their ability to compete in the world of tomorrow. They deserve every advantage we can give them. I would do anything for my three daughters and I know you would do anything for your children. So let's give them a chance.

I believe at the end of the day, as complicated as things seem to be, is as simple as they are. There is always a basic truth and the basic truth here is all of this is not about politics and not about democrats and republicans, it's not about the bureaucracy, and it's not about politicians or union officials. Education is about the kids. Education is about the kids and if we remember that and if we are guided by that, the solutions are easy. The goal should be simple: the best education for our children. That's it. And I will do everything I can to make that a reality. My grandfather used to say, "our children are our legacy – we live for them." He was right. Let's fix the problems. Let's lead the way. I know we will – together.

# Contact the Governor's Press Office

NYC Press Office: 212.681.4640

Albany Press Office: 518.474.8418

✉ **Contact us by email:**

[press.office@exec.ny.gov](mailto:press.office@exec.ny.gov)



## Common Core Task Force Input

All information submitted through this form, excluding contact information, may be posted on the Common Core Task Force website or may otherwise be made public as part of the Task Force deliberations.

Feedback will be accepted through November 30, 2015.

**First Name**

**Last Name**

**Organization / Affiliation \***

**Title \***

**Email Address \***

**Telephone Number**

**City**

**State**



**Zip Code \***

**I am a: \***

- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Other

**\*If Other, please specify:**

**May we use your name when publishing your comment / suggestion? \***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Which charge of the Task Force does your suggestion fall under? \***

- ☐ Common Core Standards Review
- ☐ State Guidance to Districts & Teachers
- ☐ Student Assessments Fitting Standards & Local Curricula
- ☐ Freeze on Recording Student Test Scores & Parent Review of Tests
- ☐ Reduction of Number & Duration of Tests
- ☐ Quality of State Tests Created By Vendor

**What is your proposal / solution? (500 word limit) \***

**What is the intended outcome of your proposal / solution and what stakeholders would it help? (500 word limit)**

**If implemented, how should this proposal ultimately be evaluated for success or**

**failure? (500 word limit)**

**Upload additional testimony or supporting documents.**

No file selected.

Files must be less than 5 MB.

Allowed file types: pdf doc docx ppt pptx xls xlsx.







## Share Your Experience

Tell us your story on why reviewing and reforming the current Common Core learning standards is important to you.

By submitting your story, you give permission for it to be used in future materials regarding the Common Core Task Force. Feedback will be accepted through November 30, 2015.

**I am a: \***

- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Other

**If Other, please specify:**

**Share Your Story (500 word limit) \***

**E-Mail \***

**Zip Code \***

**Sign Up**

- ☐ Yes, I would like to receive emails from the Governor's Office





## **New York wants to hear from you about Common Core learning standards.**

Feedback will be accepted through November 30, 2015.

By submitting your comments, you give permission for it to be used in future materials regarding the Common Core Task Force.

**Name \***

**I am a: \***

- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Other

**Organization**

**Email \***

**Zip Code \***

**Testimony (500 word limit) \***

## Upload File

No file selected.

Files must be less than 3 MB.

Allowed file types: pdf doc docx ppt pptx.

