



## **New York State Allies for Public Education**

### **Meeting with NYS Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

As leaders of the opt out movement and representatives of over 50 grassroots groups, NYSAPE represents the views of the New York parents who seek an immediate end to the overemphasis on harmful testing practices and the inappropriate use of test score data. Although the use of test scores in teacher and principal evaluations has served to exacerbate the narrowing of curriculum and test prep in our schools, it has NOT led to greater academic achievement, student engagement or parent and educator satisfaction.

In addition, since the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and Common Core based state assessments in New York, disproportionately greater numbers of students of color, special education students, English Language Learners and students living in poverty have experienced failing test scores as compared to their white, economically advantaged peers. It is disturbing that rather than remaining constant over time, the rate of failure for vulnerable students has grown disproportionately larger and the achievement gap widened. This raises serious questions of racial and economic bias in the New York State testing program and the use of these scores for making determinations about student achievement.

New York State parents understand the Common Core Learning Standards. Parent opposition to experimental learning standards based on questionable research is not a “communication” or “implementation” issue. Parents do not see the value or reliability of information gleaned from compelling young students to sit for hours and hours of developmentally inappropriate testing, nor do they accept the use of their children as tools for teacher evaluation.

Therefore, New York State parents will continue to refuse and oppose state testing in grades 3-8 until substantial and concrete changes are made. We urge NYSED leadership and the NYS Board of Regents to:

- **Ensure that standardized test scores are being used in accordance with research and evidence based practice**
- **Convene an independent review of the NYS career and college ready benchmarks to ensure that the standards used to determine proficiency are research based and appropriate**

- **Reduce the length of and time spent on state tests to align with recognized developmentally and pedagogically appropriate levels and provide full transparency for the state tests by allowing them to be made public**
- **Require that school districts notify parents & guardians on an annual basis of their right to refuse state standardized tests on behalf of their child(ren) without penalty to the students, teachers, or school districts**
- **Amend education regulations to require parental notification for sharing of any personally identifiable student data and information**
- **Insist that the legislature revise the APPR law so that teachers and principals are not evaluated by student test scores**
- **Commission a task force including parents, educators, and stakeholders to study the Common Core Learning Standards and make recommendations to adjust and adopt NYS standards**

We are hopeful that the New York State Education Department will utilize the feedback and concerns of the families of more than 200,000 students in Grades 3-8 who have made their opposition to test-driven public education abundantly clear.

**New York State Allies for Public Education**

A coalition of over 50 grassroots groups across New York State who believe in the power of public education

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