



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

MARCUS J. MOLINARO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

January 17, 2014

Dr. John B. King, Jr.
Commissioner of Education and
President of the University of the State of New York
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner King:

Over the past several months there have been numerous forums throughout Dutchess County, focused on the implementation of Common Core. Clearly, it is an issue that has sparked great concern among the parents and educators of Dutchess County.

As County Executive and parent of two school aged children, one receiving special education programming, I have worked to educate myself on the issues surrounding Common Core. I have spoken with other parents and educators who are passionate advocates for their children. I have heard stories of teachers being overwhelmed and feeling unprepared. I have read, with concern, debates over testing regimens and the privacy of data. And most importantly, I have heard the cries of parents whose kids of all learning levels come home from school confused and burdened by a new curriculum and standards heaped upon them seemingly overnight.

Additionally, I wonder if adequate thought has been given to the "downward pressure" Common Core places on the growing need for Early Intervention and Special Education Pre-K services – a large unfunded mandate on county governments.

After careful consideration and a lot of listening, I have come to the conclusion that the State Education Department must fully reconsider Common Core standards. Too many aspects are being implemented without the necessary public dialogue, involvement of all appropriate stakeholders and investment from parents and students.

Finally, I fear the level of confusion, concern and unrest among parents and educators threatens to seriously undermine confidence in our educational system. Our schools are the center of civic life and should be a place that brings us together, not tears us apart.

With these concerns in mind, I add my voice to so many others and call on the State Education Department to stop the process and fully reconsider the implementation of Common Core.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Molinaro", written over a large, loopy flourish that extends to the left.

Marcus J. Molinaro
Dutchess County Executive