

Good evening.

To start, I want you to know that I am a mother of 4 children ages 8 to 15. I was here in Binghamton two years ago when our former Commissioner and members of the Board of Regents wanted to “hear” from us about our concerns with Common Core. And yet, here we are again. Nothing has changed, except that our children have lost another two years of a meaningful education, and our former Commissioner is now charged with overseeing ALL of the children in our country, not just here in New York State.

We recognize this charade for what it really is...a stall tactic. We know that the longer the state can put off the noticeably vocal concerns and outrage of parents and teachers, the more entrenched it will become. The state can attempt to rename, rebrand, and send out “tool kits” all the while pretending to “listen” but we, as parents, will continue to do the only thing we can do, attend these meaningless dog and pony shows, and refuse the tests.

I would like to remind those here that back in early 2008, then Vice Chancellor, Merryl Tisch, asked former Board of Regent, Saul Cohen, to lead a team of New York educators, administrators, and professors in a Regents Standards Review and Revision initiative to create what may have been the country’s best standards for English Language Arts and ESL. They were tasked to do the same with other subjects. They spent almost two years seeking legitimate and meaningful feedback from stakeholders around the state and drafting the ELA standards. The team presented their work in December of 2009 to which Merryl Tisch said was “Brilliant!”

But then, the project died in exchange for \$700 million dollar carrot from the federal government.

The Common Core standards were developed behind closed doors, led by David Coleman, now president of the College Board and funded with over \$1 billion from the Gates Foundation and over \$3 billion of our tax dollars. The standards were quietly and quickly thrown together, using a few teachers and professors from around the country to create the illusion that they had any meaningful input rather than just being a rubber stamp.

That isn't my definition of "local control."

With four children, the decline in learning over the last five years has been demonstrably noticeable. Test prep is part of the daily routine.

Regurgitating unimaginative answers from "informational text" devoid of context, while using formulaic writing is the "critical thinking" rhetoric that supporters would have us believe. The same goes for giving students one source material and implying it is the only viable place from which to draw conclusions.

Supporters of the standards are quick to highlight that common core math is now narrower in content and deeper in thinking. It might sound "rigorous" but what I have found is that with a focus on multiple methods rather than the BEST method to solve problems in order to be labeled "proficient," fewer math concepts are taught. In fact, writers of the common core math standards did not see a need for students to go beyond Algebra I. Yet, these are supposed to be "higher" standards?

Our children are being "trained" to satisfy a workforce as future employees, not educated to think for themselves or gain knowledge necessary to be a future employer or entrepreneur. And people thought the achievement gap was wide before...

I have tried to find anyone who can show me evidence that these standards are effective and will prepare students with the well-rounded education they need in the long-term.

I am still waiting...