

My name is Steve Paz. I'm a Central NY parent and educator. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to speak about the Common Core this evening.

New Yorkers have lost faith in the State Education Department's ability to act in the best interests of students and our communities. The evidence is clear.

Consider the intense negative feedback 2 years ago that forced Dr. King to cancel the remaining dates on his Common Core tour across the state.

Consider the number of educational forums held last year protesting state aid funding tied to testing results. Forums that often morphed into venues for communicating outrage and dissatisfaction with the Common Core and the tests associated with it.

Consider the over 200,000 parents who opted out of Common Core testing.

Our new commissioner says things will change. She has plan to fix this debacle:

What is it?

A rebrand of the Common Core. Rebranding isn't change. It's a gimmick to mask the original product in a prettier package.

Hiring a new test vendor YET still using the tests for all the same purposes that got us here in the first place. That isn't change either.

Inviting public comment on the Common Core by creating a survey that literally takes hours to complete. I guess if the tests are too long, the survey should be too? That doesn't sound like change to me either.

Last month, as I listened to the first connectny broadcast on PBS , I heard panelist Bianca Tanis remind us what real change is. She reminded us that high standards are MORE than just a set of written aspirational goals. High standards must be coupled with real change-- like reducing class sizes, providing better funding for schools, and making a real commitment to fighting poverty--which almost every expert in the field agrees is what will make or break student success.

As an elementary special education teacher and as a parent of two school age children, who are in the middle of this horrible debacle, I see the problem on the education front and as a parent. Here's where I see the change. Less creative thinking. Less creative teaching--thanks to the many flaws of our Common Core

teaching modules. Less time for arts and music. Less recess. We're talking about kids here. They only get one shot at being a kid. We only get one shot at making sure we give them a well-rounded quality education.

We've all heard this definition of insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result.

So I'd like to respectfully ask your task force to pass this message to the Governor, SED, and the Board of Regents:

Have the courage and moral fortitude to abandon this path of "rebranding" and focus on rebuilding the public's trust by developing a set of standards that are developmentally appropriate, attainable, and decoupled from teacher, principal, or school evaluations. Return the standards to their one true and valid purpose--ensuring children get a developmentally appropriate and sound education.

If the commissioner and the state education department continue to do the same old thing, how can we truly expect a different result.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Steve Paz