

Hello I am Tonya Wilson, a parent of three girls living in the Camillus NY area, a suburb of Syracuse.

We have the pleasure of attending West Genesee Central School district; a district rich in excellent teachers, talented and well-rounded students, a district rich in academic opportunities, music opportunities, fine arts opportunities, and athletic opportunities. Our SI is always reminding us that we have a 98% graduation rate to be proud of and yet..... Close to 36% on average in our 3-8th graders are not meeting Common Core Academic Standards. This trend of not meeting the standards has barely changed over the last three school years.

Socio economics have been touted as the cause for this level of proficiency and yet we are only at an 18% poverty rate in our community. So I stand here today to point out that there is something drastically wrong with the NYS ED measuring stick, the ELA & Math tests. Standardization of assessing our diverse students moves us further and further away from creativity and innovations that will equate with literacy.

Having spent 10 years, this year as our last year in the same elementary school, I have seen first-hand the changes in curriculum choices, delivery of those curriculum choices, the error riddled and ambiguous NYS ED ENGAGE NY MODULES, changes in parental involvement, and the resistance and hesitation for dialog between teachers and parents on what is really going on in the classroom or teachers concerns for the standardized tests that are now linked so heavily to the teachers APPR. The increased use of DATA POINTS for school success moves us away from student and teacher engagement. In ten years I have been able to develop a relationship with over 30+ teachers. Some years my girls have had the same teacher for the same grade, and yet I saw dramatic changes in delivery.

I have three very diverse students, my oldest, who really has never wanted to excel in school, my middle daughter who has always pushed herself to her best, always performed well her classes, always made high marks in her academic grads, and yet was continually defeated by state mandated standardized assessment and state mandated standardized AIS service interventions due to her

fear of tests. It was not until I learned I could REFUSE/OPT out of those interventions that this fight began three years ago.

I have seen first -hand how AIS in the elementary schools can indeed reduce a child's interest, confidence and performance, taking away the creative and innovative opportunities for our children.

Then there is my youngest daughter who barely meets the needs of special education, but she does and thankfully gets one on one instruction or modifications where needed. However, once I learned more about the removal of those modifications for standardized testing, I again had more reason to REFUSE or OPT out.

I have seen first-hand how technology has changed the connections in the classroom. The use of Smart boards, dry erase boards, lap tops, iPad, desk tops, computer adaptive testing, all of which is not shared with the parents to really know what is being asked of our children or what they might be working on. Technology has a way of removing the interactions of teachers to students and students to students when their focus shifts to what is on the screen in front of them. Rather than what or who is there to share the educational experience and opportunity.

But enough about my story..... I need to throw out some buzz words or topics that need consideration and changing. Trust, Transparency, Quality, Over Testing, Validity

Are you listening? Is the Governor going to really hear us? We have been shouting the same stories for years....

OPT OUT REFUSAL will soar if changes are not made into law this next year.... We have lost so much time on this failing measuring stick.... The needle is not moving...

Implementation flawed or not, costs have grown every year, and yet success rates are staying the same, year after year.

50% for APPR is too high when only 20% of our teaching staff actually teaches ELA & MATH, in our district the other 80% of our teachers are measured by NYS HS REGENTS results, which fortunately has an 85% passing rate.... So why worry about it right???? APPR should not be linked to student test scores. The Regents Exams and REGENTS ONLY DIPLOMA are whole other three minutes.

Local control of local concerns is necessary to get the changes that are needed locally – SED ties the hands of the local school boards far too much with mandates, so that they too listen.... But do not respond or hear what we are saying...

Special Education Growth is not measured by a standardized test that removes the modifications that help that student gain growth over time.

The teach to the test mentality and reality will not change by changing vendors in the year 2016-2017 just as and shortening the tests by a question or two this coming spring will not improve the validity or quality of the assessments.

QUALITY AND VALIDITY

COMMON CORE STANDARDS NEED TO BE SCRAPPED for something that can be created by the teachers teaching our students. Who knows more about what those kids know than the ones teaching them or raising them?

Fiscal Equity and the states delivery of equitable funds, and then the responsible allocation of those funds within the districts so that they are used to the best advantage of the STUDENT success is a necessity. Millions and millions of dollars have been lost to our districts due to the GEA or lack of Fiscal Equity.

Until the curriculum has been rewritten, therefore dropping the Copy written CC Standards, until they are age, grade and developmentally appropriate. We will refuse.

Until the amount of assessments from September to June is reduced our confidence and trust in the system will not be improved.

Until the results are not tied to teacher evaluations, our trust in the system will not be improved.

Parents, teachers, NY stakeholders are here to advocate for better policies today. We have lost too much time and too much money on what has proven to be a failure.. Our children and teachers are more than any test score.....

I will continue to stand with the OPT OUT MOVEMENT and do everything I can to communicate within our community to do what they feel is in the best interest of their children and students.

Let me leave you with the experts..... Dr. Milgram, Dr. Slotky, Dr. Petsa, Dr. Luksik..... I urge you to talk to them, ask them why they did not sign off on the standards or testing measures...

How are you going to regain our trust?

How are you going to overcome the lack of transparency of your education and political agendas?

How are we going to reinstate quality public education that existed pre CCSS?

When is enough, enough? When will we stop the over testing of our NYS Students?

Where is the validity of your transparency, quality standards, and teacher evaluations?

Why is Governor Cuomo ignoring the research?

Thank you

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