

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. I'm pleased to see such a large turnout despite the significant challenges of very short notice, an inconvenient time, and an out of the way location for a lot of people. Our presence here is a testament to our commitment.

I'm having a sense of deja vu. Most of us have done this before and we are painfully aware that this "listening tour" is meant only to placate us. Many of us were here when John King pretended to listen to us. We weren't soothed then, and we hardly expect to be soothed now. The State Ed Department has a reputation for not listening.

Do you really want to know how the people in the state feel about common core? Anti common core websites have flooded the internet. Hundreds of thousands of letters, emails and internet posts have been sent and shared. Board of Ed meetings are consumed by common core. Newspapers are thick with common core articles and discussions. Our state legislators have been inundated from parents and teachers. Governor Cuomo has heard us loud and clear. And if that's not enough, more than 200,000 students voiced their objection to common core and high stakes testing when they refused last year's state math and ELA testing.

We are here so you know we are not going away. So you know we are not intimidated by obstacles or tactics. We're here because we want you to listen to us and respond to our concerns, rather than suggest that we just don't understand or that better PR would somehow make it more palatable. We want our local schools back. We want our children to love school again. We want age-appropriate standards and an environment in which the child is more important than the bubble sheet. We want tested and proven standards. When I ask my Regent for statistically significant evidence to corroborate his claims that the standards work, I do not want to hear him tell me that his friends like it, as he did two weeks ago at a public forum.

We want a curriculum that inspires our children, not one which kills the joy of learning or squashes children's innate intellectual curiosity. We want a classroom filled with magic and wonder, with an understanding that they are after all, children, and not robots that must blindly comply without thought or feeling. We want standards that respect our children and their childhood. **THERE ARE NO DO OVERS.**

I'm here for another reason. I believe in second chances. This is your second chance to truly listen to us, to change the course of this failed reform. This is your second chance to protect our children and to stand up for them and for what's right. **YOUR** chance to put our children ahead of politics. Make the most of it.