

I hope that you took the time to read over my ‘cover letter’ and my resume. I feel that I have a wide variety of education experiences to draw from as evidenced by those two documents. Below are some of my views on issues that I have heard others bring up and deem as critical issues.

- Where accountability is concerned I have some very clear notions of who I am accountable to.

In my teaching position I have always felt very strongly that I work for the parents of my district first and foremost, not the district office that signs my check. That will not change when I become a member of NYS Board of regents. The parents and children are the only ones I am ultimately accountable to. My reputation in my district is that one of my greatest strengths is the relationships I form with the kids and families that I work with.

I would keep the lines of communication open. I will remain informed the same way I always have: by listening. I listen to individual parents, parent groups, social media groups, articles, essays, phone calls, emails, etc. It is that quality which helps me form the close ties I do with the parents in my community (both where I teach and where I live). I also believe that I have acted upon what I’ve heard and listened to and will continue to do so.

It is through communication that relationships are formed and maintained.

- Where data collection is concerned I support the parental right of notification and consent regarding the collection and sharing of personally identifiable student information with third party vendors. Too long has information been sent home that has fine print that means: “Not signing or responding means that you give your consent.” Quite honestly, that is one of the things that truly angers me. In my opinion both personally and professionally it should be more along the lines of: “If we do not get a response then it means you do not give permission.”

Any time data of that manner is going to be collected consent should be clear and concise. Furthermore, what that data will truly be used for, how it will be used, who will have access to it, and who will be using it must be clearly communicated. Our political “leaders” and even education officials at the district level have at times been less than forthcoming with the whole truth.

- I am 100% supportive of an independent study of the Common Core Learning Standards by a panel of NY education practitioners and developmental psychology experts, as well as a study of the costs of the curriculum, exams and tests.

Truth be told all of that should have been done before it was unleashed on the children, their parents, and public education. Perhaps if proper procedures and accepted protocols had been followed from the onset we would need this conversation now.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ1Upn9Br24&list=PLFQ\\_e-HFMqkRi-Nr0PoETMcgPAOx7fhu3&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ1Upn9Br24&list=PLFQ_e-HFMqkRi-Nr0PoETMcgPAOx7fhu3&index=6)

- While I may not be able to describe what I believe to be the ideal and appropriate length and format for the state standardized exams for children in grades 3-8 I am not without some thoughts on this matter.

To use a Sherlock Holmes quote as an analogy, “when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth?” (From *The Sign of the Four*). In other words I know some of what it is not as well as some of what it should be.

- \* It is certainly not a 3 day 80 minutes /day minimum mind numbing marathon.
- \* It is not multiple choice questions written with “tricking” the test taker in mind. It is one thing to provide reasonable alternate answers, it is another to provide alternate choices that are so nuanced even fairly well educated adults are not sure what the answer is (and yes I’ve seen numerous examples of this)a
- \* I know in ELA that questions should not be written two, and sometimes three, grade levels above the grade a child is in (So we need age/grade appropriate questions).
- \* In math we do not combine three, four, and even five different skills into ONE question. Once again, it is a matter of common sense and brain development. In my opinion, many recent “math” tests punish those that are poor readers. They may fully understand the steps of a mathematics algorithm, but get utterly confused by the reading. I am not saying that we should not have word problems, nor am I saying that we should not encourage the use of rich vocabulary, but as in ELA we need realistic reading levels.

I do not have all the answers but I know what I don’t know;  
and that in and of itself I consider to be a strength.

- I believe I have made it clear in my writings, in videos, and in public speaking engagements that I am in complete support of the right of parents to decide whether their children will participate in the New York State standardized exams especially in grades 3-8. I also understand that high school regents exams may require a different approach.
- Students with disabilities, many of whom are not able to pass a Common Core-aligned Regents exam, even at a modified passing score, should be able to receive a diploma?

I have always been a firm believer in an alternate diploma path. Our current system of requiring every child receiving a regent's diploma I feel is misguided as it does not recognize other strengths children and young adults may have. I would love to see the local diploma come back into our school; I'd love to see greater investment into our BOCES and trade programs as well. We must have a legitimate Special Education Certificate/Diploma that recognizes their honest and sincere efforts. Many of these learning challenged students overcome things on a daily basis that many of us cannot even imagine. To not honor and recognize them with a diploma is, to me, unfathomable.

*I hope this helps you decide as to whether you can support me or not. I encourage to reach out to me via Facebook; there I have essays, links, and papers dedicated to education.*

*I can also be found on twitter under @hornigoldteach.*

*I even have other YouTube videos that can be found by searching "John Sheffield off the cuff."*

*Most importantly thank you for taking the time to read though this material. I hope you read the "extra stuff" too.*

*Either way you deserve all the credit in the world for being part of this process. It is you that makes it work. It is you who are your child's biggest advocate, your public schools biggest advocate, and your community's biggest advocate.*

*It doesn't matter as much to me if you support me as it does that you are taking time to be involved! Make your voice heard!*

*John*