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Cuomo: Common Core 'is not working, and must be fixed'

2015-03-04-EMB-Cuomo5.JPG

File photo: Gov. Andrew Cuomo talks about raising the minimum wage during the Fight for Fair Pay rally at Solvay-Geddes Community Youth Center, Wednesday, March 4, 2015. Today, he called for a comprehensive review of the way the Common Core teaching standards have been implemented in New York. (*Ellen M. Blalock | eblalock@syracuse.com*)

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on September 03, 2015 at 1:12 PM, updated September 03, 2015 at 1:38 PM

SYRACUSE, N.Y. -- Gov. Andrew Cuomo today called for a comprehensive review of the **Common Core** teaching program because it "is not working and must be fixed."

In his call for changes, Cuomo continued to lay the blame for New York's Common Core problems on the state's Department of Education -- the sole state agency that he does not directly control -- rather than the teaching methods themselves.

"A growing chorus of experts have questioned the intelligence of (the state Education Department's) Common Core program and objective educators across the state have found the implementation problematic, to say the least," Cuomo said in a statement released early this afternoon.

To that end, he plans to use his own "education commission" to review the Common Core implementation in classrooms and role in standardized tests. He said that commission would report back to him in time to introduce new policy early next year.

The announcement comes a week after **a Baldwinsville teacher shared frustrations** and worries from fellow teachers with Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul at the New York State Fair.

In today's statement, Cuomo did not lay blame directly on the state's new education commissioner, **MaryEllen Elia**, who he said has inherited the problem.

Elia has **criticized parents and schools officials** for supporting the opt-out movement, and is taking steps to combat it through legal means.

Cuomo, by contrast, said today he sympathizes with parents so frustrated they are allowing students to skip state-required exams.

"We must have standards for New York's students, but those standards will only work if people -- especially parents -- have faith in them and in their ability to educate our children," Cuomo said. "The current Common Core program does not do that. It must."

Here's Cuomo statement in full:

STATEMENT FROM GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO ON THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

"There has been an ongoing discussion about Common Core Standards nationwide, and in this state as well. I have said repeatedly my position is that while I agree with the goal of Common Core Standards, I believe the implementation by the State Education Department (SED) has been deeply flawed. The more time goes on, the more I am convinced of this position.

"A growing chorus of experts have questioned the intelligence of SED's Common Core program and objective educators across the state have found the implementation problematic, to say the least. The new Commissioner of Education has inherited this problem and I understand has been meeting with parents, educators and students, and has heard the same concerns. Recently, SED has made comments about organized efforts to have parents choose to opt out of standardized tests. While I understand the issue and SED's valid concern, I sympathize with the frustration of the parents.

"We must have standards for New York's students, but those standards will only work if people – especially parents – have faith in them and in their ability to educate our children. The current Common Core program does not do that. It must.

"The fact is that the current Common Core program in New York is not working, and must be fixed. To that end, the time has come for a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Common Core Standards, curriculum, guidance and tests in order to address local concerns. I am taking this action not because I don't believe in standards, but because I do.

"In the past, I employed an Education Commission to make substantive, unbiased recommendations on reforms to our education system. It has worked very well. I will ask a representative group from that Commission, including education experts, teachers, parents, the Commissioner of Education and legislative representatives to review the issues raised above and provide recommendations in time for my State of the State Address in January."

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