

President PHILIP RUMORE



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MEMO TO: New York State Legislators

FROM: Philip Rumore, President, BTF

RE: This Can't Be True

After all the blunders, damage to our students and back-of-the-hand treatment of legislators, we are informed that all of the incumbent Regents may be reappointed. This would be a slap in the face to our students, parents and educators. We are confident you won't support this action.

If, for some reason, some mistakenly believe that the Regents addressed the concerns of legislators, parents, teachers, and students they have been intentionally misled.

I assume that you have a full copy of the Regents Report "Adjustment Options to Common Core Implementation (2/10/14)" www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2014/February2014/214p12hea3.pdf.

False Belief: The Regents have eliminated the use of high stakes tests for students. (#4)

The Truth: Districts may use state 3-8 standardized tests for making promotion or placement decisions but also must use something in addition. Therefore, 99% of the decisions for student promotion or placement can be based on NYS standardized tests and 1% on any other factor. (#5)

False Belief: The Regents have made significant adjustments for English Language Learners (ELL). (#7, 8)

The Truth: The Regents will develop Language Arts assessments for "Spanish speaking ELL's" (emphasis added) that "would best measure the progress of Spanish-speaking ELLs". For this, they are asking for \$10 million. We have 43 different languages spoken in our schools. What about those students? (#8)

The Regents would not assess ELL students on the New York State English Language Arts Exam for the students' first two years; however, we have some students in grades PreK-12 who have never been in a school.

False Belief: The Regents will "Focus extra support on students that need the most". (#10)

The Truth: This continues the reduction in Academic Intervention Services (AIS), that was allowed in 2012-2013 to save Districts money, to continue to be in effect at the reduced level in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

False Belief: The Regents have given the “high school students more time to meet the Common Core standards.”

The Truth: The students will still have to pass the Regents that are aligned with the Common Core in 2017. What was changed is only when the passing grade will be raised. The passing grade for the ELA Regents will move from 65 to 75 and the passing grade for the Math Regents will move from 65 to 80 in 2022 instead of 2017. It will be interesting to see how this change will impact on graduation rates.

False Belief: Strong action has been taken to reduce unnecessary testing and standardized testing in K-12. (#11, 12, and 13)

The Truth:

- There is only an expedited review of APPR amendments that eliminate unnecessary (undefined) testing. There is no clarity as to what is considered “unnecessary” or that any such amendments must be submitted. (#11)
- Traditional standardized tests in grades K-2 will be disapproved in APPR plans beginning in 2014-2015. What about the standardized tests that are already in previous APPRs? Why not an outright prohibition of standardized tests in K-2? (#12)
- The one percent (1%) cap on locally-selected standardized testing is meaningless and does not factor in the State testing.
There is no way to monitor or assess that such a cap is met or enforced. (#13)

False Belief: The Regents have now addressed concerns relating to students with disabilities by applying for a waiver. (#6)

The Truth: This waiver was apparently advocated for and proposed months ago but as yet not submitted.

False Belief: The Common Core Learning Standards will be reviewed and updated. (#1)

The Truth: The Regents will “Advocate for” the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State Officers to convene States to “periodically” review and update the standards, not the local school district, parents, teachers.

In other words any feedback from the community will be filtered through these two organizations and then only “periodically” reviewed.

Where is NYSED and the Regents establishment of an ongoing review based upon local calls for change?

False Belief: The Regents acted to “Prevent unfair and negative consequences to teachers and principals”. (#15)

The Truth: Not only is that justified defense (as well as others) already available to teachers and principals in 3020a proceedings but teachers and principals also have an appeal process to challenge the APPR itself using that defense before they even get to a 3020a hearing.

Isn't it interesting that the Regents also did not include their, the Commissioner's and NYSED's failure to “timely implemented the Common Core by providing adequate professional development, guidance on

curriculum or other necessary supports to the education during those school years?" Be assured we will use this as a defense.

Hopefully, the above will clarify that the Regents, et. al. have really done nothing to address your concerns and those of parents, students and educators.

They have instead just attempted to dupe you and the Public. That I am confident will not happen.

PR:su