



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2014

Ulster County Legislators Voice Opposition to Federal Common Core Initiative

(KINGSTON, NY) While States across the Nation continue to reassess the Common Core State Standards, Ulster County Legislators lend their voice to the dialogue seeking a halting in the implementation of the Common Core Standards until an independent New York State initiated approach to improving the New York State education system is explored. The Ulster County Legislators recognized the standards were released in June 2010 and were given only 60 days to evaluate adopt them with no opportunity to modify for State specific needs or goals.

“With no local education officials, school leaders, teachers or parents participating in the any part of the discussion of standards that affect each and every one of our students, it is outrageous that our State Education Department leaders just signed away home rule and State control of our educational system,” stated Craig Lopez, Ulster County Legislator from District 14 serving the Towns of Shawangunk and Wawarsing.

This focus on local input and control of student assessments was reiterated in Resolution No. 395-14 in seeking to allow local school districts to opt children with an individualized education program out of Common Core Standards. Legislators noted the IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel and, when appropriate, the students themselves to work together to improve the educational results of children with disabilities.

“Assessing to a set standard, while a laudable goal, leaves little flexibility and results in a one-size fits all model,” stated Peter Loughran, District No. 5 Legislator from the City of Kingston. “Ultimately, all children, but especially those with disabilities, deserve to be recognized as the individuals that they are. Educational assessments should be ensuring a long term growth spectrum that matches the individual student’s ability.”

Both Resolutions No. 350-14 and 395-14 passed the November 18th Ulster County Legislative Session and will be forwarded to the New York State Legislature to support the reintroduction of State legislation in their 2015-2016 Legislative Session.

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[Resolution Nos. 350-14 and 395-14 attached]

Supporting The Reintroduction and Passage Of New York State Assembly Bill 07994 And Senate Bill 06267, An Act To Amend The Education Law, In Relation To The Common Core State Standards Initiative And The Race To The Top Program

Referred to: The Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services Committee (Chairman David Donaldson and Legislators Archer, Gregorius, Lopez, and Wawro)

Legislator Craig Lopez and Legislator Donaldson offer the following:

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 07994 and Senate Bill 06267 have been introduced in the 2013-2014 Legislative Session which amends Education Law Section 116 to discontinue implementation of the common core state standards developed by the common core state standards initiative and declares any action taken to adopt or implement the common core state standards void; and

WHEREAS, in 2009 and 2010, New York State was offered the chance to compete for education funding through the “Race to the Top” program created by the U. S. Department of Education (“ED”); and

WHEREAS, the only way to achieve a score in the competition sufficient to qualify for funding was to agree to “participation in a consortium of States that is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards”; and

WHEREAS, the only such “common set of K-12 standards” existent at that time, or since, is known as the Common Core State Standards Initiative (“CCSSI”) and was developed without a grant of authority from any state; and

WHEREAS, the CCSSI standards were released in June 2010, and to meet the ED “Race to the Top” requirements the State had only 60 days to evaluate them and agree to adopt them and were not offered an option to modify those standards before their adoption; and

WHEREAS, local education officials, school leaders, teachers, and parents were not included in the discussion, evaluation and preparation of the CCSSI standards that would affect students in this State; and

WHEREAS, the National Assessment of Educational Progress national test already exists and allows comparisons of academic achievement to be made across the states, without the necessity of imposing national standards, curricula, or assessments; and

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Supporting The Reintroduction and Passage Of New York State Assembly Bill 07994 And Senate Bill 06267, An Act To Amend The Education Law, In Relation To The Common Core State Standards Initiative And The Race To The Top Program

WHEREAS, imposing a set of national standards is likely to lead to the imposition of a national curriculum and national assessment upon the various states, in violation of the General Education Provisions Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and the Department of Education Organization Act; and

WHEREAS, when no less than 22 states face budget shortfalls and Race to the Top funding for states is limited, \$350 million for consortia to develop new assessments aligned with the CCSI standards will not cover the entire cost of overhauling state accountability systems, which includes implementation of standards and testing and associated professional development and curriculum restructuring; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature emphatically urges New York state lawmakers to re-introduce and support the passage of New York State Assembly bill 07994 and Senate bill 6267 to discontinue the implementation of the Common Core State Standards developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative which interfere with State and local control of public schools; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature urges our New York State Legislature to get further involved in the current debate over Common Core, to halt implementation of the standards while a state initiative is pursued to do due diligence and perhaps take an independent state-based approach to the improvement of our education system in New York State; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Clerk of the Ulster County Legislature shall forward copies of this resolution to Governor Andrew Cuomo, Assembly and Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, Assembly and Senate Education Committee Chairmen, and all Ulster County elected Assemblymen and Senators,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: NOES:

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Supporting The Reintroduction and Passage Of New York State Assembly Bill 07994 And Senate Bill 06267, An Act To Amend The Education Law, In Relation To The Common Core State Standards Initiative And The Race To The Top Program

Postponed in Committee: Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services on October 15, 2014

Passed Committee: Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services on November 5, 2014

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
NONE

Supporting The Reintroduction and Passage Of New York State Assembly Bill 09253 And Senate Bill 06832, An Act To Amend The Education Law, In Relation To Allowing School Districts To Opt Children With An Individualized Education Program Out Of The “Common Core Standards” And Certain Testing

Referred to: The Legislative Programs, Education, and Community Services Committee (Chairman David Donaldson and Legislators Archer, Gregorius, Lopez, and Wawro)

Legislator Peter Loughran and Legislator Lopez offer the following:

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 09253 and Senate Bill 06832 have been introduced in the 2013-2014 Legislative Session and amends Education Law Section 4402 to add a new subdivision; and

WHEREAS, new subdivision 8 allows any parent, legal guardian or school district to elect to opt a child with an established individualized education program out of any standardized test, including the “common core standards”, or those tests administered pursuant to chapter one hundred three of the laws of two thousand ten; and

WHEREAS, Federal laws require that all students are assessed in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies; and

WHEREAS, each child in public school who receives special education and related services must have what is commonly referred to as an IEP or Individualized Education Program; and

WHEREAS, the IEP creates an opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel and, when appropriate, students to work together to improve the educational results for children with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, currently testing accommodations do NOT include the ability to exempt a special needs student from participating in the common core curriculum and/or high stakes testing if those individuals working directly with the student on a daily basis feels it is appropriate and meets that particular student’s needs; and

WHEREAS, this legislation will empower local School Districts in determining the methodology for assessing a child with an IEP using existing New York State standards that are appropriate and consistent with the child’s individualized education plan; now, therefore be it

