

The Lower Hudson Council of School Superintendents, an organization that represents 77 school districts and 226,000 students, believes that the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) has been rushed without adequate funding and sufficient time for staff training and program development.

Since Education Law 3012 is based on a revised student assessment and teacher accountability system that is dependent on the successful implementation of the Common Core, we believe that the entire reform agenda for New York State is in jeopardy without a multi-year moratorium.

- LHCSS
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Lower Hudson Council
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LHCSS 2014-2015 ADVOCACY AGENDA

**Common Core
Learning Standards**



K-12 Testing System



**Teacher and Principal
Evaluation System**



**Fiscal Matters, Mandates,
Equity, Income and
Achievement Gaps**



**Coordinated School and
Community Services for
Safety, Wellness, and
Mental Health of Students**



Lower Hudson Council
of School Superintendents



WE SUPPORT



WE REJECT



WE PROPOSE

▶ **COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS (CCLS)**

- High standards that are aligned to quality curricula and responsible and useful assessment.
- CCLS as a framework.

- The rapid and unfunded implementation of the CCLS;
- The implementation of the NYS CCLS and the associated assessments as the basis for high-stakes decision-making before the standards had been validated, field-tested, or fully implemented;
- PARCC testing without adequate and equitable time and resources;
- The use of the CCLS as a ‘one size fits all’ curriculum that reduces local decision-making.

- A cessation in the use of assessments that are based on CCLS until a full and adequately resourced implementation has occurred;
- A review of CCLS so that each one is responsive to cognitive developmental readiness and the needs of English language learners and children with special needs;
- A rigorous evaluation of the CCLS conducted by NYSED to be completed by January 1st, 2016;
- Full funding for CCLS linked assessments so we can use results as a learning tool.

▶ **K-12 TESTING SYSTEM**

- A responsible and reasonable use of data and research-based assessments that are for the purposes of diagnosis of learning problems, school improvement, and professional development;
- Balanced assessment that supports additional types of measurement (including formative evaluation, performance assessment).

- The requirement for school districts to use frequent and voluminous local assessments that have no validity or reliability and are used for high-stakes decision-making;
- An unfunded, costly, and ineffective APPR model;
- Excessive testing that provides limited access to item data that informs instruction or benefits students

- State advocacy for limiting annual accountability testing, other than Regents Exams, to one culminating assessment at each school level, e.g. grades 4, 8 and 11;
- **Requiring a research-based analysis of the validity and reliability of state testing and APPR programs;**
- Releasing all items on state tests for study by educators;
- Developing alternate methods to effectively assess students with disabilities and English language learners.

▶ **TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION SYSTEM**

- Evaluation that is research-based and promotes teacher learning and professional growth through the use of well-designed rubrics and observations conducted by well-trained and experienced supervisors, and peer review;
- Evaluation that results in student growth;
- Evaluation that includes “peer review” with content and pedagogical expertise;
- Evaluation that includes analysis of student work;
- Evaluation that is based on a clearly articulated definition of quality instruction;
- Evaluation that is based on high professional standards.

- We reject the current evaluation system because
 - the focus is too limited;
 - it doesn’t serve to build capacity;
 - it is misaligned to the State’s stated purpose;
- The rating of teachers and principals on unreliable test scores and via a system that is experimental and proven harmful to not only staff but students;
- A system that rates teachers **developing or ineffective** unjustly as determined by research;
- A system that does not keep evaluation private between the employee and employer.

- Collaboration to rectify the present flaws;
- Work with professionals to build a sound evaluation system -one that reflects the practices and outcomes of successful school districts in the world;
- Recognition of and response to the limited capacity schools have for effectively monitoring and evaluating large numbers of teachers;
- Ample time to learn, plan, implement and review;
- **An immediate cessation of the use of student assessment data for purposes of accountability until there is an independent assessment of the following:**
 - Use of student data for high-stakes decision-making;
 - Local districts’ fiscal and logistical abilities to equitably fund all aspects of the reforms, including CCLS, APPR and PARCC;
 - An independent review of the legal implications and costs—in time and money—that will likely result from the implementation of 3012C in its current form.

▶ **FISCAL MATTERS, MANDATES, EQUITY, INCOME AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS**

- Fiscal responsibility and enhanced efficiencies at all levels of government from local school districts to the state legislature;
- Preventative cost-measures such as robust early childhood programs and wrap-around services to support the needs of children.

- Fiscal legislation and tax formulae that restrict school district revenues yet coincide with unfunded mandates;
- Unfunded mandates;
- Competitive funding that redirects fiscal resources from the neediest students in all districts.

1. **An equitable funding formula** that provides essential resources and services to all students and complies with New York’s Constitution and meets statutory and regulatory requirements; **AND** accelerated restoration of the GEA;
2. **An analysis of the impact of the current tax cap formulae** on the fiscal solvency of New York’s school districts; **AND** Impact of the tax freeze on educational programming;
3. **A cost-benefit analysis** of all components of CCSS, APPR, and state testing to determine a means to define return on investment (e.g., cost per index score improvement); **AND** Assessment of opportunities lost due to shift in resources to CCSS, APPR, and testing (e.g., art, music, electives, time, narrowing of curriculum, and student engagement.)

▶ **COORDINATED SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR SAFETY, WELLNESS, AND MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS**

- True funding equity for safety, mental health, and wellness services within the domain of the district;
- **Full funding** for:
 - Manageable pupil-staff ratios for guidance counselors, psychologists, social workers, and school-based mental health providers;
 - Full-day kindergarten;
 - Pre-school programs;
- Support for schools and community agencies and service providers to provide their respective services and responsibilities with maximum **collaboration and coordination:**
 - Regional and accessible inter-agency family and mental health services;
 - Access to community based after-school childcare for health and academic purposes;
 - Access to summer enrichment and programs to avoid summer learning loss.

- Inequitable funding for and prohibited access to support, safety, wellness, and mental health services (zip code should not be a predictor of services available to children and families in schools and in communities);
- Inequitable reimbursement for mental health services (Medicare, health insurance providers);
- The current rate setting methodology for special act school districts;
- The lack of coordination and obstacles for collaboration between school districts and communities and agencies offering services to families in a seamless manner.

- Equitable and full funding to achieve regulated expectations for safety, wellness, and mental health services within the domain of the schools;
- Utilize and designate aid targeted for unique student needs and services:
 - Reactivation of foundation aid which was created to insure equitable funding based on student needs;
 - Emergency impact aid for the significant recent growth of students immigrating to the U.S.
 - Full funding for full-day K; Funding for after-school and summer academic programs to extend the school day and year;
- A means to incentivize agencies and service providers to align and coordinate services with school districts;
- Guidelines to regulate and expedite coordination of schools and community and agency support services;
- Promotion of a school-based health services model.