



Council of Administrators & Supervisors

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Commissioner John King
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, NY 12234

Re: Common Core Algebra and Geometry Regents Examinations

Dear Commissioner King,

Recently we were made aware of several problems and concerns raised from the field regarding the administration of the Algebra CC Regents in early June 2014 and the subsequent administration of the soon to be phased out standard Algebra Regents examination during the traditional Regents Examination period at the end of the school year. In particular, secondary schools voiced significant apprehension about adding another Regents testing date in the beginning of June that interfered with student and teacher preparation for the remaining Regents exams and the redundancy of putting students and staff through the preparation and administration of two different Algebra Regents Examinations. Sadly this same scenario will be recreated again this year with the administration of the Common Core ELA Regents Exam and the Common Core Geometry Regents Exam on Tuesday, June 2nd.

Although many appreciated the opportunity to administer both examinations and allow the students to choose the higher of the two scores for their transcript, it did not provide the same courtesy to high achieving schools who committed totally to the Algebra CC Regents curriculum and test. Specifically, students attending high schools fully committed to the Common Core Algebra program received significantly lower test scores than those students in schools that also administered the standard Algebra Regents. Additionally, concerns were raised regarding the discrepancies of the student scores manipulated by the score conversion charts and arbitrary "cut points" manufactured by the state.

In order to make this right for the students and schools that took the lead implementing the full Geometry CC program, we ask that the department go back and reset the cut scores on the first Common Core Algebra Exam so as to fairly differentiate real achievement and to correlate results equitably between the old and the new tests.

Recently you have responded positively to some of the legitimate concerns raised by public school administrators across the state by eliminating redundant math

assessments in grades seven and eight and most recently by allowing for the final administration of the standard Algebra Regents in June 2015 to accommodate the documented needs of students with disabilities and late arriving English Language Learners pursuing high school diplomas. While we applaud these actions permitting flexibility, we also ask that you apply that same flexibility for the administration of the upcoming CC Geometry Regents Examination. Without some administrative flexibility, students in schools fully committed to the CC Geometry curriculum and testing program will fall prey to the faulty logic of manipulated test scores and cut points and the needless redundancy of taking two tests for one course. Unfortunately, the same students whose final grades in Algebra were adversely affected last year will face the same fate this year.

It seems somewhat ironic that the schools and students leading the field in raising standards and achievement are the ones who suffer from the unintended consequences of questionable SED policies that, if rectified beforehand with input from the practitioners in the field, could be avoided. We ask that you provide districts fully committed to Common Core Algebra and Geometry programs with flexibility required to better meet the needs of our most capable students.

With this in mind we ask that you consider the following for the administration of the Common Core Geometry Regents and the Geometry (2005 Standards) Regents in June of 2015.

- Move the Common Core Geometry Regents test into the Regents testing weeks at the end of the school year and do not offer finals or Regents Examinations before classes end and instruction is complete.
- Set cut scores for the Common Core Geometry test that fairly correlate with the Standard Geometry test. While it would seem logical to encourage those teachers and students tackling the better and more challenging Common Core curriculum by rewarding them through generous cut scores, at the very least don't punish them for doing so.
- Do not set "aspirational" scores until all students are held to that same standard. In other words no aspiration until only one test is given.

As you have stated many times, "change is difficult", but change in curriculum and assessments requires caution and flexibility to achieve the goal of higher student, school and system performance. Perhaps asking several high school principals from across the state to examine the problems and concerns voiced and developing a plan to resolve the Geometry quandary before the Regents examinations in June would be a prudent course of action? Acting now could relieve the thousands of students across the state enrolled in Geometry from having to needlessly take two Regents exams in one subject. It could also alleviate another needless interruption in New York State secondary schools at the most important teaching and busiest time of the school year.

Sincerely,

Anthony C. Laurino

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President, Council of Administrators and Supervisors (CAS)

Executive Vice President, Empire State Supervisors and Administrators Association (ESSAA)

Cc: Board of Regents Members
Senate Education Committee Members
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