

Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

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A National Blue Ribbon District of Excellence

Roy R. Montesano Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
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June 3, 2015

Dear Members of the Hastings-on-Hudson Community,

Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to join with 40 other regional superintendents in calling on the governor and legislature to amend the educational regulations that were hastily attached to the annual budget bill in an eleventh hour press to pass the budget on time. Although some legislators have called for delaying the regulations, the fact is that a delay will not fix bad rules. My own analysis is that, if the legislation is not amended, our students will suffer from four blows:

1. The current culture of high stakes over-testing will become permanent.
2. Good teachers who are successful in our District, or have the potential to be successful, will be fired despite our principals and my own opinions of their work. The new rules are that Albany will decide who is fired based on a statewide formula applied to student test results.
3. Local control and authority over our schools' management will continue to be taken away. I find it difficult to believe anyone thinks that Albany's management of the Hastings-on-Hudson School District could possibly improve our performance.
4. Loss of local school control means that districts like ours will be "drawn toward the average." While the homogenization of schools throughout the state may help the worst schools, it will make it very difficult to maintain the high performance that many suburban homeowners chose when they bought property in our communities. This will have a negative impact on home values, of course.

Within the first 24 hours, more than 4,000 individuals have electronically signed the petition. Over **13,000 signatures** have been gathered in just six days. Legislation is being drafted right now to suspend and amend the Education Transformation Act of 2015. Our goal is to reach **20,000** by the end of the week. The following links are from the various news agencies that covered the event:

<http://www.lohud.com/story/news/education/2015/05/28/schools-chiefs-demand-suspension-ny-education-bill/28072443>

<http://longisland.news12.com/news/group-urges-lawmakers-to-suspend-teacher-evaluations-1.10483485>

<http://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/calls-for-one-year-suspension-of-teacher-evaluations-at-patchogue-news-conference-1.10482736>

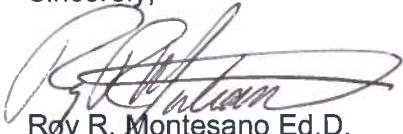
<http://westchester.news12.com/news/some-school-leaders-oppose-cuomo-s-education-reform-1.10483809>

Please take a moment to check out the links and consider adding your name. I would like to note that this message and the petition are solely the product of the superintendents. This is not a "union effort." (In case you wonder, I am not in a union).

The petition can be found at: <http://bit.ly/GetItRightNY>

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roy R. Montesano", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Roy R. Montesano Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Hastings-on-Hudson U.F.S.D.

/fhg