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DEAN MURRAY
Assemblyman 3rd District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
Food, Farm and Nutrition Policy
Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development

COMMITTEES
Aging
Education
Small Business
Transportation

*file
in legislative
file*

July 30, 2018

Catherine Collins
8th Judicial District
508 Main Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Catherine Collins,

As state education policymakers, I'm sure you will agree that our primary focus is to provide the highest quality of education and the most productive classroom environment possible for our students and teachers in our public schools.

The high-stakes testing and test-preparation requirements spurred by the previous Common Core Standards have caused much stress, anxiety and confusion to all parties involved over the past several years. As a response, the opt-out movement has become particularly salient, not only across the state, but in particular, in my Assembly District on Long Island, where about 50 percent of students have opted out of these tests over the past several years.

This is a grassroots movement started by dedicated parents, teachers, education advocates and students who believe in a high level of curriculum control at the local level and less testing mandates for our students. I am a staunch supporter of this movement and will continue to stand with many community members in opposition to these requirements.

Furthermore, I am requesting that at your upcoming September meeting, you vote against requiring schools to dedicate a portion of their Title I funding to enforce compliance with testing standards. Make no mistake, this proposed requirement is absolutely a punishment that will double-down on the unpopular and flawed testing mandates handed down by the state and federal government. It will also use money intended to better our children's education to enforce a policy that has proven to be extremely unpopular on Long Island and across the state.

Decisions about how to educate our students should be left up to those actually involved in the process at the grassroots level – our students, parents, teachers, and administrators. It would be irresponsible and myopic of the board to ignore the well-demonstrated concerns of thousands of students, parents and teachers across the state. We should not be using tax dollars to punish schools and enforce a policy that nearly half of all families disagree with.

I hope that you will take to heart the devastating impact these draconian testing requirements have had in our classrooms and heed the concerns of our students, parents, and teachers at your September meeting.

Should you have any questions or like to speak with me further about this issue, please feel free to contact my district office at (631) 207-0073.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Dean Murray
3rd District