



New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
Branch of the National

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NIAGARA REGIONAL PTA ADOPTS RESOLUTION TO STOP OVER TESTING IN NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WHEATFIELD, NY (September 27)- At their first meeting of the new academic year, the Niagara Regional PTA passed a resolution calling on the New York State Education Department to enact a moratorium on the state's 3 – 8 testing program. This resolution will be submitted for consideration as an Emergency Resolution to the New York State PTA at their convention in November.

The state's testing program raised the ire of parents, teachers and students all over the state this past April when all students in grades 3 – 8 were required to sit for 90 minutes of testing in Math and in ELA for each day for six days, for a total of nine hours. By comparison, the LSAT required for admission into law school takes about three and a half hours to complete, and the test to become a New York City Police Officer takes about 90 minutes.

The document, richly supported by recent research, parent surveys and the first-hand experiences of families, serves as a reason to question the State Education Department's recent reforms centered on student testing and teacher evaluation.

At the heart of the resolution is a concern for the well being of children, and it documents the growing body of research showing that over relying on high stakes testing in grades 3 – 8 causes "teaching to the test"; narrowed curriculum opportunities; increased emotional distress among children; the marginalization of both very high performing students and students with special needs; an overall lowering of standards and disregard for individual difference, critical thinking and human creativity.

"There are so many families who see their children suffer from the anxiety and the fear caused by these tests", said Mary Beth Carroll, Niagara Regional PTA Director. "It seems as if we've gotten away from the purpose of the tests – to identify areas where schools need to improve, rather than evaluate the child and the teacher." According to Dr. John McKenna, Principal of Fletcher Elementary School in Tonawanda, and Education Chair for the Niagara Region PTA, " We want to develop a system with true accountability that is beneficial to our students and teachers."

Mrs. Carroll continued, "When Governor Cuomo announced this legislation, he told us that students didn't have a lobbyist and that he is the 'students' lobbyist'. I think he forgot that our children have families to advocate for them. We are their lobbyists, and we don't want this for our children. They deserve better."