

Marathon Central School District
Office of the Superintendent of Schools
Post Office Box 339
1 East Main Street, Marathon, New York 13803
Tel. 607-849-3117 Fax. 607-849-3305

Mrs. Rebecca Stone
Superintendent

Mrs. Heather Euson
District Clerk

November 16, 2015

Dear Board Members, Superintendents and Administrators;

I want to thank you for attending the Central New York School Boards fall dinner on November 2, 2015. I have compiled the information from the round table session along with a list of people signed up to attend the event. As I said that night, this round table provided you with an opportunity to network and find people who are dealing with similar issues. The people that attended, as well as any board member in our area, are great resources for you when you have questions.

There were three hot topics which were discussed. The first included our thoughts and suggestions for Commissioner Elia. A letter was created based on your feedback and sent to the Commissioner. A copy of that letter is attached. The following response was received December 3, 2015:

Thank you for the feedback you provided following the local round table to discuss education issues. I have received your comments and appreciate that you took the time to share this with me.

Sincerely,

MaryEllen Elia

The second hot topic focused on APPR. Here is your feedback on that topic:

- The BOE needs to be informed. They can be a support to the school with the public.
- Professional development is needed to support the administrators and the teachers.
- Homer teachers wanted to simplify the plan. They are using the rubric with the principal score. Perhaps we needed these years to arrive at a "comfort level". They took away some assessments.
- Support staff development.
- Ask the hard questions but be supportive of changes needed.
- Keep the focus on what matters.
- Support administration. – "How is it going?"
- Evaluations need to be seen and presented as a tool for improvement, not punitive.
- As a board member, I really don't know what is being done to improve the process.
- It is tough for boards to get their arms around APPR because of the political motivations involved with its creation.

Old	New
• Unity	• Teacher Gocha!
• Getting better	• Getting my job
• Teacher work	• Scapegoating

Feedback about the Common Core - What has made a positive impact in your district?

- Positive results from the Common Core Learning Standards; Increased dialog, clear expectations, increased rigor, application of knowledge.
- Differentiating Common Core vs. modules.
- Math night, ELA night for parents and kids, demos, etc.
- Math nights, show strategies, teacher presentations at BOE, website information, newsletters home.
- Family math night sponsored by Dryden Mutual.
- Animosity between Governor's office and SED needs to be ended in order to make progress.
- PTO meeting for parents with elementary principal information on website. Family math night, Cincinnatus math booklets.
- Proactive approach – public can call staff/administrators with questions. They provide answers and informational resources.

Below you will find the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses for the district clerk in each school district. The district clerk can help you make connections to other board members in their district. You will also find a list of board members, superintendents and administrators that signed up to attend the meeting.

District	District Clerk/Secretary	Phone Number	E-mail address
Cincinnatus	Andrea Dawson	607-863-4069	adawson@cc.cnyric.org
Cortland City	Alicia Zupancic	(607) 758-4101	azupancic@Cortlandschools.org
DeRuyter	Sandy Welsh	315-852-3400	welsh@deruytercentral.org
Homer	Kelly Yacavone	607-749-7241 X5022	kyacavone@homercentral.org
Marathon	Heather Euson	607-849-3117	eusonh@marathonschools.org
McGraw	Donna Fox	607-836-3636	dfox@mcgrawschools.org
O-C-M BOCES	Theresa Smith	(315) 433-2602	tsmith@ocmboces.org
CNYSBA	Janet Smith	315/463-1904	jsmith@cnysba.org

School	Full Name	Title
Cincinnatus	Richard Dodge	Board Member
Cincinnatus	Steven Hubbard	Superintendent
Cincinnatus	Margaret D. Peri	CNYSBA Director
CNYSBA	Charles Borgognoni	Executive Director
Cortland City	Melissa Davis-Howard	Board President
Cortland City	Christine A. Gregory	Board Member
Cortland City	Janet Griffin	Vice President
Cortland City	Michael J. Hoose	Superintendent
DeRuyter	Brandi Compton	Board Member
DeRuyter	Frederick Lawrence	CNYSBA Director
DeRuyter	Amy Sperat	Vice President
DeRuyter	Charles Walters	Superintendent
Homer	Joaquin Lira	Board Member

Homer	Linda Llewellyn	Director of Instruction
Homer	William Pedrick	CNYSBA Director
Homer	Nancy Ruscio	Superintendent
Homer	Levi Sutton	Board Member
Homer	Martin Sweeney	Board Member
Marathon	Dale Betts	Board President
Marathon	Katherine Ann Bush	Board Member
Marathon	Denise Castellot	Board Member
Marathon	Robert DuPuy	Board Member
Marathon	Glenn Gates	Board Member
Marathon	Thomas Goskoski	Business Manager
Marathon	Jonathan Hillis	Elementary Principal
Marathon	Kirsten Parker	Vice President
Marathon	Christopher Grethel	Jr.Sr. H.S. Principal
Marathon	Rebecca Stone	Superintendent
McGraw	Cindy Buerkle	Board President
McGraw	Barbara Closson	Board Member
McGraw	Mary E. Curcio	Superintendent
McGraw	Tony Opera	Vice President
O-C-M BOCES	Jeff Craig	Asst. Supt. For Instr. Support Svcs
O-C-M BOCES	Jody Manning	District Supt.
O-C-M BOCES	Ann Wright	Board President

I appreciated your attendance and your dedication to our children. I hope you found the session valuable and feel comfortable reaching out to others in our area to help solve some of the many problems that will surface in the future.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Stone
Marathon CSD Superintendent

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November 16, 2015

Commissioner MaryEllen Elia
New York State Education Department
89 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12234

Dear Commissioner Elia,

On November 2, 2015, Central New York School Boards offered local school boards, superintendents and administrators the opportunity to meet and conduct a round table discussion on a few of the "Hot Topics" in education. Districts that participated included Cortland, Homer, McGraw, Cincinnatus, DeRuyter and Marathon. Even though each district was able to send representatives to the forum you conducted at the JMT in Auburn, there was still a robust discussion on items they would like you to consider. Below you will find items of concern they wanted to share with you. I facilitated the discussion and am a firm believer in providing solutions to concerns whenever possible. Many of the items listed below include both the concern and a suggested solution.

We hope you will consider our feedback as you continue your work as the Commissioner of Education. We would appreciate a confirmation of the receipt of this letter as well as any thoughts you may want to share with us. I would be happy to distribute any information or thoughts you have to the various districts. My address is found above or you can e-mail me at rstone@marathonschools.org. You are doing important work and it is vital that we as school districts support your quest to center education back around the students and student achievement where it belongs.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Stone
Marathon CSD Superintendent

Thoughts and suggestions:

Thoughts	Possible Solutions
SED must make growth scores simple and understandable. Need to clear mystery of growth score formula.	A clear explanation should be publicized and accessible to schools and parents.
Must convince parents that opting out is hurting their child.	Commercials would reach parents and combat what they see and hear from Cuomo.

	Scores must be made available to the district before the end of the school year and teachers must be able to see data on all questions to assist with instruction of class as a whole and individual students. Without this the data has little meaning.
Create a more positive message about education in general. Improve the image education has. There is a high degree of unhappiness and low morale of teachers. This has a negative impact on students.	Let us help develop a strategic plan. One that is slow and steady. Communication is key.
Complexity of text for students.	
Buy in for rural schools to modules.	Text selections that involve/emphasize agricultural fields.
Assessments based on academic ability vs. grade level.	
Let teachers teach and have more of a voice in test development and number of tests.	Let educators focus on the core items that matter. BASIC skills first.
Listen to more than the Big 5.	How about a summit on rural poverty and how it impacts education of rural students?
Measuring success on a single number is unfair to all concerned. It is unfair to tie professional evaluations to single data points.	Use an evaluation process of each student over the entire year to determine success of education. Create APPR without alignment to testing or include all testing.
State education needs to improve communication! Clear, simple communication of the state plan. Better collaboration. Need better communication with parents around the strategies. Engage NY needs to be user friendly. Parents are confused between common core, modules, APPR and testing.	People to people. Honesty. Simplicity. Need simplistic description of all different aspects. Communication needs to reach parents and communities. Currently State Ed depends on individual districts to spread the message. This method means any message is only as good as the district's ability to promote their message as well as the state's message.
Poverty impacts kids!	Improve (fix) the aid formulas.
Unfunded mandates detract us from what's important.	Fund them or rethink them.
Better alignment between standards and assessments.	Keep test covering appropriate age/level. Let us use proven strategies that work. Stop reinventing.
Difficulty in how disadvantaged districts and non-disadvantaged district are rated using the same system.	Consideration of district wealth. Weighted averages?
SED and Governor's office need to come to consensus and work together.	
Unfairly putting our students into a process they were unprepared for. Students feeling pressure to do well on exams or our teachers will be penalized.	