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Wednesday, May 28, 2014

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OPINION

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Opinion

Another Voice: Common Core standards are too important to put off

on February 17, 2014 - 6:21 AM

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By Nancy Zimpher

New York and the nation stand at a critical crossroads in education. Compared to students in other nations, 15-year-olds in the United States rank 30th in math achievement, 23rd in science and 19th in reading.

In an unprecedented push to reverse this troubling trend, 45 states – including New York – have agreed to adopt new Common Core education standards, which aim not only to improve student comprehension, but to provide students with the knowledge and skills they will need to be competitive in today’s fast-paced, technology-driven and globally connected economy.

Although there is understandable anxiety among many parents, students and educators, the recent recommendations by the State Education Department to slow down implementation of Common Core as well as some of the provisions of the state’s teacher and principal evaluation system are premature, as is the general call for a moratorium. A moratorium would impede the state’s ongoing efforts to bring greater accountability to public education, and serve only to let another generation of students fall behind.

These new education standards are absolutely crucial in preparing our students for the workforce of today and the future. That is why the State University of New York, the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, and City University of New York have made strong statements in support of the Common Core, and through a statewide Teacher Education Network, we are working with the state’s teachers and school leaders on the implementation process.

Parallel to our effort, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo will bring together a task force of experts to examine ways to improve the implementation process so that the needs of schools, teachers, parents and – most importantly – students are met.

Before we even consider hitting pause on the implementation process, the task force’s recommendations should be heard. And in the meantime, SUNY will continue to work with colleagues in education statewide to ensure that no student is left behind

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colleagues in education statewide to ensure that no student is left behind.

We must not turn our back on the opportunity that the Common Core presents. Now is our chance to have a significant, lasting impact on student achievement and success while repositioning our nation as a global leader in education.

Outdated learning standards just won't get the job done. Instead of halting our progress, let's focus on ways to work together to strengthen the implementation of the Common Core. Our children deserve no less than a concerted effort to get this right.

Nancy Zimpher is chancellor of the State University of New York.

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