LETTER TO SCHOOL BOARDS.

Dear School Board Members:

We represent a large group of parents of our district, who together with many other parents across the North Country find the current implementation of Common Core and teacher evaluation's measures very concerning and hurtful to our children and schools. We need to reclaim the local power of our School Boards, as established in our State Constitution and would like to remind you, members of this Board, that it is our community who best cares and understands the needs of our children and our schools.

Through the imposition of the Federal program Race to the Top, enormous financial burdens and distress is being brought on our children, teachers and taxpayers. The current campaign to destroy public education by privatizing it, is doing everything they can to discredit our schools.

However, we REALLY love our schools and, in fact, in spite of the high poverty rates with which we unfortunately deal with in the North Country, most of our North Country schools have been rated by the Buffalo Business First Rating Agency as “overachievers”. That means that, in spite of having a large number of kids who may not have a warm meal when they get home, or chances to get clean regularly, or who witness or suffer abuse of one kind or another, our teachers and counselors are working in ways that are allowing most of our kids to successfully graduate from our high schools.

Today, many of our children are highly stressed because the amount of testing has become shamefully unacceptable. Tying our children's results to our teachers' performance is unfair and promotes a suffocating climate in the classroom where creativity is gone and "teaching to the test" becomes the norm.

Parents are organizing all around New York and the nation in a movement of civil disobedience that will REFUSE the High Stakes Testing mandated for our schools this spring. We are not refusing any Regents, just the State Tests required for children in grades 3rd through 8th. We ask that our school board members become as well informed on the full implications of Common Core and choose to support our local teachers and kids over the profit of corporations that do not have our children's well-being at heart.

We have brought with us to leave with you some documentation that shows that we should fear no repercussions for our schools if students and/or parents choose to take this step.

Lastly, we want to make very clear that ONLY we the parents are responsible for our decision with respect to which way to go with our children's education. We strongly DEMAND that our School Board REQUIRES that administrators expect no action at all on the part of the kids when the time for administering the tests comes. The parents' letters should be enough documentation for the school to act accordingly. We expect our children to be treated with respect during those exam times.

Thank you for your time and your support for our schools.