

State Superintendent Zais said, “Secretary Duncan’s honest commentary has validated what I’ve said for nearly two years now as a candidate for public office and as State Superintendent of Education: the education establishment lowered our standards.”

“Let me be crystal clear: South Carolina’s standards were lowered through an organized effort by former Democratic State Superintendents of Education Inez Tenenbaum and Jim Rex, the State Board of Education, the Education Oversight Committee, and taxpayer-funded education lobby groups. Their intent was to hide the true performance of our schools from students, parents, and taxpayers.”

“The governance of South Carolina’s system of education is too fragmented. Parents and taxpayers don’t need more unaccountable boards in Columbia; they need leaders willing to take principled stands to transform education so every student receives a personalized and customized education, not an inflexible, standardized one. That is my mandate from the voters.”

Zais continued, “Under my proposal for flexibility from certain provisions of No Child Left Behind, South Carolina would implement a new system of accountability that would grade schools from A through F, something every student and parent can understand. The proposal would set high and achievable standards for every student in every school. I look forward to submitting this proposal by February 28 and working with the U.S. Department of Education to gain approval of the State’s waiver request.”

“As State Superintendent of Education, it is my goal to raise standards as new statewide assessments are implemented in the next few years. History has shown, and President Obama’s Administration has confirmed, the education establishment in South Carolina and their lobbyists cannot be trusted.”

Zais concluded, “I call on all students, parents, and taxpayers to hold those responsible for lowering standards to account, and to stand with my allies and me as we work to transform education in South Carolina. Now is the time to put students first. That is my calling; that is my charge to keep.”