Marryl Tisch, who championed higher learning standards and ushered in the controversial Common Core during her tenure, is now taking part in the debate over the certification of charter school teachers as a member of the SUNY Charter Schools Committee. | AP Photo/Mike Groll

**Marryl Tisch is back, will have say in how charter schools certify teachers**

By **KESHIA CLUKEY** | 10/10/2017 05:44 PM EDT

**ALBANY —** Marryl Tisch, the former chancellor of the state Board of Regents, isn’t done with state education policymaking just yet.

Tisch, who championed higher learning standards and ushered in the controversial Common Core during her tenure, is now taking part in the debate over the certification of charter school teachers as a member of the SUNY Charter Schools Committee.
She once again will find herself at the center of a contentious issue, as the committee is scheduled to vote on a proposal on Wednesday that would allow charter schools to create their own in-house teacher certification programs.

“She still wants to be a player in New York,” said David Bloomfield, an educational leadership professor at Brooklyn College and at the CUNY Graduate Center. “It’s interesting that the route that she’s taking and is being welcomed into is the charter school world.”

Tisch declined to comment on her appointment and the charter regulations.

She stepped down from her role as head of the Regents in March 2016 after 20 years on the state’s education policymaking board.

Last June, the state Senate appointed her to the SUNY board of trustees. Her first SUNY board meeting was in September, after which she was selected to serve on the Charter Schools, Academic Affairs, Finance and Administration, and Community Colleges committees, according to SUNY.

Tisch has supported charter schools in the past, touting school choice and the need for increased access to quality education, as well as healthy competition for public schools.

It’s unclear how she will vote on the teacher certification proposal. Her successor, Regents Chancellor Betty Rosa, has strongly opposed the measure.

If approved, the new rules would have a significant impact on SUNY-authorized charter schools, particularly the powerful charter school networks in New York City, which have had difficulty hiring certified teachers. The new rules apply only to charters authorized by SUNY, rather than by the Board of Regents. Among those affected is Success Academy, the city’s largest charter school network, whose founder, Eva Moskowitz, has pushed for changes to the existing certification for years.

Supporters say the changes are crucial, particularly given shortages of teachers in math, science and other areas.

Rosa and state Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia, in comments submitted to the SUNY Charter Schools Institute, called the proposal an “affront to a critical tenet in education,” saying it would diminish the number of effective teachers and would have a negative impact on charter school students of color, those who are economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities.
The Regents passed a resolution last month calling for the committee to withdraw the proposed regulations, adding to a lengthy list of opponents including teachers unions and 18 of SUNY’s deans of education.

Under Tisch, the state put in place a series of more rigorous teacher certification exams, not only pushing for high standards for students, but also looking to raise up the teaching profession.

“It’s not clear that these meet her expectations for rigor,” Bloomfield said of the committee’s proposed changes. But it is consistent with her record, having opened up teacher certification in the state through alternative routes such as Teach for America, he said.

Tisch’s presence on the committee may already have brought about change.

The committee this week released a revised proposal, which strengthens requirements, according to reports from Chalkbeat New York and The Wall Street Journal.

The proposal, however, still faces opposition, particularly from teachers unions, which say it should be thrown out. New York State United Teachers, the state’s largest teachers union, also has been skeptical about her appointment to the SUNY board.

“As chancellor, Merryl Tisch presided over the Common Core debacle; the arrival of Pearson testing and [former state education commissioner] John King Jr., and the troubled edTPA teacher certification process,” NYSUT spokesman Carl Korn said, referring to several other controversies during her tenure. "As she moves to the SUNY Charter Schools Committee, we ask, ‘What can go wrong?’”

The committee plans to vote on the proposal Wednesday. Read the revised regulations and the agenda here.