

February 18, 2014

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House Education Committee
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Regarding: Bill 1508-FN: Terminating State Participation in Common Core

Dear House Education Committee;

I would like to share my support of the current Bill 1508-FN, Terminating State Participation in Common Core.

As the mother (and advocate) of 3 exceptional girls (4th grade, 2nd grade, and soon to be Kindergarten), I would like to take this opportunity to share some of my experiences, as well as my concerns regarding the new Common Core State Standards.

My discovery of the Common Core Standards was quite accidental. It was when my oldest was struggling with math in Spring of 2013, that I uncovered what Common Core was. As any concerned parent would do, I started asking questions, met with the Assistant Superintendent and enrolled her in a Math tutoring program.

As I continued to dig into the Federal effort to push Common Core Standards upon the states, I uncovered what it really means for our children in the Londonderry School District (and State of New Hampshire). And what it means, is that New Hampshire should aim to institute higher standards than what Common Core provides.

With the realization that Common Core has already crept into the schools in my town, I see it in action on a regular basis. In fact, I've made it a practice to attend my district's Curriculum Coordinating Council meetings and hear, regularly, how they are implementing/aligning with Common Core more and more. I have heard from Math Curriculum Leaders during such meetings (as well as Virginia Barry herself at the SAU Conference in Bedford, NH late 2013), that *Common Core Standards move us to teach the children less, but with a deeper understanding.* I don't agree with this approach. I believe we should call on standards that increase the knowledge base.

I recall in my hours of research, hearing that approximately 65% of New Hampshire graduates already require remedial courses (math specifically) upon entering college. If Common Core Standards move to narrow the field in math, how many more will require remedial courses upon entering college? Is it not our responsibility as educators (and parents) to give our children the most comprehensive, extensive and beneficial education as possible?

It is my opinion, that our goal should be to instill exceptional achievement whenever possible, and encourage a love for education, not disdain over unproven tests. When given a solid, well- rounded foundation (Math, ELA, Science, etc.) our children will flourish, becoming the amazing leaders of tomorrow that this state and country need.

Although Common Core Standards claim to expand critical thinking – I have experienced, first-hand the complete opposite. Math, is math. There is no explanation or summary needed when asked what the

answer to 4×3 equals. The answer is 12, simple. But when my 4th grader finds the answer mathematically, yet gets the problem wrong because she doesn't explain, in laborious detail, why $4 \times 3 = 12$. It doesn't make sense.

Another example of critical thinking being falsely promoted by the Common Core Standards, is in the world of English Language Arts. My daughter's 2nd grade teacher told me during a parent teacher conference that she would be doing away with literary stories such as *The Tortoise and the Hare, and Anansi the Spider*. Instead, they would replace those with *informational texts.* She cited the fact that stories like those taught *cheating and trickery* whereas information text simply stated facts. If our children cannot learn to extract meaning and messaging at a young age, they never will. So, in reality, informational and factual texts do not promote critical thinking.

As I look at this from a broader spectrum and the vote that is before each of you, I would like to ask that the Education Committee consider these questions prior to voting:

- If Common Core Standards are, in fact, raising the standards for New Hampshire – why has there been little, to no, communication to the parents on what these Standards mean, and how, exactly they benefit our children.
- Approximately 73% of my current property tax bill goes toward funding the local and state school budgets. Virginia Barry stated during her February 6, 2014 testimony that the *Costs Reside with the School Districts, and there will be no significant impact*? What is considered *significant*?
- Virginia Barry also stated that Schools are NOT required to participate in Common Core Standards – however, when questioning the local (Assistant) Superintendents, we were told we would lose Federal Funding tied directly to meal programs as well as Title I / Title II status. When pressed further if we could do without the funding, in order to side-step Common Core, the answer was an emphatic NO.
- Why, as a parent, can I not get the same answers from the School Board, Superintendent(s), Teachers and/or Board of Education Commissioners? Ask the same question and you'll get multiple answers.
- Privacy should be a concern to all, although my local school will be piloting the Smarter Balanced Testing in April (2 months from now) I've yet to receive a Privacy Notice for my signature, assuring that confidential information will NOT be shared.

In closing, I would like to note that I was highly insulted by Commissioner Barry's testimony on February 6th. I am a hard working mother that has searched high and low for the answers as they pertain to Common Core and it's not been easy. I am simply looking to give my children an education better than what I had, and attempting to create *Common Students* across the 50 states is counter intuitive to the ingenuity this great country was built on. Local control and keeping parents informed, is the key to guiding our children to higher education standards. Yes, certain *standards* are necessary to make sure students are on the right track, but not the proposed (and untested / unproven) Common Core Standards. New Hampshire can do better for our children, and we owe it to our children. We should look beyond government's monetary hand, and to the future of our children. After all, our children are worth more than that.

And might I add, if we are *Misinformed Individuals* as Commissioner Barry was so bold to accuse, then it is because of her lack of communication information sharing to parents like myself.

Respectfully,

Kim Pezzetti

