

Hello,

My name is Abigail Gauthier and I am a mathematics teacher of 12 years (3 in CT). I have worked in a variety of school settings (Urban and Suburban) and in a total of three states since beginning my career back in 2002. I was a member of the 6th cohort of the NYC Teaching fellows and I have an undergraduate degree in Applied Mathematics from The George Washington University, Washington DC.

I would like to comment specifically on the Common Core standards. I believe it is a mistake for teachers to confuse the implementation of these standards with both the proposed standardized testing (SBAC) and the teacher evaluation plan. In my opinion, these are three separate issues that are simultaneously affecting education as we know it and my colleagues are too eager to combine them into one general complaint.

As a person who truly loves math and has read the CCSS in mathematics from cover to cover I am a firm believer that they represent the rigor and benchmarks that we have been lacking in Mathematics education for my entire career. Students in this country need to be held to a higher standard that encourages mental manipulation of numbers and understanding how numbers work together so that they can have genuine understanding of real world problems as well as the solutions they get (and be able to interpret the meaning of said solutions). Over the last 12 years I have witnessed a steep drop in students' numeracy skills as well as their willingness to work through a new problem. I have also witnessed a dramatic decrease in the standards to which teachers hold their students and an increase in excuses as to why "today's" kids" just can't handle the expectations that we are setting forth.

As a parent of a first grade student (and a soon to be kindergartner) I can see that the new instruction (while new and somewhat foreign) is really getting students to think about the arithmetic in a way that will hopefully develop a deeper understanding of how to break down and manipulate numbers. I can already see my 6 year old grasping estimation skills that I honestly wish my freshmen would adopt as a way to determine if their solution makes sense.

Overall my point is this, I personally have some issues with SBAC and the teacher evaluation plan and I would be happy to see some major changes made but when it comes to the CCSS I think that the math standards plan the direction that we need to move math education in and it would be a shame to discard or alter them before seeing what the results of their implementation are. Any student in CT (and also the US) should experience the same standards in their K-12 math classes and from my experience in three states this is definitely not the case without the CC.

Sincerely,
Abigail Gauthier

--

Abigail Gauthier
Mathematics Teacher
Stonington High School
860-559-5781