

**Education Committee  
Public Hearing  
Wednesday, March 12, 2014  
Testimony In Support of,  
House Bill 5078, An Act Imposing a Moratorium On The Implementation Of The  
Common Core State Standards**

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Sen. Stillman, Rep. Fleischmann and Ranking Members Sen. Boucher, Rep. Ackert, and members of the Education Committee.

I am a mom of an 8<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grader. I volunteer in an elementary school every day, helping with language arts in a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class. I have a degree in Elementary Education and taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade in an inner city school in Fairhaven, (New Haven) CT. When I first read about the Common Core I thought it was a great idea. The concept totally excited me. I thought how great for every child in every town, country and state to be judged on the same standards; especially living in CT where our state tests are one of the more difficult. I was so excited by this concept, and on paper it sounds wonderful.

I started doing a little of my own research and finding out more about this Common Core, and realized there are problems with it. As a person who went through school Learning Disabled, I really question where this Common Core is going to leave these kids who learn at a slower level. The word "rigorous" is used constantly when describing the Common Core. Children with learning disabilities feel the regular classroom setting is already a "rigorous" one. I am finding in the Language Arts that these children are writing a paragraph in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade after reading a story. My issue that I am seeing is children (all children not just coded ones) don't even know what a paragraph consists of. They can read a paragraph but when asked to write one, they consider one or two sentences a paragraph. They can't even spell half of the words correctly. I do not like the response that we have spell check and our kids don't need spelling. With spell check we need to come close to spelling the words for it to even come up correctly. I feel we are expecting too much from these kids at such an early age. I think we need to focus less on the "rigorous" and more on phonics, spelling and a general foundation of what writing really is in terms of summarizing. I do think as they get into the middle school grades they will be able to perform these tasks, but for the elementary levels we need to give them a strong foundation to build on for years to come. In K-3 grade, students are learning to read after that, they read to learn. Common Core skips this basic step and children are not given the time to learn to read before they must read to learn.

I am submitting a paper my daughter brought home to me. She is a third grader. Please read The Crumb: A Fable and look at the Common Core Standard RL.2 Theme. The question was: What is the theme of 'The Crumb: A Fable' My daughter (who is a good student) was stumped on this question. They are being taught to eliminate the answers that are definitely not the correct ones (one good thing about the Common Core) She crossed all of the answers out. She brought me the paper and said I am stuck. I read it with her. She knew it definitely was not A or B, but she needed it to be explained why it was C. She said to me, but mom it never was his crumb to begin with. He never

picked it up. I have to say I got her point. I had to explain to her why it was C. The sad part is, as she is taking a test no one is going to be able to explain this to her. She is just expected to know it. She is only 8 and still believes in the tooth fairy. These kids have not lived long enough to make inferences. I feel we are trying to have them grow up too quickly and are missing the important steps of learning on the way. Learning is a process not a race. They are going to get stressed out and burnt out quickly.

She woke up this morning and said she had a dream she was taking a test and it scared her. Here is a child who loves school, is a great learner, loves to read and is having dreams about what is to come on Monday. These insecurities are not going to help the "rigorous" classroom they are in.

Another concern I have is the concept with this curriculum every child will learn the same thing. It sounds so great. The kids from the inner cities are going to have the same opportunities as the kids in the suburbs. Learning the same curriculum, taking the same tests!!!! After my teaching experience in Fair haven I can tell you this statement is a little delusional. I worked in a Hispanic community. I only had 5 set of parents who could speak English out of 22 kids. Whatever work these kids were doing at home, they were doing on their own with no parental support. Some worked really hard other missed days and days of school. One child was out of school more than he was in. I had one girl who was lucky if she got a shower once a week. I feel for these kids as well with the Common Core. Where they are learning the same things as suburbs they have a lot more personal stuff going on in their lives and trying to learn the English language as well. They are doing double the work as our suburbs. I knew students who would only get lunch and breakfast at school and they would not have dinner. One of my 4<sup>th</sup> grade students had to take care of her mother when she got home from school. Not to mention the fights that would break out on the streets. I would personally be led to my car at 6:00 at night whether I was ready or not to leave. I had to be out of there so they could lock the parking lot. We expect the same things out of these kids as we do the suburban kids? (I am not saying these issues don't affect the suburban children but, where I worked that was the norm) I just don't think this is a reasonable goal for the Common Core. Children's environment plays the biggest role in a child's life. In theory it works in reality, well you have to decide that one yourself.

I went to a Common Core meeting that they had in our town. I would have been sold on it hook, line, and sinker if it wasn't for my roll as a teacher and parent. Please when discussing the common core take these examples into consideration. I just wanted to give you a little insight from someone who loves education and is an active parent in their child's education.

Thank you for your time and your consideration HB 5078.

Sincerely,  
Carolyn Candelora

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Week Eleven

# Daily Common Core ELA Practice

## Grade 3

Friday

### The Crumb: A Fable

Squirrel saw a crumb of bread on the ground as he was searching for food. "Humph! That little thing," he said and walked past the crumb and search for a larger piece of food. Ant was hungry and came across the same crumb. "Oh wow, a piece of food," he said. Ant quickly grabbed the crumb and ran back to his home. He was glad that he found the crumb to eat for dinner.

Hours passed and Squirrel did not find any more food. He went back to the spot where the crumb was and noticed that it was gone. "Oh no," he said. He went home empty handed.

### The Laughing Squirrel: A Fable

One day Squirrel saw Rabbit with a twig stuck to his leg. "Ha Ha!" he said laughing at Rabbit who had not noticed the piece of twig stuck to him.

"That's not funny," said Rabbit as he pulled off the twig and hopped away. Later that day, Squirrel walked past a group of crows. As soon as they saw Squirrel, they laughed so hard that their bellies hurt.

"What are you laughing at?" questioned Squirrel. They pointed to the leaf that was stuck to his foot. Squirrel grunted and stormed away angry.

### Common Core Standard RL.3 Character Analysis

1. What word best describes Ant?
  - a. dishonest
  - b. tricky
  - c. appreciative

### Common Core Standard RL.2 Theme

2. What is the theme of 'The Crumb: A Fable'?
  - a. Always be honest.
  - b. Never take things from others
  - c. Be thankful for what you have.

### Common Core Standard RL.9 Compare and Contrast Themes, Settings, and Plots

3. Squirrel learned lessons in both stories. What is the lesson that he should have learned in 'The Laughing Squirrel: A Fable'? How is this lesson different from the lesson that he learned in 'The Crumb: A Fable'? Explain your ideas using details from both texts. Use the back of this paper to write your answers.

### Standards Covered This Week

- RL.1 Details
- RL.2 Theme
- RL.3 Character Analysis
- RL.5 Stories, Dramas, and Poems
- RL.9 Compare and Contrast Themes, Settings, and Plots

### Overall Friday Review Progress

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