

11 Mar 2014

To the Education Committee:

Common core is illegal, untested and destructive. You people need to wake up. This will be an election year issue on a scale you cannot imagine. Below is the rest of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Cort Wrotnowski

Admin, Facebook

Stopcommoncoreinct

<http://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com/> - vast info resource

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQbjvy1iSHO> Beth Dimino, 2 min.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCaXTNcNJRI> Mary Calamia, 13 minutes

Common Core using children as guinea pigs

Stamford Advocate, **Wendy Lecker**

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The nationwide rollout of the Common Core standards is an experiment on our children that violates all standards of human subject research.

The Common Core was rushed into schools before the curricula were developed and aligned to the standards, and before the tests were finalized and aligned to the curricula. Alignment is independent verification that a curriculum addresses standards, and that tests assess what the curriculum teaches; and is particularly necessary when high stakes are attached to tests. Those who insist that test scores

should determine teacher effectiveness, school quality and whether a student is ready to graduate have a responsibility to guarantee that the tests actually measure what teachers teach and students learn.

The Common Core is being implemented not only before the curricula and tests are independently deemed valid. The curriculum in many cases is not even written. New York's Education Commissioner admitted that the Common Core curriculum modules are being written as the school year unfolds. A curriculum not yet written cannot be aligned. Likewise, the Common Core tests are not finalized. The tests are being developed independently of the states and school districts; by contractors hired by two multi-state consortia. It is impossible that these unfinished tests are aligned to curricula now being taught.

This type of experimentation would never be allowed in research. Human subject research must adhere to three basic principles: (1) respect for individuals; respecting their autonomy; (2) beneficence; doing no harm and maximizing possible benefits while minimizing risks; and (3) justice; taking special care not to exploit vulnerable groups.

Ethics requires that subjects participate in an experiment knowingly and voluntarily. A recent poll revealed that the majority of Americans know nothing about the Common Core. Moreover, parents, children and teachers had no choice but to comply with the standards and tests.

The most glaring ethical violation concerns the prohibition against doing harm. The focal point of the Common Core is high-stakes standardized testing. We now know that education based on high-stakes tests not only fails to raise achievement but also harms learning, by narrowing the curriculum, increasing anxiety and diverting resources from methods that actually improve achievement. Officials imposing the Common Core knowingly embarked on a course that hurts students. At public hearings, parent after parent told New York's Education Commissioner King that their children now hate school, and children testified about their anxiety and despair. A Greenwich, Connecticut official acknowledged that Common Core testing in 11th grade, when students take AP tests, SATs, SAT subject tests and ACTs, will cause undue stress. Parents and teachers report that the Common Core makes no adjustments for children learning English or students with disabilities.

In rolling out this untested program, officials jeopardize valuable learning time. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that even 10 days of lost learning is a significant deprivation. The Common Core tests are much longer than previous tests. The high stakes attached pressure school districts to spend inordinate amounts of time on test prep. If it turns out that these standards were not a success, our children will be unable to recapture the years lost to an ineffective testing regime.

The Common Core requires massive investments in textbooks, tests, training, and technology. Money is spent on the Common Core experiment at the expense of strategies with a long track record of success, such as high-quality preschool, small class size, wraparound services and extra help for at-risk children.

The benefits of the Common Core are speculative at best. A New York comparison of the 2013 Common Core tests, the previous standards and college completion rates, revealed that the previous standards were better predictors of college readiness. Moreover, the evidence is clear that neither tests nor standards raise achievement. Countries with national standards fare no better than those without, and states with higher standards do no better than states with lower ones. In states with consistent standards, achievement varies widely. The difference in achievement lies in those resources that states are now foregoing to pay for the Common Core.

As for justice, schools serving our most vulnerable students suffer most from a narrow test-based curriculum. A new report in New York reveals that poor children and children of color are least likely to be in schools with libraries, art and music rooms, science, and AP classes. Expanded Common Core testing will disproportionately harm our neediest children.

It is time to ask policy-makers why they made our children guinea pigs in the rush to impose the not-ready-for-prime-time Common Core.

Wendy Lecker is a columnist for Hearst Connecticut Media Group and is senior attorney for the Campaign for Fiscal Equity project at the Education Law Center.