

Testimony

My name is Denise Bard and I am a parent of two school age children in New Milford, and a teacher in Connecticut. I am writing to you today to voice my concerns about the Common Core. In the beginning I had many questions and no one could seem to answer them. Why was everything about Common Core such a secret? I began researching and doing some digging on my own. What I found is that Common Core standards are detrimental to the well rounded education of our children and they serve corporate and political interests and not those of our children.

Common Core was adopted, implemented and imposed on our children without public, legislative or educator discussion. Why the mystery; why weren't parents and school boards consulted about the standards before they were "adopted" by the state. If the Common Core is truly about the education of our children, then why would the most fundamental voices of parents and teachers be unwelcome in this discussion? Because the Common Core Standards amount to the Federal takeover of our children's education.

The Common Core is said to be State led. Everything I have read indicates that States were basically bribed to adopt the Common Core Standards, before they were even written. States had no input into writing these standards. They are copy righted by private trade organizations, which means that CT has no ability to change them to meet the needs of the State or local communities. Common Core proponents will say that the states still have control over their local education; however the Smarter Balance test, which is made specifically to test the Common core standards, will be driving all of Connecticut's future curriculum; So Connecticut has, in effect, lost control of its children's education.

The Standards are said to be "rigorous" and will make our children "college and career ready". There is not a shred of evidence to substantiate that claim. In fact, one of the chief authors of the standards, Jason Zimba, acknowledges that the college level that they are referring to is a 2 year non-competitive community college! What happened to preparing our children for a 4 year competitive college! In addition, two highly qualified educators, Dr. Sandra Stotsky and Dr. James Milgram, who were hand-picked by the Common Core Validation Committee, refused to sign off on the standards. Instead, they referred to the standards as a political document, which is actually written at a very low standard level and will give students an empty skill set. If the standards were really about education, why were their concerns ignored? Also ignored were the concerns that the standards being developmentally inappropriate, by early childhood development experts and organizations. But these standards are going to make our children "College and Career Ready" right?

I am not against pushing our students, I am not against testing, I am not against standards. I am against holding our children to developmentally inappropriate standards. I am against “adopting” standards that numerous experts had grave concerns about and were ignored. I am against the Smarter Balance assessment because it is a computerized adaptive test which was made specifically to test the Common Core Standards. I am against not ever being able to see what questions were asked on the Smarter Balance test. I am against the Smarter Balance providing test questions that undermine parental authority.

In recent years, education has become all about “data”, data on schools, data on teachers, data on children. Where is the data on Common Core? Where is the evidence that this is going to work? A number of experts have testified in other states against the Common Core standards, why is this?

The federal government does not know our children and has no right to be involved in education! Education has been the domain of State government and local school boards. We need to stand up and take control of our children’s education back from the federal government! The way Common Core was implemented proves the federal government is not concerned with the welfare of our children.

I urge you all to truly look into Common Core, Smarter Balance and Data mining before submitting any bills. Common Core needs to go in its entirety. The Smarter Balance Assessment needs to go in its entirety. Data mining and the state wide longitudinal database need to go in their entirety. There is no compromise on this.

Thank You,
Denise Bard
New Milford, CT