

Re: HB 5078

To the Members of the Education Committee:

I am providing written testimony as a parent who originally supported the Common Core State Standards. I am writing to you because I am surprised and disappointed at the lack of organizational readiness at the State level as the field testing is set to begin, and at the disregard shown to parents and families who have concerns and reservations about participating in the field tests.

Whether or not the Common Core State Standards is the right approach, it is clear that we are not ready to move forward with field testing. In our district, we've done our best to prepare. But there hasn't been enough time, resources, or information.

At the middle school, field testing for 7th and 8th graders will have to take place over a two-month period because we don't have enough network bandwidth. So, for the next two months:

- All student schedules will be disrupted to accommodate proctors and other resources needed for the test.
- Some of our classes have to triple in size.
- Computers will not be available to students for anything other than field testing.

Some issues we're facing district-wide:

- No one knows if our computer systems have the capacity to actually handle the number of computers that will be brought online.
- We don't know if the batteries will last through a whole testing session, or if they will recharge in time for the next group to take the test.
- Teachers are still being trained on how to administer the test.
- Students and teachers are losing precious class time in preparing for a field test.
- 11th graders will lose 8 - 12 hours of class time, even though they met Connecticut State requirements by taking the CAP Test last year.
- Parents are being told their students are required to take the field test. (I haven't yet found the state law that requires students in Connecticut to take a field test.)
- Many parents have requested information from our district and from our schools about opting out, and some have written to refuse field testing. The responses to parents vary widely, even from within a single school.

Finally, I am concerned about the waste of taxpayer money in implementing a field test, at a cost of approximately \$27.30 per student. Why are we paying to provide data to an organization, and spending time, money and local resources on a field test, when we will get nothing in return?

These are all issues that can --- and should --- be addressed before we move forward with Common Core.

To be clear: every single person I've spoken with in the Office of Education has been courteous and as helpful as possible. But the fact is, the lack of operational readiness and organization at the State level means we aren't ready to implement this without major disruptions and operational problems in every school. It would be a disservice to students and to the parents and a waste of taxpayer's money to continue moving forward now.

It's time to take a step back, and get this right. We're not ready yet, and this has important, long-term implications for the future of education in Connecticut. If that means we need to stop or delay implementation of Common Core, then I urge you to pass HB 5078.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Marian Breeze

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