

Testimony on Common Core

March 11, 2014

Dear Committee,

I am submitting testimony to you today on behalf of my family, parents, teachers, and experts in education who are seeking to see CT reverse course on its implementation of Common Core. I am also supportive of the establishment of parental rights legislation, strengthened regulations on privacy for our students, and the abolition of the SEED program.

You will have had the opportunity to hear all the facts about common core that you were likely never told and were not available on the "official" sites. My testimony today attempts to point out what the SDE's adoption of Common Core means to us as a symptom of a great problem - one that you have the power to correct and that we citizens would have you correct.

I am a parent, a small business owner in the tech field, and I am well aware of the challenges our children face. I am a second generation American whose family valued education. I would argue that I am uniquely in a position to know better than most people who recite the mantra "preparedness for college and career".

As a graduate of the "old" system of education, I find it troubling that those in our current public education system have taken to sales tactics to sell the public on an idea. That idea is that if we don't do something in public education our children will not be prepared. The solution has long been to allow the State and now the federal Government to assert what that solution would be. I regret that the actions are not consistent with the actions of any business or any leader that would want to be successful.

Let's look at some of what has been done:

1. Tax-payer money redirected out of districts and redistributed into districts deemed as being needy. In the districts that this redistribution is supposed to benefit, a culture of teachers as second class citizens has been created and hostile students are pervasive. There is no baseline for acceptable behavior and the tax-payers and local boards have no authority in maintaining a system that is safe, secure, and does the greatest good for those who want to be there and are able to conduct themselves appropriately in the public school environment.
2. Title I funding is now seen as a viable revenue source as districts try to get as many people on the free and reduced lunch programs as possible. Taking pride in a self-sufficient community and communities helping their own is apparently not as favorable as Towns being welfare recipients.
3. The State entering into agreements with the Federal Government on Educational Standards and in exchange for the promise of access to funding or waivers.

4. The State placing mandates on municipalities that it has not adequately funded. Common core is resulting in the need for technology funding at a recurring expense that will need to be redone in only a few years as hard technology loses its value and reliability over time.

5. The loosening of privacy regulations that would protect our and our children's information. The corporatization of education coupled with loosening of privacy laws and big data projects spells "new markets" as Bill Gates was quoted saying. The idea and current open door that exists where data from us and our children may somehow be used to either predict their future strengths, weaknesses, or preferences is unacceptable and another violation of our Constitutional rights.

I do not see how any of these actions have worked toward improving the ability for my children to be prepared for college and career. In fact, a recent assignment given right here in Wallingford's 6th grade demonstrates that, as parents, we need to be protecting our children from historically inaccurate propaganda. A sixth grade who has no understanding of government, politics, the economy, foreign policy, etc., should not have to write a persuasive piece that explains how President Obama's "accomplishments" are positive for the country.

When it comes to Common Core, there are two sources of information. One source tells us how good common core is for us. These proponents are almost always tied to money, promises, or corporate interests. The other source comes from parents, teachers, and other citizens who are concerned for the welfare of our posterity. We believe in Public Education and are willing to fight for it, but Public Education is best when it is controlled locally by the many and not mandated by the few. We know that the success of our country does not come from a prescription for all people handed down from the top, but rather a nurturing of children by families and a community (as represented by a BoE, PTA, etc..) that comes from the locality.

Questions/Comments you may hear

So much has already been done, we can't simply change course?

So much was done because our system of government failed. Any Federal program should be scrutinized by the State Legislature. It was not. The result is that the SDE implemented policies that committed municipalities to unproven standards and untold expenses without a discussion. The system of government must be preserved and in my opinion that means rolling back Common Core even if some good ideas exist.

What precedent does the Common Core and SDE's Tyrannical Policies Set?

1. A small group of people in the state and without checks and balances can decide for all citizens in the State what will be mandated.
2. Federal directives need not be scrutinized by the State Legislature to determine the value or detriment to the State.

Common Core does contain some good components?

Anything that the Common Core may offer of benefit can be chosen to implement locally without the obligations currently associated with its adoption.

Allow me to leave you with the following idea. If the State of Connecticut wants to help our children, may I suggest it seek to build our economy to draw and retain businesses, and cease its experiments in social engineering and government sponsored social justice. The government was never intended to be the distributor of equality. A delicate system of checks and balances were instituted so that all people could enjoy a path to enlightenment, property ownership, etc.. Connecticut was once a leader in such arguments and has since lost its way. We no longer view ourselves as Connecticuters striving to build an economically strong state who attracts the best and brightest from other states. Instead we are a state of redistribution, tax burdens, and of leadership that is progressively giving away our freedoms for that next monetary fix or because those in positions of decision making do not know where they come from.

Please make a Statement by Supporting Legislation that will Stop Common Core and restore local control over education.

Respectfully,

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