

March 11, 2014

Patricia Charles  
Superintendent  
Middletown Public Schools

RE: Testimony for HB 5078, An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee on Education:

I would like to express my concern regarding HB 5078. As written, this bill jeopardizes funding to our neediest children and poorest districts. Middletown is an Alliance district. Our Alliance funds finance teachers, coaches, materials and supports which are directly tied to Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The provision in HB 5078 to stop the quarterly allotment of funds for work tied to the Common Core until a study of CCSS and SBAC can be completed would be devastating. This would result in the loss of jobs and critical instructional supports if enacted as proposed.

Further, reverting back to old curricula negates the work already accomplished. Our teachers have spent countless hours developing curricula aligned with the CCSS. Middletown Public Schools has devoted professional development over the last three years to integrating CCSS into our courses. We are proud of our success in designing lessons that make these standards meaningful and increase critical thinking and problem solving in the classroom. We have been doing this diligently on a barebones budget. Instead of a moratorium on implementing Common Core, we need adequate funding and professional development to continue to do this work.

However, I support the components of this bill that provide a more measured approach to implementing Smarter Balanced Assessments. Find a solution that provides the research and study of the Smarter Balanced Assessments to ensure that they are valid and reliable measures of student achievement. Implement SBAC after being vetted. If field tests are required, do so with a sample group rather than testing every student. Extend the decoupling of teacher evaluation to SBAC results until we are certain that it is a fair and valid measure of student learning and ultimately teacher performance.

Amend HB 5078, An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards to include:

- Support professional development and materials with the funding needed to implement CCSS.
- Research and revise as needed CCSS to ensure they are developmentally appropriate.
- Research SBAC to ensure the test is valid and reliable.
- Extend the decoupling of teacher evaluation to SBAC results.
- Do not halt the funding to Alliance districts. The consequences would be devastating.