

Dear State of Connecticut Education Committee Member,

I would like to express my concerns regarding HB No. 5078 and HB 5331 in writing. I am greatly disturbed that the reforms being implemented in the State of Connecticut, which mirror those taking place in the country, are misguided and serve as a one-size-fits-all process with serious flaws:

- I am concerned that the new Common Core State Standards in both Math and ELA have received many criticisms about their developmental appropriateness and usage, and feel that both parents and teachers should be given the opportunity to understand them fully, and provide feedback on how their use is impacting my child. The ELA is particularly concerning to me. My child has always had a love of writing and story-telling. The new approach has turned her off to writing and it is difficult to keep her attention on writing assignments for fear she will get it “wrong.”
- I am concerned that the State of Connecticut has developed a P20 database called the “Preschool through 20 Workforce Information Network“ which was funded through the federal government, under the ARRA. I understand this will hold personal data including educational records and assessment data, and other data collected and shared across various state agencies, on our children from pre-school through college. This is especially disconcerting because the federal law (FERPA) to protect their personally identifiable information has been changed to allow sharing with outside organizations of personal information on my children.
- I am most concerned that my child this year is being used as “guinea pig” to help validate a product called the Smarter Balanced Assessment without my fully-informed consent, and insinuating that it is legally required, instead of giving a yearly assessment (like the CMT) of their learning as required by state statute. I have seen the sample tests online and I know that my child has not been properly prepared for this exam. Our schools have had technology paras cut from our budget. Her online time is extremely limited. I cannot imagine how she will use the computer to complete a one-hour exam. The AAP – American Academy of Pediatrics – suggests limits of screen time to one – two hours. And now my child is expected to take online exams for one hour at a time. Four times over a two week period?
- I am concerned that my child’s teacher will at some future point be evaluated in great part based on the result of an entirely new and untested type of assessment. And as research shows, it could be detrimental to both students and teachers to tie a teacher evaluation to a standardized test score, and this practice should be eliminated altogether.

As a parent, I strongly believe we need to step back and assess how this will impact our children moving forward. As many other states are seeing, this is not the best course for us to take at this time.

Sincerely,

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