

Testimony for Common Core Hearings on March 12, 2014

I am writing concerning the hearings about the Common Core State Standards Curriculum guidelines. I am a high school science teacher, a member of the EW BOE, and a parent of 2 school age children. **From all 3 of these perspectives, I am certain that the Common Core is good for CT schools and children.** It provides a common foundation for all schools in the state (and eventually across the country) to build their curriculum from. This is forcing schools to update curriculum, but that is a good thing. Curriculum should be a living document that is continually changing. Far too many school districts have not updated curriculum in years. Schools do need professional development time and some financial resources, but those items should have already at least partially existed in school budgets.

Also, the Common Core increases the rigor and will move our students toward the levels of learning that are occurring in other countries. Many studies (including an excellent one by Cornell University titled "Which Secondary Education Systems Work Best? The United States or Northern Europe?" by John H. Bishop and an excellent book ("The Smartest Kids in the World" by Amanda Ripley) make it abundantly clear that the US needs to move to the Common Core. We need to challenge kids more and ensure that they receive the skills needed to compete in the global world we live in.

What I think is really causing all the uproar is the new teacher evaluation system, the SBAC on-line testing, and the Common Core all being implemented at the same time, with pressure on all sides on teachers. We need to allow time for these changes to occur before we start "grading" schools based on the SBAC scores. Also, Governor Malloy's changes to the SEED evaluation system requirements should help reduce the stress on teachers.

So, please do not change the required Implementation of Common Core. Maybe provide more resources or have a year where SBAC results will not be published on a per school basis. But Common Core is a good and very necessary change.

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