

Christine O'Neil- Teacher Blackham School- Bridgeport

In opposition to HB 5078

I teach middle school science in Bridgeport, as well as a literacy and mathematics intervention block. These past two years have been difficult as a teacher. Not only have teachers faced struggles within our respective classrooms, but we have also dealt with several new systems being implemented simultaneously. Changes in how we are evaluated, new assessments and a shift in curricula have all had problems as they were rolled out, and there has been more than one time over the last two years where I have felt frustration and anger at the changes we are being asked to implement.

But I didn't take this job because it was easy. I don't think any teacher decided to teach because it was easy. Transforming our youth into the leaders of the future is not a small task, and is not for the faint of heart. The new common core standards have taken an already difficult task and made it even more challenging. Helping get my students to apply skills across content areas is not easy. Asking them to think critically and abstractly to connect content strands to the real world is a terrifying prospect.

My kids are nervous about what they are being asked to do. I am scared about how I can elevate my teaching to help students become critical thinkers and lifelong learners. I am also worried about potential failure as we transition to these more rigorous standards. **But I am more scared about what will happen to our students or our future society if we don't make this adjustment and hold all students to the same high expectations necessary for college and a career.** True, we need to give teachers the support and tools to do this work. True, we will face challenges and maybe even failure over the next few years. Despite this, I am asking you, our elected leadership, to please keep the Common Core. Please help raise the bar and prepare our students for their futures.