

Although the Content Standards for the Common Core are by far better than the current Connecticut Standards, the implementation and development of curriculum to meet the CC standards and the constant assessments by districts have been the concerns for many parents.

The educators continue to impose their progressive philosophies of education to meet these higher level content standards. As a result, students are trying to learn skills in the abstract; rather than learning skills tied to content. Administration believes that students can only master these higher content standards through student center learning, self-discovery and mindless informational text. We need to meet these higher content standards through teacher led instruction, more skill practice, and an increase level of complex text and historical content text. Please help guide the State Board of Education and Districts to see that the implementation and continual assessments will never bring these students to the level of content mastery presented in the Common Core Standards. We need to stop teaching to the tests!!

As a parent of Fairfield Public School students, I ask that the Common Core Standards remain, as they are better than Connecticut Standards, but I ask that implementation and continual formative assessments be the subject of debate.

Please read my last two articles on the Common Core implementations in Fairfield Public Schools, as well as last year's fiasco with the implementation of Common Core Algebra 1 standards in an "alleged pilot program" that violated the State Statute, and harmed the education of over 800 plus Algebra 1 students. The CT State Board of Education voted to investigate Fairfield's use of an Algebra 1 text book.

Connecticut Post : Beyonce, Pepsi and the common core - Published 4:46 pm, Tuesday, March 4, 2014-

for full article see this website -

<http://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Beyonce-Pepsi-and-the-common-core-5288608.php>

Parents have been told that the Common Core Standards were developed to "include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills." As a parent of eighth grade students in the Fairfield Public School, I query the choice of educational content and implementation methods being used in the English classrooms.

My eighth-grade children have been watching videos in English class, taking notes on topics, and then comparing their notes with peers. Is this how our administrators are aligning with the Common Core Standards? Just recently, they watched three videos on Chocolate Milk.

The assignments devolved to even less educational topics as the week progressed: Should Beyonce endorse Pepsi? Should "trash talk" be banned from schools; and should parents of students who bully be fined? More concerning, these articles are based on "Junior Scholastic" publications. Is our District actually purchasing this material?

Students cannot learn skills in the abstract; rather, skills should be tied to content if they are to be learned effectively. For non-fiction, students should be reading primary documents that are historical in nature to introduce students to civics, complex readings and sophisticated vocabulary, instead of perfunctory topics that sound like they came from People Magazine or The National Enquirer?

Our board members should be voting on a comprehensive curriculum document that identifies whether our children will be learning about Beyonce and Chocolate Milk or more challenging content, like Greek mythology and historical non-fiction documents. We all need to ask the questions, and then demand the answers. Otherwise, why waste the time and money on new standards that have promised to bolster intellectualism for the 21st century without knowing the curricular content.

Strategic education plan needed: In response to an Opinion Letter written by Joan Fortuna, a senior in Fairfield (Minuteman, Feb. 14):

Published: Wednesday, February 19, 2014

for full article see this website -

<http://www.minutemannewscenter.com/articles/2014/02/19/fairfield/life/doc5304c29cb2563767641530.txt>

The curriculum is weak and there is too much emphasis on the administration of District assessments. Fairfield has strong teachers who want to teach, but are forced to spend too much time on District initiatives and teaching methodologies that have been ineffective over the last several years. My eighth grade children are reading a science text book aloud in class; yes, one student at a time. Sounds more like elementary school! Hence, most students have taken the path of least resistance, and zone out! In Algebra 1 classes, students are administered nine District assessments (SBAC aligned) throughout the year. Students are told not to study since questions might be unfamiliar to them, and their scores will not count toward their cumulative grade — a waste of precious instructional time. As for English Language Arts, my eighth grade children have never been directly taught grammar, spelling or vocabulary in elementary or middle school, as it is not part of the Fairfield Curriculum. If students do not get this instruction at home, then they will never know how to identify a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, unless they take a World Language. Oh I forgot, the District cut daily World Language instruction from the curriculum until seventh grade! Students have never been asked to read, discuss or analyze classic literature: Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Little Women, or The Call of the Wild. Since the curriculum does not allow for assigned classroom novels, students select books of their choice to read independently - basically anything from Diary of a Wimpy Kid to Twilight Series. The District curriculum expects students to learn vocabulary on their own through the context of these self-selected books ... Can you imagine?

Although administrators are continually proclaiming that our students will be ready with “21st Century Skills” because of this new “rigorous” and “authentic” teaching, I wonder if they really know what that means. Are our administrators just putting a new label on the methods of instruction that they have been implementing over the last several years, as well as administrating too many inconclusive District developed assessments?

Area Math Group Speaks Out on Proposed Changes in Fairfield -

Published: Tuesday, November 27, 2012;

for full article see this website -

http://www.minutemannewscenter.com/articles/2012/11/27/fairfield/opinion/op_ed/doc50abfeaa1c3e8970433044.txt

This year, the Fairfield School District has decided to purchase and utilize textbooks and a curriculum from an outside source, College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM). They are utilizing the State's shift to the Common Core Curriculum Standards as an impetus for this change. Curriculum Leaders from other Connecticut districts, such as Westport, Darien, Wilton, Weston, and Farmington have elected to use their current textbooks and build a Mathematics Curriculum to align with the Common Core Curriculum Standards for Mathematics.

The Fairfield district has already implemented the new curriculum, College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM), in the eighth and ninth grade Algebra I classes, as well as Algebra II classes in the high school.

The CPM textbook and curriculum uses an instructional method that is based on the premise that students need to build (construct) knowledge for themselves in cooperative learning groups, rather than be taught formulas and problem solving in the traditional way that we, as parents, were instructed. On a daily basis, students work in small groups for two-thirds of their classroom time with supplemental guidance from their teachers.

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