



Date March 11, 2014

Dear Senator Guglielmo,

We hope that your legislative session is going well. We, the Connecticut Speech Language Hearing Association's (CSHA's) School Leadership Council, are writing as your constituents. We are a council of licensed and certified Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) from districts across Connecticut.

You may already be aware of Raised Bill 5078, **An Act Imposing A Moratorium on the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards**, which is currently on the Senate Calendar. With all due respect, we are asking that roll out of curriculum and assessments derived from the Common Core State Standards *not be halted*. The CCSS were adopted in 2010. This is only our third year in acclimating to the most appropriate paradigm shift in education in years. The Core is the vehicle that will effectively prepare our children for global interaction and success in the 21st century. We should not drop the ball on this initiative as we have with so many other initiatives in the past before we have had the chance to implement with fidelity.

The CCSS are a fundamental construct that is research based and developmentally appropriate. Those that argue against the CCSS do not have a complete understanding of its learning progressions, which are coherent and based on extensive scholarly research and evidence. In English Language Arts, the standards are built upon the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) frameworks. The mathematics standards are constructed from findings from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The learning progressions within each CCSS strand lead to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

It is NOT the Core itself that is the challenge. Rather, it is the *significant change in instructional practice and pedagogy* that must take place across all content areas for our children to be successful. It is our position that the state and its legislature should be focusing efforts on guiding and coaching our certified staff as they make this dramatic shift in professional practice.

From a speech and language perspective, we are adamantly in favor of the Core as it requires all adults in the student's learning environment to be highly cognizant of the language underpinnings of the curriculum framework and adjust their instruction accordingly. This shift in instructional practice, differentiated design of learning activities, and focus on language development and effective communication will result in Connecticut's children becoming metacognitive thinkers and active problem solvers. Students will not simply be passive learners but will be able to explain what they have learned, how they have learned it, and justifiably argue their positions. Connecticut's students will become consumers of factual information and be able to differentiate fact from fiction in our every growing technological, information age. Most importantly, the CCSS are constructed in such as way as to produce rational, effective

communicators that can work with others to solve problems, produce products and achieve goals as opposed to producing students who are independent silos of information.

This is the first time in our state that curriculum is in alignment across all districts. The CCSS aligns Connecticut with 45 other states as well. We understand and respect that certified education staff are extremely concerned about tying our professional evaluations to student achievement in a newly adopted, rigorous curriculum. We also understand that parents and family members may be concerned about the content and change in learning they are seeing or hearing about. It is because of this that we ask that our legislators not to delay the implementation of the CCSS but to allow the state to guide and coach teachers through this learning curve and instead delay or adapt the new teacher evaluation policy and procedures accordingly. We need to be able to implement the CCSS successfully and *with fidelity* before we can evaluate our progress with any type of validity.

We would more than happy to discuss these concerns with you further, and welcome your attendance at any of our local meetings. Thank you for your hard work and attention to our concerns.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Connecticut Speech Language & Hearing Association

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