

Dear Legislature:

Will Connecticut's policy makers have THE COURAGE to stand up against corporate reformers (their centerpieces are common core standards and teacher evaluation systems) and their fast talking representatives (Stephan Pryor is a good example) or will you be "seduced" along with the rest of the crowd? And by "crowd" I mean all those who dabble in education; who want to be involved in it but never roll up their sleeves and do the hard work of teaching IN the classroom everyday with students – a hundred or more of them if you are teaching high school.

Corporate reformers who wish to privatize education have duped both the media, teacher and administrative training programs, and many politicians into believing there is a "national crisis" – a disaster everywhere! Villifying teachers and their unions across the board suits this end. They have played a savvy game in the media and national spotlight. The final result will be the end to public education. Is that what's really best for our nation in the end? To play to and satisfy a few elite so that they may burnish their bank accounts even more is a tragic end to the history of and importance of public education in our country. And it will be a turning point that will take years to recover from, if at all.

Please, please do not let our educational institutions here in CT turn into "Wisconsin", an "Alabama" or many of our southern states. Have the courage to tell corporate reformers and their sponsors/supporters that some things are just too valuable to driven by or based on profits and education is one of them. Students are human beings, not products or commodities to be bought and sold. We can also become the most technologically advanced society in the world, but if our young people cannot adequately read, write or have critical thoughts because they are spending most of their day in a cubicle with tablets and a cache of the latest software rather than trained teachers working through things with them, then we surely will become a second rate society.

Teachers are not fooled by all of their (reformers, etc) continued escalation of expectations, their "edu-speak" on steroids (just listen to Stephan Pryor speak for 10 minutes!), their constant fear-mongering, and neither should you be.

Education will never be alright; it will never survive unless politicians and education leaders stop the exploitation of it for profits and career advancement. They must unroll themselves from constant data collecting, testing, the latest "institutional research" and new technologies, and the obsession that the characteristics of good teaching or a good teacher can be defined in a box. (Of course, keeping the public focused on this serves their purpose quite nicely, doesn't it!)

Will you have the courage to stand up and say, THE SHOW MUST NOT GO ON? Or will you play the game, going round and round to spin, twist and destroy one of the most important institutions of our society? Let Connecticut be the one to lead the way out of this pathetic movement, not become another follower of it!!

Sincerely,  
Nancy Hammarstrom, Teacher