

To the CT State Department of Education,

Thank you for listening to our concerns, and there are many. With so many changes, it has become too difficult to feel as though I, as an 18 year teacher, have a handle on all of my work. I am overwhelmed with demands from the school, the parents, the students, and then add in three new computer programs or changes to existing ones, and a new evaluation plan that ties my work into the success of my students. Wow! When we had a seminar with Mr. Costas, he said that we could potentially be fired if we do not comply with all the directives coming from State Dept. of Ed, and we have to have our students working up to a standard we have never seen or worked with, until this year. (The SBAC testing)

We have found that the Common Core, especially in English/Language Arts, is all the standard work we cover in a year of teaching. We attempt to touch on every item in that small brown book, and when I began highlighting what I did, I found I was highlighting the entire book. I understand that it is a great resource for new teachers, but seasoned teachers are very aware of their content and subject matter. We are also aware of what our students need for high school and college, and I direct my teaching to those standards as well, and they match the Common Core well.

I don't think it is fair to have our teacher evaluations tied to all the Data Teaming information we have to keep now on our students. It is just extra work, and it is very tedious. It shows what we evaluate about every students during the first two weeks of school. I know what levels they are working at, and can easily identify what they need to work on to succeed in our technological world. I cannot keep reams of data and plan lessons, complete grading in a timely manner, and have my plans ready for the Administration on time. I found this year has been too difficult to keep up with all this work, and am trying to find other teachers to help me with the new computer programs as well. This takes time out of their busy schedules, and that is not fair either. We needed more training classes prior to throwing all this at us. I have never felt so overwhelmed in my life, except for maybe the first year of teaching. At least that was without Data Teaming and being afraid to be fired because my students may not live up to the State of CT's standards. I have a high concentration of special education and 504 students, and this is simply unfair, as they may not be able to succeed to the level the State requires, and that would make us all feel as if the work we did this year was for naught. Please slow it down, give us more training, lessen the demands for data from students, and allow us to TEACH! Thank you, Karen Webster – Long River Middle School, Regional District 16, Prospect, CT.