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Good afternoon!! My name is Susan Goodenough and I am a literacy coach for grades K-6 in the Winchester School System. I just wanted to add some thought to the common core and the teacher evaluation process.
First of all, I have to say I went into both with an open mind and a willingness to give it a try. I knew this school year would be an extremely difficult and stressful one but, little did I know, HOW difficult and stressful it would be.
Let's start with the Common Core. I have been a teacher for the past 29 years. I taught first grade for 22 years, third grade for one year and then went back to school and got my 6th year in Reading and have been a reading teacher for the past 6 years. I have always had very high expectations for my any student that I have worked with. I strongly believe that this is absolutely necessary in order for the student to learn. I work in a low income town where there is not a strong belief in education so I believe the teachers are who need to put the love of learning into the students. I think there are many strong, valid points to the common core but when you have students coming into Kindergarten and they don't even know what their name looks like or have any letter recognition, then it makes it very difficult to teach to the common core. Some of our students, as I am sure is true of many communities in the nation, come to school already far behind the expectations and it is almost impossible to catch them up. Add difficult behaviors and lack of parental support and a whole host of other "teacher responsibilities" and you have a program that is set up to fail. Yes, I do believe each child who wants to go to college should be able to but, unless we have high expectations at home as well, there is very little we can do to achieve this. I also, think that teachers have been given VERY little support and training in the Common Core--all of a sudden, it's here and teachers need to do it. What other profession is expected to change everything with little or no training? In a town such as Winchester, there is no money or interest in anything educational so either teachers need to spend their own money on supplies/training/etc. or just "wing it" and see what happens.
As far as the teacher evaluation goes, it is extremely stressful and time consuming. Wouldn't it make more sense to just have principals just walk in and see what is happening on a regular basis? The time and stress I put into putting a pre, post observation plus the mid year evaluation has been tremendous. Wouldn't it be more reasonable for teachers to spend that time actually planning more than one lesson? It has pitted teachers against each other (why is she a 4 and I am only a 2?) sort of thing. There has been many professional problems that have never happened before. Teachers used to be collaborative and be able to work together--now I find much more anger and

resentment between individuals and groups. I believe this has to do with both the stress level and the amount of time and work it takes to do any of the evaluation items. I have nothing against hard work (which I believe is true for most teachers) but I do believe in working hard for a reason and not just to satisfy state requirements. What other professionals do we treat this way? I see a huge number of teachers who are burnt out. This not only applies to seasoned veterans but to new teachers as well. Think about what we expect our new teachers to do--TEAM, SLO's, several observations, etc. Who does this to their beginning employees? Don't we want the best we can have? Let's not scare them off. Thank you for listening, Susan Goodenough