

TO: State Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt
State Senator Paul Farrow

FROM: Diana Radtke, Voter & Taxpayer

DATE: October 22, 2013

RE: Common Core Concerns

Gentlemen,

Because of my work schedule, I have not been able to attend any of your town-hall information sessions, unfortunately. I am a very concerned citizen that votes on Constitutional principles. I also am a conservative (Independent) and do not like the direction our government (and country) is going.

I am NOT in favor of any part of Common Core. I especially disagree with the Federal Government running our educational system, and would like to encourage you to help us bring it back to the local/ county/state level.

This isn't for myself. I am a Grandmother of 10 (and counting) and **care about the younger generations' education.** I don't like the idea of various subjects such as history, being watered down, "recreated," or rewritten. One son who has 4 in public schools shared info with me and stated "they are dumbing down my kids."

However, my MAIN concern is the DATA-MINING. I don't believe the general public knows about the 400 facts that will be tracking their children, for YEARS. This is not good, no – it's dangerous.

These are the main 3 areas that concern me for the future of our wonderful America, and the next generation.

I am thankful that one of my daughters is homeschooling her 4 children. Many families I know are now talking about homeschooling. Please investigate this thoroughly, and stand strong for our Constitution. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

God Bless,

Jeremy,

I wasn't able to attend the Public Hearing on Common Core but did want to offer my thoughts on this subject.

Assuming the Reporter was accurate in their quotes following the meeting I want to reiterate what Jim Seibert and Aaron Sadoff presented at the meeting. Common Core was not generated by the Department of Education, it was developed by educators. It is not a step in Federalization of our schools. It is a baseline national standard that allows us to see how our students are performing versus the rest of the state and country. School Districts are free to target achievement beyond Common Core and locally establish their own standards that do this.

I serve on the West Bend School Board, and like Fond du Lac and North Fond du Lac, that district has been developing programs and plans for quite some time to smoothly adopt Common Core as our baseline standard. There has been an enormous investment in time and money in this project. If Wisconsin veered away from Common Core there would be much more than being an outlier on standards in the country. Starting over would have an academic and fiscal impact as well.

As Jim and Aaron said at the public hearing, there is a good bit of misinformation and incomplete information about Common core floating about these days. From my own public service I know how difficult it is to get the pulse of what the public really thinks. People who feel strongly about issues usually show up at hearings and meetings. If I voted on the school board based on a stick count of who was present at a meeting and was for or against a particular item. As public officials we have to listen to all sides of issues and then apply our judgment as to what makes sense, not just consider who spoke the most or the loudest.

For something like Common Core a relatively few number of people are opposed to the concept, but they are vocal. The same is true for those that are well informed and support moving forward with Common Core as a baseline national standard – there aren't very many of them either. The 80% in the middle who don't really know anything about it, and in some cases don't care, rely on public officials to do the homework, understand the issue and do the right thing.

You would be hard pressed to find a school administrator in Wisconsin who believes it would be anything short of disaster to veer away from Common Core at this point. These are people who, like you up to the time you were elected, have devoted their career to education and doing the right things for our kids. As a group they are vigorously using the tools given to us by Act 10 to stabilize the fiscal positions of schools across the state, while still maintaining a level of respect and support for our teachers. Their depth of understanding far exceeds folks who gain their information from blogs and newsletters.

I urge you to give thoughtful and well informed people like Jim and Aaron a high level of credibility as you report back to the legislature.

Thanks,

Rick W. Parks, CPCU
President & CEO
Society Insurance

I am sorry I was unable to attend your hearing on the Common Core. I would like to register my support of the Common Core and also my support for all schools receiving State funds to be held accountable to the same standards and assessment of student progress.

Thank you,
Nancy Hackbarth

Rep. Thiesfeldt:

The hearing on Common Core Standards was great and very informative. It was a brilliant move to invite Dr. Stotsky for a perspective different from the DPI women.

Thanks to you and the others on the panel for organizing the hearings and going around the state to inform the citizens.

Respectfully and most appreciatively,

Jeanette Rinke

jarinke@charter.net

Fond du Lac

I support any and all efforts to block common core curriculum in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin can and must do better than that Please keep up the fight.

Your Wisconsin voter.....

Dear Senator Farrow, Representative Thiesfeldt, and members of the committee considering the Common Core Standards,

I am writing to express my support to continue the use of the Common Core Standards for Reading and Mathematics as adopted three years ago.

I've been in the field of education for the past 30 years and, have thus, seen a number of educational initiatives -- some good, some not as much -- come and go. With this perspective, I would place the Common Core Standards (CCS) most solidly in the "good" column.

These new higher standards paint a clearer picture for schools than previous standards of what's required for students to be successful in college or on a career path and keep us competitive at a global level. Schools and districts have embraced this clear vision, investing significant resources to date in professional and curriculum development.

Adoption of the Common Core Standards has helped districts and schools come together in positive ways for the benefit of ALL learners in the state of Wisconsin. Far from dictating curriculum and instructional practices for local schools, the CCS have opened the door to discussions of what approaches will be most effective for the students served by each district and school.

I understand the criticisms that the CCS appeared to be adopted quickly by the state. At the time of adoption, Wisconsin was on the path to updating and vetting its own standards. It takes courage, I believe, to recognize a better path when you have committed energy toward building your own. And that's what DPI had. The time it took for DPI to adopt the CCS masks the considerable years of effort and expertise that went into the development of the CCS and the extensive insight of the members of the WI standards committee to recognize the quality of that work.

I'm hopeful that each member of the committee has taken the time to review the CCS for Mathematics and Reading and to consider for his/herself where the controversy lies. Here are selections of standards for reading across grade bands:

Kindergarten: Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.

Grade 5: Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

Grade 8: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Grade 11-12: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text

I see no controversy here. These are skills and strategies that I think we can agree that we want all Wisconsin students to be able to do well. There are multiple, innovative, research-based ways that each and every school in Wisconsin can choose to help students reach these standards.

Are the CCS perfect? Of course not. But rather than throw out the entire set and start from scratch, I implore you to instead set in place a plan to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the CCS as they are enacted and take measured means to improve them.

Respectfully,
Heidi Erstad
Glendale, WI

Comments from a retired teacher- home district in 3rd year of implementation

I was appalled to hear all the outright lies at the hearing. I'll be specific.

False testimony:

Students do not need to know the context of the Gettysburg Address.

Western literature is being replaced with EPA pamphlets.

Actual statement from Common Core document:

Given space limitations, the illustrative texts listed above are meant only to show individual titles that are representative of a range of topics and genres. (See Appendix B for excerpts of these and other texts illustrative of grades 6–12 text complexity, quality, and range.) At a curricular or instructional level, within and across grade levels, texts need to be selected around topics or themes that generate knowledge and allow students to study those topics or themes in depth.

False testimony:

Students do not need to give the right answers in math. Right answers are being replaced with math fluency and estimation.

CCSS.Math.Content.3.NBT.A.2 Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.

False testimony:

Common Core standards were written without local control or input.

Fact: The common core state standards drafting process relied on teachers and standards experts from across the country. In addition, there were many state experts that came together to create the most thoughtful and transparent process of standard setting. This was only made possible by many states working together.

I personally know local people who said they were involved in the process.

Misleading testimony:

Teachers who testify in favor of Common Core are not telling the truth.

Truth: I personally talked to dozens of teachers before coming to the hearing. I am not in a position of power. So there positive comments were not lies.

History of anti-common core movement

-Koc funded Heritage foundation on Fox- responsible for 24 million tons of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere in 2012

-Dick and Betsy DeVos-school privatization activists who gave over 1 ½ million to the Walker campaign in 2011

-Next generation science standards will teach climate change

-Obamacore- opponents need to state specific objections, not Fox News talking points

Duke Pesta, who testified in Fond du Lac, sells curriculum to home schoolers. He has a financial stake in making sure the Common Core is defeated. On his website, he warns of national sex standards. He says Common Core is “one size, fits all” which it is definitely not. On his website, he says Common Core was designed by the very liberal and progressive Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Here is their actual mission statement: “We see equal value in all lives. And so we are dedicated to improving the quality of life for individuals around the world. From the education of students in Chicago, to the health of a young mother in Nigeria, we are catalysts of

human promise everywhere.”

They seem to be much better Christians than Duke Pesta!

My personally viewed Positives on Common Core:

-children who move to a new district or state are not burdened with learning a new “language” in school.

-Common Core standards are specific and meaningful- For example: 2nd graders will write opinion pieces in which they will introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, us linking words (because, also) to connect opinion and reasons and provide a concluding statement: write a letter to a turkey saying sorry, we will eat you on Thanksgiving, or congratulations, we will not eat you on Thanksgiving.

Old standard : By the end of 4th grade- Use the vocabulary of the unifying themes to ask questions about objects, organisms, and events being studied - See more at:

http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_scic4#sthash.TCeUL1fQ.dpuf

-teachers can still be creative in eaching a concept. For example: 2nd graders will determine whether a group of objects (up to 20) has an even or an odd number of members (draw a volleyball net, and put 15 dots on teams)

-employers should begin to see a common competency among high school graduates. This would also apply to those continuing their education. Standards started from the top and worked their way down.

-C.C. standards are more rigorous than what we were previously doing. Anyone who says they are too easy needs to visit a kindergarten: in some ways this is a complaint about C.C. Much of what was first grade curriculum has been pushed down to kindergarten (counting by tens and ones to 100, doing long sheets of mixed addition and subtraction. This creates self esteem problems for 5 year olds who are not developmentally ready for much of this. The gap between the haves and have nots is increasing. (I recently had a kindergartener express concern over not knowing her letter names in Sept. ! She was already feeling hopeless about being so far behind, and was having stomach aches during help extra help session.)

sklock@wi.rr.com

Deb Klock

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Plymouth, WI 53073

I am very concerned with the Common Core curriculum. I want it out of Wisconsin. Let's follow the other states that have gotten rid of common core. It is a detriment to our kids' education, and will only lower their confidence in learning and school. NO to Common Core!!!

ingaliese@yahoo.com

Ingrid Zitzer

6819 Blanchard Street

Wauwatosa, WI 53213

October 19, 2013

Senator Paul Farrow
Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt

Dear Sirs:

I have been invited by some educators in Wisconsin to weigh in on the Common Core State Standards at your hearings. My schedule will not permit that, but I am submitting these comments in the hopes that you will find them helpful. I deeply respect the need for local control of educational policy and write to you with some trepidation, as I don't wish that this that the provision of this information appear disrespectful to you in any way. I believe my expertise in literacy education and my more than 40 years of experience in the field provide me with a good vantage from which to assess both the value and the limitations of the standards, and I am happy to share my insights or to answer your questions; nevertheless, I fully recognize that any decisions about this are rightly in your hands.

The Common Core State Standards for the English Language Arts are more rigorous – and much better aligned with college and career readiness preparation – than Wisconsin's previous educational standards. I certainly would not claim that these standards are perfect, and yet, having standards the accomplishment of which will allow students to succeed when they leave school is an important step for Wisconsin. I would gladly support another set of standards if there were a better alternative available, but independent analysis (the one by the Thomas Fordham Institute, for example) as well as my own personal analysis indicates that these standards are substantially higher and more appropriate than what has preceded them.

These CCSS standards do not establish a curriculum for Wisconsin; that must be done locally, but they do point Wisconsin teachers in the right direction in many ways: (1) It sets language complexity targets for the texts used at each grade level (rather than just specifying skills without regard to the difficulty of the texts the students are asked to read); (2) they emphasize the specialized literacy of the disciplines including in science and technical subjects (something likely to bear fruit for Wisconsin's economic future); (3) they encourage teachers to use texts that represent our literary heritage as well as many of our founding documents; and (4) they renew the emphasis on writing in the language arts curriculum, something that both colleges and employers will applaud.

It is important to note that these standards are consistent with research on the teaching of reading, they are internationally benchmarked, and they are beginning to energize teachers across the country who recognize in them a great opportunity for improving schools and the lives of students.

The complaints that I have heard about the English Language Arts standards are without merit. Many of the complaints have to do with supposed violations of federalism; in other words, the claim is that these are national standards being imposed by the federal government. I believe that your hearings show that to be untrue, as does the fact that Wisconsin educators participated in the creation of the CCSS. I have also heard that the standards somehow limit the amount or quality of literature that students will read in school, because it encourages the reading of documents such as the Gettysburg Address, the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, Ronald Reagan's Speech to the Students of Moscow University, and other similar works on history, science, and technology. It is true that CCSS requires that teachers teach students to read such materials, but this in no way diminishes the amount or quality of literature required by the CCSS.

Overall, I see the CCSS standards as a valuable advance for education in the U.S., and I would be happy to provide any specific information on them that you might find helpful.

Sincerely yours,



Timothy Shanahan, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor Emeritus

TIMOTHY SHANAHAN

Timothy Shanahan is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago where he is Founding Director of the UIC Center for Literacy. Previously, he was director of reading for the Chicago Public Schools, serving 437,000 children. He is author or editor of more than 200 publications including the books, *Teaching with the Common Core Standards for the English Language Arts*, *Early Childhood Literacy*, *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners*, and *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through Third Grade*. His research emphasizes the connections between learning to read and learning to write, literacy in the disciplines, and improvement of reading achievement.

Professor Shanahan is past president of the International Reading Association. He received a presidential appointment to serve on the Advisory Board of the National Institute for Literacy, and serves as content expert, advisor, and on various boards for the National Center for Family Literacy, ERIC, Learning Research and Development Center, What Works Clearinghouse, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Illinois-International Dyslexia Association, Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), Reach Out and Read, Reading in Motion, and Ready to Learn (Barnardo's, Northern Ireland). Shanahan took a leadership role on the National Reading Panel (NRP), convened by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the request of Congress to evaluate research on successful methods for teaching reading (third most influential education policy document according to the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center). He chaired two other federal research review panels: the National Literacy Panel for Language Minority Children and Youth, and the National Early Literacy Panel, and was a member of the English Language Arts Work Team for the Common Core State Standards. He is on the editorial boards of *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Scientific Studies in Reading*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *Reading Psychology*, and *Reading and Writing*, and has reviewed research proposals for the National Science Foundation (USA), Institute of Education (Hong Kong), Economic and Social Research Council (UK), Social Science and Humanities Research Council (Canada), and the Czech Science Council. He is co-principal investigator of the U.S. Department of Education's National Title I Study of Implementation and Outcomes: Early Childhood Language Development funded by the Institute of Education Sciences.

Shanahan received the William S. Gray Citation for Lifetime Achievement and the Albert J. Harris Award for outstanding research on reading disability from the International Reading Association (IRA), the Milton D. Jacobson Readability Research Award, the Amoco Award for Outstanding Teaching and the University of Delaware's Presidential Citation for Outstanding Achievement. In 2009, he was selected as researcher of the year at the University of Illinois at Chicago (Social Sciences/Humanities). He co-developed Project FLAME, a family literacy program for Latino immigrants, which received an Academic Excellence Award from the U.S. Department of Education, and his article, "The Common Core Ate My Baby" received the Distinguished Achievement Award for Learned Article from the Association of Educational Publications (2013). His research and testimony are cited in federal case law (*Memisovski v. Maram*, No. 92 C 1982, lauded by the American Academy of Pediatrics as "an enormous victory" for children's health care). He received his Ph.D. at the University of Delaware in 1980. His research and development projects have attracted approximately \$6 million in funding from government agencies and the philanthropic community. He was inducted to the Reading Hall of Fame in 2007, and is a former first-grade teacher. For more information, visit his blog: www.shanahanonliteracy.com

Dear Representative Thiesfeldt -

It is with great interest and passion that I write to encourage your support of the Common Core State Standards.

As a 20-year teacher, I have been actively involved in the implementation of CCSS in my district and classroom for the past few years. There is no doubt in my mind that the Standards are a huge step in the right direction for our students and our educational system. For the first time, we have clearly-defined markers of what every student should know and be able to do at each grade level. The Standards are *not* curriculum; curricular and content decisions are still made at the local level. The Standards do not dictate *how* math and English are to be taught, but rather *what* students are expected to learn.

I can definitively say that the Common Core State Standards are quite rigorous. They require students to demonstrate application of knowledge, ensuring readiness for both higher education and the work force. They also allow for comparability between states, which has been lacking.

The Common Core State Standards are a significant component of systemic improvement for schools across the state.

Thank you for your time.

Karen L. Arnott, 6th grade teacher
School District of Rhinelander

I have attached information about the Common Core State Standards that I hope you will find useful. I know you have hearings under way and are accepting both public and written testimony in this matter, and I have been requested, by some Wisconsin educators to provide some information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Timothy Shanahan

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I am not in favor of Common Core in Wisconsin for many reasons. We have 5 children and I believe that Common Core will cause our children to lose independent thinking, that it will not foster creativity and that the standards themselves are not appropriate for age levels.

ljinvestments@earthlink.net

Jennifer A. Finkler

8717 84th Street

Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158

Relative to a letter that was sent to you by WILL (Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty), it questions Tony Evers authority to bring in the common core standards. Article X, section 1 of the Wisconsin Constitution states that the legislature shall direct to the Superintendent. In light of this, can we immediately halt further implementation of common core? Let you as the committee decide, along with educators and parents decide on some better standards for Wisconsin.

I completely understand that the old 1998 standards stink. However, common core is worse, for more reasons than just the standards. I was at the FDL hearing and wanted to poke out my eye listening to the 2 ladies from DPI. My kids and Wisconsin deserve better.

Can you please let me know if Evers has over stepped his bounds?

Debbie Golden
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Dear Committee Members,

This link is to a very long article that tells us the values of Bill & Melinda Gates. I have also copied the article so that I could highlight what I find to be reasons for eliminating CCSS!

The sooner CCSS can be replaced with already proven standards, such as those developed by Dr. Stotsky, the healthier our schools will be.

Ruth Elmer

<http://www.crisismagazine.com/2013/the-ambitions-of-bill-and-melinda-gates-controlling-population-and-public-education#.UmEue-kb7-s.email>

Continuing their commitment to controlling global population growth through artificial contraception, sterilization, and abortion initiatives, Microsoft founder and philanthropist, Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, a self-described “practicing” Catholic, are now attempting to control the curriculum of the nation’s public schools. Subsidizing the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has committed more than \$76 million to support teachers in implementing the Common Core—a standardized national curriculum. This, on top of the tens of millions they have already awarded to the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to develop the Common Core in the first place.

Working collaboratively with the Obama administration, the Gates Foundation subsidized the creation of a national curriculum for English and mathematics that has now been adopted by 46 states, and the District of Columbia—despite the fact that the General Education Provisions Act, the Department of Education Organization Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act all protect states against such an intrusion by the United States Department of Education.

The Common Core Standards were developed by an organization called Achieve, and the National Governors Association—both of which were funded by the Gates Foundation. The standards have been imposed on the states without any field testing, and little or no input from those involved in implementing the standards. In a post entitled “Why I Cannot Support the Common Core Standards,” educational policy analyst and New York University Research Professor, Diane Ravitch, wrote that the standards “are being imposed on the children of this nation despite the fact that no one has any idea how they will affect students, teachers or schools... Their creation was neither grassroots nor did it emanate from the states.”

Ravitch is especially concerned about the content of the curriculum—what she called the “flap over fiction vs. informational text.” Rather than giving English teachers the freedom to teach literature, the Common Core mandates that a far greater percentage of classroom time be spent on “fact-based” learning. Ravitch’s concerns are shared by others. For example, one teacher claimed that she had to give up having her students read Shakespeare in favor of Malcolm Gladwell’s *Tipping Point* because it was “fact-based” and Shakespeare was not. Of course, *Tipping Point* has a **political agenda**. Parents may be concerned if they were to learn that

Gladwell suggests such “facts” as the belief that parents should stop worrying about their children’s “experimentation with drugs,” including cocaine because “it seldom leads to hardcore use.”

“Fact-based” books on climate change are also replacing classic works of literature because they are viewed as offering students an opportunity to learn “science.” *Freakonomics*—a book that has already been a favorite of public school teachers—is preferable to Poe because students will learn about the positive effects of abortion on reducing crime rates by reducing the population of those more likely to commit crime.

While the adoption of the Common Core was “voluntary” by the 46 states that adopted it, it was well understood by these states that they would not be eligible for Race to the Top funding (\$4.35 billion) unless they adopted the Common Core standards. The Gates Foundation was very much a part of this. According to Lyndsey Layton of the *Washington Post* (December 2, 2012), “the Gates Foundation invested tens of millions of dollars in the effort... The Obama administration kicked the notion into high gear when it required states to adopt the common core—or an equivalent—in order to compete for Race to the Top grant funds.”

Valerie Strauss of the *Washington Post* recently reported (February 26, 2013) that there is growing resistance. Alabama, for example, withdrew from the two consortia that are working on creating standardized tests aligned with the standards. Indiana, which adopted the Common Core in 2010 under the state education superintendent Tony Bennett, is now talking about a “pause” in the implementation of the curriculum. Bennett was defeated in the November elections by an educator who opposed Bennett’s support for the Common Core.

Now, there are concerns that the imposition of the Common Core within the public schools could threaten the autonomy of private schools, religious schools and home schools. An op-ed published in the *Orange County Register* by Robert Holland, claims that the Common Core could “morph into a national curriculum that will stifle the family-centered creativity that has fostered high rates of achievement and growth for home education... Many private and parochial schools—including those of the 100 Roman Catholic dioceses across the nation, already are adopting the CCSS prescriptions for math and English classes... Their debatable reasoning is that the rush of most state governments to embrace the national standards means publishers of textbooks and tests will fall in line, thereby leaving private schools with no practical alternatives for instructional materials. According to October 8, 2012 article in *Education Week* by Erik Robelin, it is not just Catholic schools that are adopting the Common Core, some Lutheran and other denominations of Christian schools are shifting to the common core, including Grand Rapids Christian in Michigan and the Christian Academy School System in Louisville, KY. According to Robelin, parochial school leaders claim that they must “remain competitive” with public schools and now feel pressured to adopt the Core. These are real concerns. As Diane Ravitch points out, “Now that David Coleman, the primary architect of the Common Core standards has become president of the College Board, we can expect that SAT will be aligned to the standards. No one will escape their reach, whether they attend public or private school.”

On February 14, 2013, Missouri legislator Kurt Bahr filed HB616 that prohibits the State Board of Education from implementing the Common Core for public schools developed by the

Common Core Initiative or any other statewide education standards without the approval of the General Assembly. An increasing number of parents are voicing their concerns. For example, Tiffany Mouritsen, a Utah mother, blogged that the American Institutes for Research (AIR), the primary source for Common Core testing is a major concern for her: “AIR markets its values which includes promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual agenda for teens, and publicizes its client list (including George Soros and Bill and Melinda Gates).” In a column published in January, political commentator Michelle Malkin calls the Common Core a “stealthy federal takeover of school curriculum and standards across the country.” And, she maintains that the Common Core’s “dubious college and career read standards undermine local control of education, usurp state autonomy over curricular materials, and foist untested, mediocre and incoherent pedagogical theories on America’s schoolchildren.

The Gates Foundation: Buying Control

The promise of federal funds to states in order to “encourage” them to adopt the Common Core is nothing new. Our government has been doing this both nationally and internationally for decades. In a 2008 book entitled *Fatal Misconception*, author Matthew Connelly writes that in the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson leveraged food aid for family planning during crop failures in India, thus creating an incentive for the sterilization program. India’s Ministry of Health and Family Planning admitted that, “The large number of sterilizations and IUD insertions during 1967-68 was due to drought conditions.” Eventually, more sophisticated incentives such as bicycles and radios were used to encourage women to accept sterilization. Connelly writes that under Indira Gandhi in the mid-1970s sterilization became a condition not just for land allotments, but for irrigation water, electricity, ration cards, rickshaw licenses, medical care, pay raises and promotions. There were sterilization quotas—especially for the Dalits (the untouchable caste) who were targeted for family planning.

While the Gates Foundation has not been involved in anything this coercive, they have indeed been very much involved in giving aid to those countries willing to participate in family planning initiatives. For nearly two decades, the Gates Foundation has been generous in providing aid to more than 100 countries—often coupled with family planning opportunities. Such aid is often framed as a way to foster economic growth. In an article in *American Thinker*, Andressen Blom and James Bell wrote that Melinda Gates made that connection explicit in a speech at a population gathering that “government leaders are now beginning to understand that providing access to contraceptives is a cost effective way to foster economic growth.”

Bill Gates revealed his own population goals in February, 2010, at the invitation-only Technology, Entertainment and Design Conference in Long Beach, California, when he gave his keynote speech on global warming: “Innovating to Zero!” In a youtube video available [here](#), Gates stated that CO2 emissions must be reduced to zero by 2050 and advised those in attendance that population had much to do with the increase in CO2. Claiming that each individual on the planet puts out an average of about five tons of CO2 per year, Gates stated that “Somehow we have to make changes that will bring that down to zero...It has been constantly going up. It’s only various economic changes that have even flattened it at all.” To illustrate, Gates presented the following equation: $CO_2 \text{ (total population emitted } CO_2 \text{ per year)} = P \text{ (people)} \times S \text{ (services per person)} \times E \text{ (average energy per service)} \times C \text{ (average } CO_2 \text{ emitted per unit of energy)}$. Gates told the audience that “probably one of these numbers is going to have to

get pretty near to zero. That's a fact from high school algebra." For Gates, the P (population) portion of the equation is the most important: "If we do a really great job on new vaccines, health care, reproductive health services, we could lower that by perhaps 10 or 15 percent."

Gates maintains that improvements in health care—including an expansion of the administration of vaccinations—will encourage families to reduce the number of children they desire to have. And, in an ongoing attempt to expand the types of birth control, Gates has spent millions of dollars on research and development. According to *Christian Voice*, a few years ago the Gates Foundation awarded a grant of \$100,000 to researchers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, to develop a new type of ultrasound described as a "non-invasive form of birth control for men" which would make a man infertile for up to six months.

Such strategies have been effective. In fact, the Gates Foundation has been so successful in their family planning initiatives that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) awarded their annual Population Award in 2010 to the Foundation. According to a June 15, 2010 article in *Mercator.net*, at the awards ceremony, UNFPA executive director Thoraya Obaid cited the Gates Foundation as a "leader in the fields of global health and global development, particularly in promoting excellence in population assistance, including through the design of innovative, integrated solutions in the areas of reproductive health, family planning, and maternal and neonatal health." The International Planned Parenthood Federation is a previous winner of the United Nations Population Fund's Annual Award.

It is easy to understand why the United Nations Population Fund—a fund which Steven Mosher, the President of the Population Research Institute has exposed as being a direct participant in China's coercive one-child policy—honored Gates with their prestigious Population Fund award since the Gates Foundation has donated more than one billion dollars to "family-planning" groups including the United Nations Population Fund itself; CARE International—an organization which is lobbying for legalized abortion in several African nations; Save the Children—a major promoter of the population control agenda, the World Health Organization—an organization that forcibly sterilized thousands of women in the 1990s under the pretence of providing tetanus vaccination services in Nicaragua, Mexico and the Philippines; and of course, the major abortion provider, International Planned Parenthood Federation.

Bill and Melinda Gates truly believe that population control is key to the future. Plans are already in place to track births and vaccinations through cell phone technology to register every birth on the planet. Gates claims that the GPS technology would enable officials to track and "remind" parents who do not bring their children in for vaccines. Maintaining that vaccination is key to reducing population growth, Gates predicts that if child mortality can be reduced, parents will have fewer children, following the example of the urbanized West where birth rates have dropped to below replacement levels: "The fact is that within a decade of improving health outcomes, parents decide to have fewer children." For Gates, "there is no such thing as a healthy, high population growth country. If you're healthy, you're low-population growth... As the world grows from 6 billion to 9 billion, all of that population growth is in urban slums...It's a very interesting problem."

More than a decade ago, on May 17, 2002, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had purchased shares in nine of the largest pharmaceutical companies valued at nearly \$205 million. Acquiring shares in Merck, Pfizer, Johnson and Johnson Wyeth, Abbott Labs, and others, the Gates Foundation continues a financial interest in common with the makers of AIDS drugs, diagnostic tools, vaccines, and contraceptives. But, the commitment to global population control goes well beyond financial interests. It is likely that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will continue its commitment to global population control, and now, curriculum creation in the nation's schools because they truly believe that they know better than anyone else how we all should live.

A Product of Poor Catholic Education

It is difficult to believe the claims of Bill and Melinda Gates that they are not involved in the abortion industry when you look at the relationships they have with organizations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation—the largest abortion provider in the world. According to the *National Catholic Register*, Melinda Gates represents herself in the media as a practicing Catholic who has a great uncle who was a Jesuit priest and a great aunt who was an Ursuline nun who taught her to read. She graduated from Ursuline Academy in Dallas, where she claims to have learned “incredible social justice.” And, this may indeed be where the problem begins. For so many Catholics, social justice has been so broadly defined that it now includes giving women access to reproductive rights—including the right to abortion—so that they can play an equal role in contributing to the workplace and the economy. In an article entitled “Why Birth Control is Still a Big Idea” published in *Foreign Policy* in December, 2012, Melinda Gates writes:

Contraceptives unlock one of the most dormant but potentially powerful assets in development: women as decision makers. When women have the power to make choices about their families, they tend to decide precisely what demographers, economists, and development experts recommend.

Most recently, in a January 2, 2013 article published on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation website entitled “Profiles in Courage: Philippines Passes Reproductive Health Bill,” the article congratulates all of those who helped bring expanded access to “reproductive health” through the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012—recently signed by President Aquino. This bill states that women and men—living in the most Catholic of Catholic countries—can now “decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children.” What the Gates Foundation website omits is information about the provision within the bill involving “population management” through mandatory counseling of couples seeking marriage licenses. In this case, social justice involves a demand that couples learn about the government's views on an ideal family size of two children—coming one step closer to China in its government's one-child policy.

This commitment to a distorted definition of social justice by Melinda and Bill Gates will likely continue because they have been lead to believe that such control is what is best for people. The Core Curriculum is really just another component of population control—it is used to help teach children the “facts” about climate change and problems of over-population. Indeed, the population agenda is a trap that many wealthy, highly intelligent people have fallen into in the

past. From the wealthy eugenics supporters of Planned Parenthood's Founder Margaret Sanger, to the Rockefeller family and their population control initiatives, this work continues today through their heirs—heirs like David Rockefeller—an ally of Bill and Melinda Gates. And some influential Catholics have been complicit in this. At one time, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, President Emeritus of the University of Notre Dame served as a trustee, and later, Chairman of the Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, a funder of population causes counter to the teachings of the Church.

The population control initiatives promoted by the Gates Foundation will continue to grow nationally and internationally because they have convinced others and themselves that they are saving lives. On their website, they ask: "what is more life affirming than saving one third of mothers from dying in childbirth?" What they do not seem to acknowledge is how many unborn children have died from their initiatives.

I watched the Madison and Fond du lac hearings and am opposed to Common Core for many of the reasons stated by others (\$ investment, fed govt involvement, writing vs reading emphasis, info texts vs literature, data mining). I won't repeat those. It is disturbing to me that all curriculum in the country is aligning to common core, which means all students will be exposed to the same materials. Do we want everyone in our country approaching problems in the same manner? Talk about groupthink! I've sat with my son for many hours teaching him math in a way that makes no sense to me so he can pass tests. It adds many steps and emphasizes the process vs the answers. In the real world, it is the right answer that matters. Discarding rote memorization is throwing out the baby with the bathwater. My 6th grader still doesn't know math facts and her teacher isn't allowed to time test her because that's not how we do it with common core. Really? You can't think critically if you don't know base material. I'm spending a ton of time with all three of my kids because they are really struggling with this curriculum (which is 100% driven by standards). I am seriously considering homeschooling next year, but if the only curriculum available is common core, that won't help! Please turn this bus around, I beg you.

steinhorsts2002@yahoo.com

Kerri Steinhorst
408 E Songbird Ln
Appleton,

To those of you who will decide our children's future:

As a small business owner, it was not unusual that in my training a new employee I had to convince them that ½ pound was 8 ounces, not 5. When is the last time you watched a teenager make change without the register telling them the amount? If they put in the wrong amount tendered ... well just hope someone is there to help them!

Are you noticing that lots and lots of money has been spent – too much of it from the tax payers!! – to develop and establish CCSS behind closed doors? Are you seeing how much personal money (what we have left after taxes) and especially personal time and hard work are being expended by the citizens as they find out what CCSS is all about and are determined to eliminate it?

I have listed 3 websites below to support my belief that CCSS is not only bad education, parts of it are evil.

Ruth Elmer

(I am sorry, these web sites will have to be copy/pasted)

** a 16 year old from Arkansas follows the money and shows you how the data mining will be used. <http://www.arkansasagaincommoncore.com/3post/2013/10/even-a-15-year-old-can-connect-the-dots.html> On the web site, he offers his files for others to use. I hope you will order them for the committees use. Sen. Lehman made a presentation for CCSS. Will one of you present against CCSS?

<http://creation.com/the-christian-foundations-of-the-rule-of-law-in-the-west-a-legacy-of-liberty-and-resistance-against-tyranny>

This article, 11 pages long, supports why it is not only right and moral for a Christian to stand up against bad & evil laws, but it is their duty to do so. [The state of Wisconsin has the obligation to protect its citizens' God given rights from bad National law.](#) (Nullify Common Core State Standards)

<http://www.crisismagazine.com/2013/the-ambitions-of-bill-and-melinda-gates-controlling-population-and-public-education#.UmEue-kb7-s.email>

(Excerpts from the Crisis magazine article) **Continuing their commitment to controlling global population growth** through artificial contraception, sterilization, and abortion initiatives, Microsoft founder and philanthropist, Bill Gates and his wife, Melinda, a self-described "practicing" Catholic, are now attempting to [control the curriculum of the nation's public schools. Subsidizing the Common Core State Standards](#) in English language arts and mathematics, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has committed more than \$76 million to support teachers in implementing the Common Core—a standardized national curriculum. This, on top of the tens of millions they have already awarded to the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to develop the Common Core in the first place.

.....—despite the fact that the General Education Provisions Act, the Department of Education Organization Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act all protect states against such an intrusion by the United States Department of Education.

.....Their creation was neither grassroots nor did it emanate from the states.”

“Fact-based” books on climate change are also replacing classic works of literature because they are viewed as offering students an opportunity to learn “science.” *Freakonomics*—a book that has already been a favorite of public school teachers—is preferable to Poe because students will learn about the positive effects of abortion on reducing crime rates by reducing the population of those more likely to commit crime.

it was well understood by these states that they would not be eligible for Race to the Top funding (\$4.35 billion) unless they adopted the Common Core standards

..... Common Core could “morph into a national curriculum that will stifle the family-centered creativity that has fostered high rates of achievement and growth for home education...

.....American Institutes for Research (AIR), the primary source for Common Core testing is a major concern for a mother in Utah: “AIR markets its values which includes promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual agenda for teens, and publicizes its client list (including George Soros and Bill and Melinda Gates).”

..... It is likely that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will continue its commitment to global population control, and now, curriculum creation in the nation’s schools because they truly believe that they know better than anyone else how we all should live.

..... It is difficult to believe the claims of Bill and Melinda Gates that they are not involved in the abortion industry

..... distorted definition of social justice by Melinda and Bill Gates will likely continue because they have been lead to believe that such control is what is best for people. The Core Curriculum is really just another component of population control—it is used to help teach children the “facts” about climate change and problems of over-population

Dear Wisconsin Representatives and Senators:

· Do we want our educational system to be just like 46 other states in the US? Or, can we do better?

· Are better, proven standards of educational instruction available to our children, as compared to Common Core?

· Do we want to allow this generation of children be experimented on with an unproven set of standards and teaching methods?

· Do we want our children to go to college with the prestige of receiving Wisconsin education in primary and secondary schooling, or be accepted as simply "another Common Core" student?

· Do we want our students to be subjected to questionable learning practices?

I have been following Common Core, and trying to understand how it fits into the Wisconsin Landscape. I am convinced we can do better, and would like to outline my thoughts to you. I have broken this message into two sections: 1) Impressions from the Fon du Lac hearing, and 2) Questionable Learning Assignments. With time I have found a lot more to dislike about Common Core, but for the sake space will do my best to keep my comments on-track.

Impressions from the Fon du Lac Hearing

I attended the Common Core hearing in Fon du Lac last week as a person 'opposed' to Common Core. I left, with an even stronger resolve that Common Core is **not** for the children of Wisconsin; many red flags were raised about Common Core. Common Core is COMMON, and our children deserve so much better. After listening to many testimonies, it is clear to me that Common Core woke the sleeping giant. The debate is on, and many parties are engaged and focused on the outcome.

I heard in Fon du Lac that the previous set of WI standards were not very good (this was actually news to me). Testimony from Dr. Sandra Stotsky confirmed they weren't great, and commented that standards should be reviewed and revised every 5-7 years. WI standards were put in place in 1998; so with the adoption of Common Core 15 years later, we are 10 years past any sort of standards review.

I heard testimony from a number of schools that CC has lifted their school performance up. Perhaps this is true, and if so that is wonderful. It confirms that the 1998 standards weren't very high, and perhaps our administrators jumped on the CC bandwagon because it was much better than what was already in place. As evidenced in Fon du Lac, some administrators and educators are passionate about Common Core and believe it to be a good thing.

I would suggest, that although Common Core may be better than what some schools were doing, it certainly isn't the BEST that Wisconsin could be doing. In fact, my children are in a private Catholic school in Appleton (St. Francis Xavier Educational System), and the standards as written would be a step backwards for our school system.

I would suggest that Wisconsin can do better than Common Core. I'm not an educational expert, but per Dr. Stotsky's testimony (and many others that can be found online), there proven standards available that are far superior to Common Core. Instead of implementing CC because it is "better than what we were doing", wouldn't it make better sense to work with the fabulously talented educators (primary, secondary, AND collegiate) in Wisconsin and develop the best approach? There are standards currently available, free of charge to Wisconsin, that are

INTERNATIONALLY PROVEN,

Questionable Learning Assignments

I initially tried to take the truly negative and questionable things I have learned about Common Core with a grain of salt, as lots of research on the internet certainly does not make one an expert. That being said, I have found far too many examples of questionable assignments associated with Common Core. As a parent, I am concerned what these lessons will teach our children. Understanding that Common Core is copyrighted, and must be followed to 85% of the standard, I'm worried about my children being exposed to these types of lessons.

Here is a listing of inappropriate lessons, all of which I have done my best to verify have been linked to Common Core:

1. Pornographic reading assignments – Louisiana

<http://danetteclark.wordpress.com/2013/10/16/louisiana-high-school-recommends-porn-to-students-for-summer-reading-assignment/>

The listing of “Exemplar Texts” includes books that are not appropriate for our children. “The Bluest Eyes” and “Dreaming in Cuba” contain very adult themes that I would personally not choose to read.

2. Racism discussions in 4th grade

<http://eagnews.org/fourth-graders-learn-to-own-their-white-privilege-thanks-to-common-core-aligned-lesson/>

My oldest son is in 3rd grade this year; I do not believe he will be socially mature enough to discuss this topic in 1 year.

3. An admittedly biased article, asking how our current President will “Make us more secure?” If this is under the guise of a history lesson, shouldn't the question have been more along the lines of “Discuss the National Security approaches of the last 5 Presidents”?

<http://joeforamerica.com/2013/10/wonder-called-obamacore/>

4. Not a lesson, but the use of Biometrics in our classrooms. This article does not specifically link this to Common Core, but there are plenty of discussion of biometrics for use with Common Core.

<http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/future-is-now/biometrics-help-teachers-track-students--every-move-165708623.html>

Not in our classrooms, right? At least, not until it happens the first time..... Anyone ever read “1984”?

5. Maryland School Survey “What's your religion? Your sexual orientation? Your parents' political affiliation? Should “assault rifles” be banned? Who's to blame for the government shutdown?”

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/10/16/parents-outraged-over-wildly-intrusive-school-survey-that-polls-students-on-obamas-skin-color-parents-political-affiliation-obamacare/>

Do these questions belong in our schools?

6. Parental abandonment and Infidelity, as discussed in 3rd grade.

<http://www.independentsentinel.com/common-core-reaches-a-new-low-check-this-out/>

7. The Bill of Rights is outdated and needs revising....

<http://poorrichardsnews.com/post/63442677802/common-core-civics-assignment-revise-the>
<http://dailycaller.com/2013/10/08/common-core-assignment-makes-sixth-graders-scrap-bill-of-rights-amendments/>

8. “ Think like a Nazi, Why are Jews Evil?”

<http://poorrichardsnews.com/post/48049380443/common-core-writing-assignment-think-like-a>
How is this assignment going to make our children more "College ready"?

9. 3rd Grade Citizenship Assignment

<http://grumpyelder.com/2012/12/common-core-3rd-grade-benchmarks-for-citizenship/>

10. "Pick the Survivor" assignment, in a South Milwaukee HS? Choose the survivors, given info on age, religious affiliation, career, etc

<http://twitchy.com/2013/10/19/who-should-survive-common-core-assignment-mixes-race-religion-and-lifeboats/>

Schools aren't even allowed to recite the Pledge of Allegiance anymore, because it incites God. But this assignment has students choosing survivors, in part based on their religious choices?

Please understand that these types of assignments are surfacing every day. I focused for the most part on social studies-related assignments, that seem inappropriate for our children. I'm sure administrators will say, "Not in my school", but as Common Core becomes more and more integrated, it will be impossible to follow all lessons. These lessons will come home, and parents will rightfully be upset. Most of these teachings belong at home, not in the school system.

The above list does not even discuss the differences in Math that I am starting to see come home this year. I have a Chemistry degree, and a math minor, and I have had a hard time helping my 3rd grader with a couple of math assignments! I do math every day, all day long, but yet I'm stumped by some of his math worksheets.

Remember that $3 \times 4 = 11$ is OK, as long as the student can explain the answer. Tell that to a Pharmacist, or an engineer and see how that would work in the real

world. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DW0VxxoCrNo>

My favorite (and I have seen math like this come home) is this video showing a young girl doing math the way Common Core taught her:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=1YLIX61o8fg

In closing, I will comment that as my Common Core research has progressed, I've learned to leave my personal emotion out of the equation. Looking at the facts, Common Core is a step backward for my children. It subjects them to unproven learning methods, and uses questionable learning materials. Perhaps some school systems in Wisconsin see Common Core as an improvement; this should be an enormous red flag to the members of the Committee selected to understand Common Core. Common Core is not better, it is Common. Wisconsin is better; please recommend Common Core implementation is halted, and that a superior set of standards is adopted.

We want to be a state that attracts families because our schools are better than the other states. We want to be able to send our students to University out of state and have their application make the short stack, simply because they are from Wisconsin. Let's become known for true academic excellence, not just another state that jumped on the Common Core bandwagon. We can be EXCEPTIONAL, so why settle for COMMON?

Respectfully, Wendy Mueller

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Appleton, WI 54913

(920) 427-2917

Dear Senator Farrow, Representative Thiesfeldt and Members of the Select Committee on Common Core Standards,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my viewpoint on CCSS. I'm a parent of a Kindergarten student at a top performing public school in Madison, WI. I love our daughter's school and teacher, but am very concerned over how the atmosphere has changed in the kindergarten classroom over the last 3 years due to the implementation and alignment to the CCSS.

The amount of academics and rigor at the kindergarten level seems out of step with the research I've read tells me is best for my daughter at this time. My kindergartener's daily schedule has four to six times as much literacy and math as it does free-choice time, and this is a HUGE change. So out of a six hour day, my child is lucky to have 20 minutes per day (if that) of free-choice time in the classroom.

Why is free-choice time so important in kindergarten? According to early childhood development research "In a comprehensive review of numerous studies on play, researchers found evidence that play contributes to advances in 'verbalization, vocabulary, language comprehension, attention span, imagination, concentration, impulse control, curiosity, problem-solving strategies, cooperation, empathy, and group participation.'" from **Crisis in the Kindergarten** (http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/crisis_in_early_ed.pdf).

Also, from a story in the *New York Times Magazine* titled '**Kindergarten Cram**' by Peggy Orenstein (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/03/magazine/03wwln-lede-t.html?_r=0): "Play at age 5 is of great importance not just to intellectual but emotional, psychological social and spiritual development,' says Edward Miller, the report's co-author. Play — especially the let's-pretend, dramatic sort — is how kids develop higher-level thinking, hone their language and social skills, cultivate empathy. It also reduces stress, and that's a word that should not have to be used in the same sentence as "kindergartner" in the first place."

So here is a bit of on-the-ground information. The below schedule was a schedule our school showed parents last spring at a kindergarten open house. The school hosted 4 sessions in which parents could learn about their child's new kindergarten experience. There was such an uproar from parents in the first meeting about how the schedule was so overly academic the school decided not to show the schedule after the first meeting, even with numerous parents asking for an example schedule.

Here was the schedule shown:

7:38 Morning Routine
8:10 Small Group Phonemic Awareness Instruction
8:30 Whole Group Phonemic Awareness Instruction
9:00 Snack & Restroom
9:15 Guided Groups/Literacy Centers
10:00 Restroom & Recess
10:25 Writing
11:05 Lunch & Recess

11:45 Rest time & Restrooms
12:05 Math
1:00 Science
1:20 Pack Up
1:30 P.E.
2:00 Music
2:32 Go Home

This is kindergarten! And that is where the problem is...there was no early childhood development input in the CCSS. I don't mind unified standards but what is happening in the classroom is an increase in rigor without concern for whether the rigor is proven to be effective and developmentally appropriate at this age. This view of CCSS standard misalignment is supported by educators, pediatricians, developmental psychologists, and researchers, including many of the most prominent members of their field. Their statement reads, " We have grave concerns about the core standards for young children.... The proposed standards conflict with compelling new research in cognitive science, neuroscience, child development, and early childhood education about how young children learn, what they need to learn, and how best to teach them in kindergarten and the early grades...."

(http://www.edweek.org/media/joint_statement_on_core_standards.pdf)

I even contacted my new superintendent Jen Cheatham with these concerns and here were her comments, 'As for her concerns regarding early childhood/primary, I actually share them. There is no doubt that, if there is a weakness in the new standards, it is at K-2. It will be up to us, as a school district, to figure out how we interpret them in the primary grades and how we fill gaps that the standards do not address. I know in CPS we had a teacher group focused entirely on addressing the issues she raises in the primary grades and we were making some good headway.' So far no changes have been made.

According to this *Washington Post* article titled '**A tough critique of Common Core on early childhood education**' by Valerie Strauss (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/01/29/a-tough-critique-of-common-core-on-early-childhood-education/>),

"We reviewed the makeup of the committees that wrote and reviewed the Common Core Standards. In all, there were 135 people on those panels. Not a single one of them was a K-3 classroom teacher or early childhood professional.

It appears that early childhood teachers and child development experts were excluded from the K-3 standards-writing process.

When the standards were first revealed in March 2010, many early childhood educators and researchers were shocked. "The people who wrote these standards do not appear to have any background in child development or early childhood education," wrote Stephanie Feeney of the University of Hawaii, chair of the Advocacy Committee of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators."

As you can understand as a parent of a kindergartener, I'm also shocked, frustrated and worried this type of learning will wear on my child. She already complains about how long the day is and how little choice they have in what they are doing. This is not an environment that is appropriate as these kid's first experience/introduction to school. My child is curious and loves to learn and school is not working with her natural tendencies to learn through both cognitive and non-cognitive approaches. Instead, the standards developers shifted the standards down into the lower grades in order to show improvement in the upper.

Here is an excerpt from an article titled '**What Happened to Kindergarten**' by Jen Scott Curwood (<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/what-happened-kindergarten>)

"Proponents of ramping up standards in early elementary education tend to focus on the numbers. More children learning to read or do math sooner must be good. But these achievements may come at the expense of other skills kids need to learn, such as self-reliance, problem-solving, and spatial thinking. "When we replace the block center with a math center, what do we gain?" says Stoudt. "Blocks are all about math, except they are more fun.

"While young students' reading and math scores are soaring, there is little assessment of the effect of the intensified academic focus on kids' motivation to learn, creativity, motor skills, social skills, or self-esteem. "The risk is children who are already burned out on school by the time they reach third grade," says Stoudt. "Play is how children learn. There should be more of it in the upper grades, not less in the lower."

What I would recommend:

1) Keep the current CCSS but brand it as **Wisconsin's own** (copyright and all), so we have *the power to make revisions*

2) Work with *early childhood educators and researchers to better align the standards* to what is **developmentally appropriate** at the K-3 level

3) Set goals and time requirement in the daily schedule for both cognitive and **non-cognitive skills**...seems like literacy and math are all that is important in the kindergarten classroom, thus ignoring the needs of the whole child

4) Require all who work with the K-3 level have **early childhood development training**...especially those who influence, direct, and oversee teachers because *high-caliber kindergartens need educated administrators*

Thanks so much for your time and this opportunity. I've also included many links below to research and articles regarding this issue and I hope you may have a moment to look them over. One is an article from a Professor of Early Childhood Education at the UW Madison, others are from the Alliance of Childhood (a nonprofit research and advocacy group). So there is much to be said about this topic and much of the problem is most parents don't have this knowledge and teachers are not in a position to have a public opinion, lest it be in approval of these new standards and the curriculum the schools have invested so much in already.

Best,
Jinger Schroeder
608.442.7296

SOURCES:

Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in

School (http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/kindergarten_report.pdf) *Based on the research of Smilansky and Shefatya, *Facilitating Play: A Medium for Promoting Cognitive, Socio- emotional, and Academic Development in Young Children*, Gaithersburg, MD: Psychological and Educational Publications (1990). Cited in Bodrova and Leong, "The Importance of Being Playful," *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 60, No. 7 (April 2003), pp. 50–53; http://pdonline.ascd.org/pd_online/substitute/el200304_bodrova.html.

Joint Statement of Early Childhood Health and Education Professionals on the Common Core Standards

Initiative (http://www.edweek.org/media/joint_statement_on_core_standards.pdf)

"We have grave concerns about the core standards for young children now being written by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The draft standards made public in January conflict with compelling new research in cognitive science, neuroscience, child development, and early childhood education about how young children learn, what they need to learn, and how best to teach them in kindergarten and the early grades...."

ARTICLES:

Reimagining Kindergarten; Restoring a developmental approach when accountability demands are pushing formal instruction on the youngest learners

By Elizabeth Graue,
Professor of Early Childhood Education at the UW Madison
(<http://www.aasa.org/schooladministratorarticle.aspx?id=8450>)

Crisis in Early Education, A Research-Based Case for More Play and Less Pressure.

by Joan Almon and Edward Miller
(http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/crisis_in_early_ed.pdf)

Children's Lack of Playtime Seen As Troubling Health, School Issue.

by Linda Jacobsen (for Education Week) <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?sid=c3ab084b-f62f-4a8b-8760-e5bcc11a8ef5%40sessionmgr4&vid=1&hid=23&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXB1PWNvb2tpZSxpcCxjcGlkJmN1c3RpZD1zNzMyNDk2NCZaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#db=f5h&AN=35697195>

Playing around in School: Implications for Learning and Educational Policy

In this paper, we argue that playful learning offers a middle ground between the warring factions in early education (pre-K – 3rd grade; Bodrova, 2008; Bogard & Takanishi, 2005). Using the best available data as our foundation, we show that children who are exposed to rich academic content through free and guided play acquire a cadre of cognitive and social skills beyond those taught via traditional, direct instruction practices. (Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2003; Ladd, Herald, & Kochel, 2006). Moreover, when we view play as a learning process, we gain a broader

perspective on the key skill sets that young children must develop to be successful in school and in the 21st century (e.g., Bell-Rose & Desai, 2006; Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk, & Singer, 2009).

(http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCwQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fastro.temple.edu%2F~khirshpa%2Fdownload%2F2011_Fisher_et_al.doc&ei=mVdlUpC2GqPSyAHoi4EY&usg=AFQjCNEPg0E5IDHNVm0GYBsGPHuGPska9A&sig2=m4B5l4GNsSGje6RsluDAtg&bvm=bv.54934254,d.aWc)

To: Senator Paul Farrow
Representative Jeremy Thiesfeldt

From: Billie Earl Sparks, Ph.D.
Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

Re: 10/23/2013 Eau Claire Hearing on Common Core State Standards

Due to a long scheduled out-of-state trip I am unable to be at the hearing Wednesday in Eau Claire. Therefore, I would appreciate this statement being shared with members of the committee.

I retired from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Mathematics Department as Professor of Mathematics in 2004 after 35 years of service. During those years I taught a full range of mathematics classes while specializing in the phases of the Department offerings for future teachers of mathematics. I was also the original chair of the group that developed the UW System Mathematics Placement Exam that is still used across the UW-System to place students in various entry-level classes. Through various grant projects I also worked with school districts and CESAs across the state on various curriculum, instruction, and assessment projects. Since my retirement I have worked as a consultant for schools and educational agencies across the country. These experiences and others over the last 46 years in mathematics and mathematics education inform my opinions on K-12 mathematics education, what it means to be college and career ready, and the need for focus, coherence, and rigor in the Standards used by our schools.

Prior to the development of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM) mathematics curricular topics were introduced and mastered at widely different points of students' schooling. A topic such as addition of fractions appeared in state standards as being introduced as early as 1st grade in some states and as late as 7th grade elsewhere. The same topic then was listed as mastered as early as 4th grade and as late as 7th. In Wisconsin these grade placements varied widely by district as we had grade band standards (by the end of 4th grade, by the end of 8th grade, by the end of 12th grade). Therefore, different Wisconsin districts presented very different sequences of mathematics causing huge problems for students moving between districts and compounding the national problem for mobility.

In 2008 after studying the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in conjunction with the American Diploma Project and the Partnership for the 21st Century (conducted by a broad based group of which I was a member) Wisconsin decided that new academic standards should be developed. I was asked to Co-Chair this development project. A committee of outstanding mathematicians and mathematics educators (this included representation from mathematics departments at several

higher education institutions including UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and others) were nearing completion of this project when State Superintendent Burmaster and Governor Doyle announced the state was signing on to the development of the CCSSM. We transitioned into a review committee for this process using our experience in developing our own standards. During the writing of the Common Core we reviewed about 8 drafts of these Standards, providing suggestions at each stage, seeing that many of the Wisconsin suggestions were listened to, and moving the process to a point of belief that the final document met the criteria of focus, coherence, and rigor. The development process was very open with two drafts being provided for public input across the country with thousands of suggestions being provided and several other drafts being reviewed by state level review committees like Wisconsin's.

The CCSSM as adopted by Wisconsin in 2010 as the Wisconsin Standards are the next logical step in the leadership that Wisconsin has provided over the years in mathematics education. The placement of much algebra in 8th grade allows for the high school to advance students much further and truly prepare all students to be college and career ready. The emphases on understanding mathematics as well as doing mathematics and the Standards for Mathematical Practice greatly increase the rigor of programs. The Common Standards across the state and nation allow for texts and resources that are developed with focus, without having to cover topics that are taught some places and not others resulting in materials frequently described as "a mile wide and an inch deep". A completion of a K-12 program based on these standards would greatly improve the entry-level assignment of students to university classes and alleviate the remedial class issue. In my opinion, based on nearly a half century of working on these issues, the CCSSM are a vast improvement over our previous standards and are a real promise for the future.

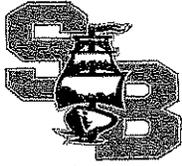
A last comment I would like to make concerns the implementation of the CCSSM. I have observed and worked with districts and CESAs across the state since 2010. These educators have seen the benefits of common standards, worked extremely hard to implement these into their local curricula, and now into their classrooms. This is where local control still exists and actually is stronger. Previously, textbooks frequently became the curriculum because a topic sequence was needed and the state standards didn't really provide one. This allowed undue influence by states that had statewide textbook adoption lists such as California and Texas. With CCSSM Wisconsin schools have done the hard work of localizing the Standards to provide the strongest program for their students. Standards are the "what" of a mathematics program. The curriculum is the "how" of that program. This local control of the "how" can be seen throughout the state as educators have worked diligently to make these standards a reality for their students in a multitude of ways.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these remarks and provide support for this historic opportunity to set and meet high expectations in mathematics for ALL students.

My boys were happy. My boys were bright. My boys were smart. My boys were "above average" in reading and mathematics. My boys loved school and their teachers. Right up until this September. Now, they trudge off to school. They come home angry or sad. Homework is a struggle. At ten years old, my oldest son has already come to the decision that he cannot be a fashion designer because he doesn't "get" fractions and therefore will be unable to measure fabric when he is an adult. Ten years old and his dreams of the future are already crushed. This is the reality of Common Core. I would like to see every single member of the committee do one of the "mental math" problems that are sent home for homework. Just pull out a random sheet from the text book and do it right there at the podium. What? You can't add those numbers in your head without scrap paper?? Well neither can an eight year old. Why should a child, who last year was helping other students with their math skills now be given scores like 57% on his own test? Do you think seeing failing grades over and over and over again is motivating kids to do better? Common Core is not teaching our students mathematics. It is teaching them how to fail, how to hate themselves, how to hate school and teachers, and best of all... how to prepare for an entry level job in the fast food service industry instead of college. Because that is what they will most likely have to do for years because there is no way they are learning anything that is preparing them for the future with this program. STOP Common Core now!!!

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The School District of Sturgeon Bay

1230 Michigan Street, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235-1498

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Dear Legislator,

The students of Wisconsin are the key to our state's future success. We know that the expectations and standards we set for children in school play a critical role in how far they go and how successful they are. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are part of our state's education plan to help all of our children excel and be fully prepared for life after high school. Teachers in the Sturgeon Bay School District began the process of implementing the standards soon after they were adopted by the State of Wisconsin, about three years ago. Our district has spent a considerable amount of time and money on the implementation. The Common Core Standards provide more rigor and welcomed additions to the curriculum, according to our teachers.

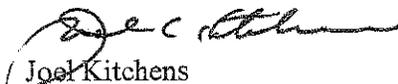
Recently, the legislature and others have called for reconsideration of the adoption of these standards. We believe the implementation of the Common Core Standards has been very beneficial for our students in a number of ways. First, they provide specific content knowledge and skills for every grade level across all schools in the state. This helps keep students on track in our increasingly mobile society. Second, they provide consistently more rigorous standards to ensure college and career readiness, which our employers and post-secondary institutions are looking for. Finally, the standards increase students' critical thinking ability as well as their ability to demonstrate their skills on practical tasks.

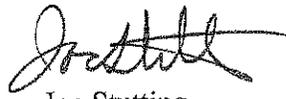
We are asking for your help to ensure that teachers and others have the resources necessary to continue to successfully implement these standards in our classrooms.

As we challenge students to reach these rigorous expectations, there will be struggles. We must all work together to bring these standards to life in the classroom, support all teachers, and engage all students in ways that help them achieve these new educational goals.

Our district continues to work to provide support for educators, students, parents, and others across the state to ensure they are prepared for these changes. We want to serve as a resource for you as you consider Wisconsin's approach to implementation of the new standards. Please visit www.commoncore.dpi.wi.gov to find useful information on the CCSS. Feel free to reach out with any questions you may have as we move forward in the implementation process.

Sincerely,


Joel Kitchens
School Board President


Joe Stutting
Superintendent

Northwood School District

N14463 Highway 53, Minong, WI 54859

Phone: 715-466-2297 Fax: 715-466-5149

October 22, 2013

Dear Wisconsin Legislature:

The purpose of this letter is to offer support for the Common Core and to encourage you to continue to move Wisconsin forward with the implementation of the Common Core. At Northwood, we have invested over three years preparing for the Common Core and have seen amazing results. Our staff has grown so much professionally as a result of our involvement. Their professional dialogue is so rich; their understanding of where students are currently performing and how to maximize individual student growth is so powerful. Our staff is focusing on student learning – not just their teaching practices. The tremendous growth of our staff is due, to a large part, by our involvement with Common Core.

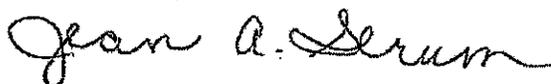
The Common Core State Standards are more rigorous than the previous ones used in Wisconsin. State Superintendent Tony Evers, in reference to his Agenda 2017, wants us to ensure all students are college and career ready. The Common Core State Standards promote critical thinking and will better prepare our students to compete in the global job market.

The previous standards attempted to challenge our students-but they were not specified for each grade. The new standards clearly outline what students need to learn; they engage our students in learning. Staff is then able to better individualize instruction to meet students where they're at and move them forward. Students will learn to problem-solve and to communicate effectively. They will learn real-life skills.

The Common Core State Standards will allow us to use the Smarter Balance Assessment, a much more rigorous assessment than the WKCE. Since over forty other states are using the Common Core, we will be better able to compare our performance with that of the majority of the nation...not just Wisconsin.

When we first started with the Common Core over three years ago, we were a bit overwhelmed. It seemed like more than we and our students could handle; however, we found just the opposite. Our staff and students are rising to the occasion. While we may not score as high as we'd like on the Smarter Balance, we know we are on the right track. We finally have our standards, assessments, and staff/principal evaluations all aligning. Please don't de-rail us. Wisconsin is moving forward; we don't want to go backward. The students in Wisconsin deserve to move forward. As educators, we need to demand that we keep moving forward. Please, support the continued use of the Common Core State Standards.

Professionally,



Jean A. Serum
District Administrator
Northwood School District

Dear Rep. Thiesfeldt,

Thank you for taking time to read the attached letter offering my perspective on the Common Core State Standards. As an education professional of 15 years, I believe the flaws in our state and country's educational system are not related to the CCSS for math or English (i.e. having common expectations for learning) but rather the high stakes accountability and evaluation processes that force educators to limit focus and depth of learning. If we truly want to reform education, there needs to be a provision of time and funding to allow education professionals to personalize learning for ALL students. The Common Core State Standards are an excellent foundation for success, but we need time and resources to personalize learning for every student.

Regards,

Dave Harper

David D. Harper

Early Childhood Center Principal

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

The School District of Denmark

Dear Rep. Thiesfeldt,

I am writing to inform you as Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment in the School District of Denmark, I believe the Common Core State Standards are a step in the right direction to reform education, but it is only half of the equation. These common standards provide a solid foundation to ensure our children will be fully prepared for college and careers. Since adoption by the state in 2010, we have been working diligently for three years to implement them.

The collaborative work in curriculum development, lesson planning, and creation of progress measures for student growth towards these standards has been an area of focus in school districts across the state, and much has been accomplished to achieve these shifts in teaching and learning that hold students to higher standards and increased levels of rigor and complexity in learning.

As a curriculum professional, I ask that you keep in mind that standards are not a curriculum. They are a set of desired outcomes from which curricula are developed in individual school districts. Standards represent broader levels of learning; it is at the regional and local levels where the standards are analyzed to determine and develop appropriate instructional strategies, materials, and assessments for direct use by students and teachers. Local professionals maintain control over the resources used for instruction, and over the delivery model or type of instruction that is used. The CCSS provide a framework of high expectations from which local districts create academic programming that will work best for their community and its students. This past year our teachers collaborative made decisions on which reading texts to purchase for our students as well as a new math resource program to reach the high expectations for learning defined in the CCSS.

What needs to change in our system is the heavy emphasis on one standardized assessment (i.e. WKCE or SBAC) being used as the threshold by which students' proficiency to these standards is measured. I believe classroom teachers, administrators, and local school boards should collaboratively be in charge of determining how students are growing and learning, as they tailor instruction to best meet the needs of individual children. Learning is personal and involves the human element of imperfection. Every child brings talents and gifts to the classroom that must be cultivated and encouraged. Not every child excels in math or (insert any subject)-he or she should be competent to a common expectation, but, more importantly, he or she should be allowed educational options tailored to his or her strengths. I've always believed our goal in education should be to unlock each student's gift and help children become the best they can be in the area where they excel and demonstrate a passion for learning. This can be accomplished within the context of the Common Core Standards, but it requires time and creativity on the part of our educators, not a 180-day school calendar and a carrot-stick approach in accountability that by its nature beckons teachers to focus on "teaching to a test" rather than teaching students in their areas of interest and through the ways in which they best learn.

We are in the third year of implementation of the Common Core Standards and most school districts are embedded in this work along with us. To change course now would waste time, undermine resources, and dismantle the foundation that has been laid to help ALL students achieve success.

Our district will continue to provide support for educators, students, and parents to ensure they are prepared for necessary changes in curriculum, instruction and assessments. We want to serve as a resource for you as you consider Wisconsin's approach to implementation of these standards. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have as we move forward.

Sincerely,

David D. Harper

Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Early Childhood Center Principal
Musical Director
The School District of Denmark

Good afternoon, Senator Thiesfeldt,

A small group from our school district would like to testify at the Common Core Hearings" soon to be held in Wausau. I have submitted a request on your webpage at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/thiesfeldt/Pages/Contact.aspx>

Would you help me to be sure that we have done everything we need to do in order to submit our testimony?

Below is my statement (draft) for your information.

I appreciate your assistance.

Andrea Thiry-Wenz
Director of Teaching and Learning
Howard-Suamico School District

Jeremy Thiesfeldt, Fond du Lac

Dean Knudson, Hudson
Don Pridemore, Hartford
Jeff Stone, Greendale
Jim Steineke, Kaukauna
Michael Schraa, Oshkosh
Sondy Pope, Cross Plains
Christine Sinicki, Milwaukee
Dianne Hesselbein, Middleton

My name is Andrea Thiry-Wenz and I am the Director of Teaching and Learning for the Howard-Suamico School District in northeastern Wisconsin where I have been leading our curriculum and assessment development for eight years.

In Howard-Suamico, we take our legacy of high performance as a duty to continue for the preparation of responsible, productive citizens who might prosper and serve. For many years, our achievement was founded on benchmarks that took standards that were a mile wide and an inch deep. These benchmarks were among the best interpretations of the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards, but still they were largely quantifiable measurements of student success.

We have been working diligently for three years on our approach to implementing the Common Core State Standards. This work has been completed within our existing budget. Teacher teams have been determining the knowledge and skills required of these learning targets, and facilitating the changes necessary in assessment and instruction with their building level and grade level peers. With the targets of the CCSS, we have re-developed a curriculum that maintains our local preferences and strengths, while stretching our learners and our teachers toward more qualifiable and quantifiable measures.

This has been hard work, but I believe that our teachers believe in this change, and are enthusiastic about what kinds of graduates we will be preparing with this vertically

articulated, specific, and rigorous set of standards that require skill and understanding across curriculum areas.

Simultaneously, we have worked with our teachers, our community and our Board of Education in developing our goals for the district and for our learners around "21st Century Skills". We are developing authentic, real-world learning experiences. Children in all grade levels are producing high-quality, well-researched, articulate products and presentations. With strong content knowledge and high-quality, current-century skills of communication, collaboration, creative and critical thinking and citizenship we aim to produce stronger and more capable students and workers who are prepared for their college and career training.



We are working to address a criticism and a concern of the higher education community and the business community. We have heard for many years that graduates were arriving at their doors and in their training programs still needing remedial assistance. This is costly to one's progress in what has been called "the real world" and it shouldn't be the case for anyone. In Howard-Suamico, we believe the content knowledge, understanding and skills required within the CCSS partnered with the development of 21st Century Skills will ensure that our learners are not among this group, and that they are prepared to develop and create a future equal to their potential.

In this way, the Common Core are not the ceiling for us, but they are a critical part of our foundation. I would strongly encourage no change in course for all of the students within the state of Wisconsin. I am confident that the multitude of miscommunications and misunderstandings surrounding the CCSS can be clarified and we can all look forward to a strong future for our children and our state with Common Core as a part of the foundation. (2:33)

Andrea Thiry-Wenz, Director of Teaching & Learning

Teaching & Learning Center

SERVING•LEARNING•ACHIEVING – TOGETHER

Phone: 920-662-8107 Fax 920-662-9777

Howard-Suamico School District

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andrthir@hssd.k12.wi.us

Here's what DPI a govt entity is using their time for. Are they supposed to be lobbying you reps or doing what you have mandated them to do? They also have used district emails to do this????? They actual email included "talking points" and what to say if asked by media, etc.?????

Hello! I received a call and email (see below) from Lynette Russell, my Assistant Superintendent at DPI, regarding upcoming public hearings being held around the state on the implementation of the common core standards, statewide ACT testing, and smarter balance. Apparently the attendance at the public hearings has been overwhelming against common core. There is going to be a public hearing in Wausau on Wednesday, October 30, at NTC from 2 to 8 p.m. I was wondering if you might be willing to encourage your colleagues to get the word out to educators, parents, and school board members about attending the hearing. If they can attend, they just need to register and indicate their support of common core, ACT statewide testing, and smarter balance. They do not have to testify or stay for the hearing. If someone wants to speak, they do have to bring a written copy of their prepared remarks. If you or your colleagues cannot attend and you would be willing to send an email to the legislators on the committee conducting the hearing, that would also be a big help too. The Common Core Action Alert which is attached includes the committee members' emails. Whatever you can do to show your support would be appreciated. Thanks for your help. Sharon

My students want to know if this is normal for a dept created by the legislature to lobby the legislature and key legislators to be pro-dept???

THX for you time. I appreciate your concern and time for this state.

Mart Grams
Shawano School District
Economics, Civics and Yearbook
715 526-2175 ext 1113

Hello to all,

Please review the attached document regarding the Common Core State Standards. I will not be able to attend the hearing in Eau Claire on Wednesday, October 23 but would appreciate my thoughts being acknowledged. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time,
Michelle Parks

Michelle Parks, NBCT, PAEMST
Math Consultant
mparks@cesa10.k12.wi.us
715.720.2034

October 22, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Michelle Parks and I am writing to voice my support for Wisconsin's adoption of The Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM).

I was a classroom teacher for 14 years in the Eau Claire school district. I have both an undergraduate and a master's degree in mathematics education. I received the Presidential Award for Mathematics Teaching for the state of Wisconsin (PAEMST) in 2005. I am nationally board certified (NBCT) in adolescent mathematics, served as the mathematics department chairperson for my math department at Northstar Middle School in Eau Claire from 1995 to 2006 and currently serve as the secretary for the Wisconsin Math Council.

For the past seven years I have served as the Math Consultant for the Cooperative Education Service Agency #10 (CESA 10) in Chippewa Falls and have been supporting the implementation of the CCSSM over the past three years within the 29 districts CESA 10 serves as well as in many other districts all over the state of Wisconsin.

I am aware of some of the voiced concerns over the adoption of the CCSSM and that hearings will be held on October 23 to address these concerns. Since I am unable to attend those hearings I am writing to express my support of CCSSM and share some insights into what I know to be unfounded concerns.

In defense of the CCSSM I want you to know that many of the concerns being voiced are simply inaccurate. I too had concerns when I first read the CCSSM document, but in working with the standards and exploring all the supports to understand the intent behind them, I have come to value the work that has been done and applaud the design and the intended outcomes for students.

Governor Walker stated, "I'd like Wisconsin to have its own unique standards that I think can be higher than what's been established, or what's been talked about, at the national level." The CCSSM are both "high" and rigorous. The design requires students to have a deep understanding of knowledge and skills and is not just simply a checklist of topics to teach. As I'm sure you know, prior to the adoption of the CCSSM, we did have our "own" Wisconsin standards. While they were an excellent first piece of the puzzle, we could not draw upon the collective intelligence that the framers of the CCSSM have been able to do. As the three main authors, William McCallum, Jason Zimba and Phil Daro, worked with many different national groups, they were able to maximize the outcomes for our students.

To truly understand the depth of the CCSSM please take some time to look at The Progressions Documents that the authors used to frame the CCSSM and have put together to help interpret the intention and depth of the standards, linked here:

<http://ime.math.arizona.edu/progressions/>

Note that the progressions document project was supported by the Brookhill Foundation located here in Wisconsin - but housed at the University of Arizona where William McCallum is a professor.

The second concern I have heard raised is that under the CCSSM “students cannot take Algebra in 8th grade.” This is also totally erroneous. The CCSS has a very strong foundation in algebra including functions at the middle school level. To see this in detail please access the following links to the Expressions and Equations domain for each grade level 6 – 8 and the Functions domain at grade 8:

6th:

<http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/6/EE>

7th:

<http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/7/EE>

8th:

<http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/8/EE>

<http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/8/F>

As a former Algebra teacher, I know that there are many standards listed in the documents linked above that were expectations for only a few of my more “mathematically talented” students that were accelerated into 8th grade Algebra under the previous Wisconsin State Standards. With the adoption of CCSSM - ALL students are expected to have this knowledge and understanding.

In addition, the CCSSM supporting document, Appendix A, explains how to accelerate learning at the middle school level if necessary. Please go to page 80 of document linked below to see that the CCSSM provides appropriate challenge for even our most gifted populations:

http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_Mathematics_Appendix_A.pdf

In my position I am aware that additional misinformation and disinformation regarding the CCSSM has been widely circulated by persons with little or no first hand experience with the CCSSM adoption work to date. As you may know DPI has addressed many of these and has created a support document to address the issues and replace the myths with facts. See link below:

http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/news_common-core-team_0312

In the past three years since the adoption of CCSSM, I have seen amazing and unprecedented focus from Wisconsin teachers, administrators, CESAs and DPI around the goal "to improve mathematics education for ALL our students." The commitment to support professional development, implementation of new teaching resources, time to realign curriculum, instruction and assessment, has been unparalleled in my many years in public education. As the state investigates the financial impact of moving away from the CCSSM, I would expect that the substantial investment both financial and in-kind that has already been made will not be taken lightly.

I thank you for your time and attention. If you have any questions regarding the CCSSM please do not hesitate to contact me at 715.834.9615 (my home number).

Michelle Parks, NBCT, PAEMST
Math Consultant
mparks@cesa10.k12.wi.us
715.720.2034

Deeply concerned that we are dumbing down the next generation by reducing/eliminating history SAT testing which in turns reduces/eliminates history requirements for graduation. When I asked a present high school senior what he was going to do when he graduates, his response was "I was going to be a history teacher but since that is no longer required, I've had to change my major!" How will our children and grandchildren learn of the true founders of our country, what our country was based on, what the Constitution states, etc. What about WWI and WWII? Will they understand the importance of 'freedom' or will they think that 'freedom' means they can get on a government program and not worry about being a productive member of society.

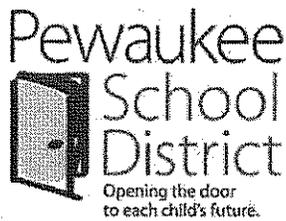
Common Core tests require Common Core teaching since they are tested on this teaching. Please do not let our children and grandchildren lose the importance and understanding of the foundation of our country – less government and more individual freedom to choose and make their own decisions.

Please do not let a federal test and teaching become the way of these young minds.....

Mary Grill

' Do not ask the Lord to Guide your Footsteps if you are not willing to move your Feet'

"May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love." Ephesians 3:17



Mike Cady, Chief Academic Officer

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October 23, 2013

Dear Senator Farrow, Representative Thiesfeldt and members of the committee:

I was in attendance at the public hearing on the Common Core State Standards and had intended to testify but unfortunately had to leave before I had the opportunity to speak so I am providing my statement in writing.

Let me begin by thanking you for listening and taking the time to better understand the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and their impact on students across the state.

In my current role, I proudly serve the Pewaukee School District as the Chief Academic Officer and have twenty-one years of experience as a teacher, building principal and now district level administrator. I am also the parent of two elementary aged children who will be directly impacted by the standards we implement in this state. In my role, I lead our K-12 efforts in the areas of curriculum, assessment and instruction. In carrying out those duties I work side by side our teaching staff in an ongoing effort to improve the learning experiences for our students. I can say without reservation that the Common Core State Standards have been a tremendous asset in our work.

I support the CCSS for a number of reasons including: 1) the CCSS in Mathematics, Literacy and English Language Arts, are without question a significant improvement in terms of their design, utility and rigor over previous state standards; 2) these standards are noticeably more rigorous and better geared to prepare our students for the modern demands of college and career; 3) these standards represent rich outcomes for students that require deeper understanding of important knowledge and skills; and 4) these standards have served as a unifying force in my district's improvement efforts. We have worked diligently and invested heavily in our efforts to construct curriculum and improve instruction to support our students in meeting these higher standards. For the Pewaukee School District, the CCSS serve as the foundation for innovation and have driven significant program improvements including our implementation of the Reader's and Writer's Workshop model in grades 4K-8, a significant investment in training all teachers to contribute to teaching literacy across disciplines, and the implementation of mathematics curriculum infused with the Common Core Content Standards and Standards of Mathematical Practices. If these standards were repealed we will have lost years of progress and tens of thousands of dollars invested in professional development and supporting resources.

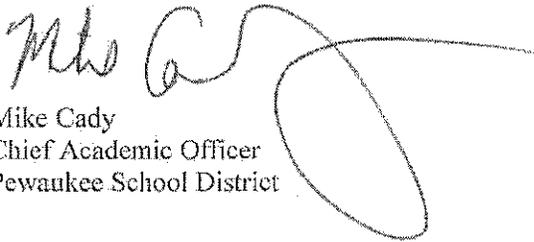
I would like to take a moment and address some of the testimony presented at the hearing in Fondu Lac. Specifically the testimony of Dr. Sandra Stotsky requires some response. First of all, I acknowledge her credentials and respect that she comes to this issue with significant relevant experience. That being said, I want to point out that Dr. Stotsky represents her own personal opinion, one that is not shared by many experts in Wisconsin and nationwide who also have outstanding credentials. First, consider that the resounding message from the public educators in our own state is nearly unanimous in support of the continued implementation of the Common Core. If these standards aren't very good - why would you be hearing such strong support from the vast majority of experts in your own state? Does an "expert" have more credibility because she is from Massachusetts and is flown around the nation by "grass roots" organizations to testify? You heard the message again and again from teachers, curriculum directors and superintendents from Wisconsin stating the Common Core is a good thing for our schools and I join them without reservation. But if it is national experts we need to hear from then I offer the following:

“In a great act of foresight for this nation, most of the states have now adopted a consistent set of expectations for school mathematics, called the Common Core State Standards. Building on long years of work, the Common Core State Standards are an auspicious advance in mathematics education.” – Taken from a common statement of support for the CCSS from fifteen professional mathematics organizations including the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), the National Association of Mathematicians, American Mathematical Society, and the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM). The full statement is attached so you can see it in context unlike some quotes attributed to Bill Gates and others at the hearing that were cherry picked out of context.

“The Common Core State Standards issue a critically important challenge to all of us to work together with enormous resolve to accelerate students' levels of achievement and to teach important skills such as deep comprehension, writing in a range of genres, problem solving, and close interpretative reading. The call for increased attention to writing and to content literacy is especially overdue and welcome.” – Lucy Calkins & Mary Ehrenworth, the Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University

In closing I want to reiterate my strong support for the continued implementation of the Common Core State Standards. These standards are having a positive impact on our students and I support the State Superintendent’s wise and visionary decision to move forward with their adoption. The choice of learning standards for our students is an important educational decision. We are “doing better” in Wisconsin and the Common Core Standards are an important reason why. Educators across the state are engaged, motivated and moving in a more synchronized and positive direction for our kids. We need and expect our elected leaders to support our progress by supporting the continued implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Wisconsin.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Cady', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Mike Cady
Chief Academic Officer
Pewaukee School District



CONFERENCE BOARD OF THE MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES
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rosier@georgetown.edu
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www.cbmsweb.org

**Common Core State Standards for Mathematics
Statement by Presidents of CBMS Member Professional Societies**

In a great act of foresight for this nation, most of the states have now adopted a consistent set of expectations for school mathematics, called the Common Core State Standards. Building on long years of work, the Common Core State Standards are an auspicious advance in mathematics education. They define the mathematical knowledge and skill that students need in order to be ready for college and career, and provide the basis for a curriculum that is focused and coherent. If properly implemented, these rigorous new standards hold the promise of elevating the mathematical knowledge and skill of every young American to levels competitive with the best in the world, of preparing our college entrants to undertake advanced work in the mathematical sciences, and of readying the next generation for the jobs their world will demand. Much remains to be done to implement the standards, in curriculum, assessment, and teacher education. But we now have, for the first time in our history, a common blueprint for this work across state lines. This is not the time to turn away from our good fortune. We, the undersigned presidents of the following member societies of CBMS, hereby express our strong support for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

James Roznowski
American Mathematical Association
of Two Year Colleges

Hans Kuensch
Institute of Mathematical Statistics

David Vogan
American Mathematical Society

Robert Devaney
Mathematical Association of America

Marie Davidian
American Statistical Association

Nathaniel Dean
National Association of Mathematicians

Alasdair Urquhart
Association for Symbolic Logic

Valerie Mills
National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics

Ruth Charney
Association for Women in Mathematics

Linda Gojak
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Fran Arbaugh
Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators

Irene Fonseca
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics

Diana Kasbaum
Association of State Supervisors of Mathematics

Don Balka
TODOS: Mathematics for ALL

Vanessa Cleaver
Benjamin Banneker Association

Dear Representatives Murphy and Thiesfeldt:

I have listened to the rhetoric at the Fond Du Lac hearing on Common Core State Standards--I am completely opposed to them for the following reasons:

1. The CCSS are not state-written standards, but are backed (not even written) by the **Federal** Department of Education.
2. The CCSS are **copyrighted and cannot be changed by the state of Wisconsin nor the local school districts**--so much for local control of education.(I understand that a mere 15% can be added to the standards.) What if a local district decides that they do not want to use the CCSS but want something better for their children. Will they have the **freedom to choose**?
3. These standards were **not tested nor proven** before being offered to the states. In fact, they had not been published by the time Wisconsin accepted them. Do we really want to use standards that have not been tested nor proven to be successful?
4. The standards that I have seen are so **vague** that a teacher could teach almost nothing about the subject and still meet the standards.
5. Included in the CCSS are provisions for **extremely invasive, privacy destroying data-mining**, keeping, and sharing which violate the Fourth Amendment: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."
6. **What will the additional costs be to the taxpayers** if you in the legislature decide to keep the CCSS standards? All tests will have to be taken online. Who will pay for computers for each or even half of the students in a school? Who will pay for increased internet bandwidth so that 30 to 60 people or more can be on the internet at the same time and still have enough speed to work in a timely manner? **Will the Federal Department of Education send more money?** or will the **local taxpayers** be hit with another tax increase?

Common Core State Standards should be removed from use in the state of Wisconsin. Wisconsin could easily adopt proven standards that are rigorous.

Sincerely,

Joann Borlee
4041 Prairie Lane
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Rick, Jeremy and Paul

For the Record. I'm opposed to Common Core. I will try to make it to the hearing in Wausau next week.

Nick Heintz
170 Sheboygan St.
Fond du Lac, WI

Dear Senators and Representatives:

I am writing to inform you that as a curriculum professional in the Wautoma Area School District, I support the Common Core State Standards and ask that you do the same. These new standards are part of our state's education plan to help all of our children excel and be fully prepared for college and careers. They were adopted in 2010 and since then we have been working diligently for three years to implement them.

Recently, the WI legislature and others have called for reconsideration of the adoption of these standards. Consider how much time, effort and progress has already been made before derailing this major education initiative. The Wautoma Area School District has complied with the state's adoption of the Common Core State Standards and as a district we have adopted them as well. As the Director of Instruction, I have provided multiple opportunities for our teachers to be prepared to use the CCSS as a tool to guide our curriculum writing. We sent teachers to multiple workshops through CESA 5 and 6 to develop a better understanding of the Common Core. Throughout the states most schools took these standards seriously and have spent countless hours making sure teachers understood the standards in order to better teach them.

We hosted one of the Wisconsin Math Institutes this summer, and twelve of our math teachers spent a week of training intensely studying one of the math domains. Educators all over the state have been involved in some of the richest, most beneficial trainings that they have attended throughout their career. Good things are happening and we need this momentum to continue. Derailing the CC is the wrong thing to do!

We are also in the process of making sure that our curriculum is completed in an online format using the Software Group tool, *Build Your Own Curriculum*. Our summer curriculum writing cycles were changed over the past 3 years to adhere to the mandates made from the state. What kind of message is being sent to teachers after hours of intense work developing a sound curriculum, if we get rid of these grade specific standards? I was a part of the adoption of the 1998 standards for 4, 8, and 12, which was the first attempt for us to have statewide standards. We learned how difficult it was to align grade levels to standards that were only for 4, 8, and 12th grade. Every district did things differently! This was not the best situation. Educators across the United States spent countless hours writing the CCSS. We finally have grade specific standards, and you want to take them away?

As a curriculum professional, I ask that you keep in mind:

- Standards are not curriculum, just as a textbook is not the curriculum. They are guideposts for which curricula are developed in each school district. Standards represent broader levels of learning, and it is at the local level where the standards are interpreted by teachers to develop instructional strategies, materials, and assessments for direct use.

- Local control is maintained because of the way that curriculum processes are carried out in school districts. Local curricula are guided by the more general expectations of the CCSS. There is local control over how the CCSS is interpreted, over the resources used for instruction, and over the delivery model or type of instruction that is used. The CCSS provides a framework of high expectations from which local districts create academic programming that will work best

for their community.

In mathematics, the content and skills have been "moved down" in the grades. For example, the CCSS call for about half of the content of Algebra to now be taught in eighth grade. These are higher expectations, but 8th grade math is still offered to most students. Some students with higher abilities are offered 8th grade Algebra, but it is optional, not mandated.

We are in the third year of implementation and most school districts are embedded in the work of implementing the CCSS. To undo it and move in another direction would waste time, money, and contribute to a loss of focus while an alternative is being developed. As a Curriculum Director our credibility with teachers would be lost. With so many expectations today, we aren't the most popular people in a school district, yet just like teachers, countless unpaid hours have been spent trying to do what is best for our kids.

Our district continues to work to provide support for educators, students, parents, and others across the state to ensure they are prepared for necessary changes in curriculum, instruction and assessments. We want to serve as a resource for you as you consider Wisconsin's approach to implementation of the new standards. Please visit www.commoncore.dpi.wi.gov to find useful information on the CCSS. Feel free to reach out with any questions you may have as we move forward in the implementation process. Thank you for your time as you become informed to make serious decisions that impact the state of Wisconsin's educational system for years to come.

Sincerely,

Sandi Jarvis, Director of Instruction

The remaining hearings are scheduled for:

Wednesday, October 23 (2:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.) Eau Claire –Chippewa Valley Technical College, and

Wednesday, October 30 (2:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.) Wausau – North Central Technical College.

Read our first [Action Alert](#) and download the Common Core Toolkit [here](#).

Sandi Jarvis

Director of Instruction, Wautoma Area Schools

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jarviss@wautoma.k12.wi.us

If you want to go fast, go alone.

If you want to go far, go with others. -Gene Sharratt

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF CADOTT COMMUNITY

426 Myrtle Street, Cadott, Wisconsin 54727

www.cadott.k12.wi.us

October 24, 2013

Dear State Legislators,

As the superintendent in the Cadott Community School District and the father of three young children, I would like to share the following thoughts regarding the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Unfortunately other responsibilities in my school district did not allow me to attend the hearing held in Eau Claire on October 23, 2013.

While my personal educational philosophy includes the preference for each school district to have local control over the curriculum being taught in schools, I think that standards and benchmarks serve an important purpose in the educational system. Standards and benchmarks are quite helpful in ensuring appropriate scope and sequence between various courses and grade levels, as well as minimizing gaps and overlaps in the curriculum being taught in our schools. This is becoming increasingly important for many reasons including the need for so many more families to move and relocate during a child's education. Standards and benchmarks also help to provide consistency when teachers retire or change positions. The CCSS were developed through a collaborative process to provide more rigor and better consistency in education across our country, and from what I can tell they are a significant improvement compared to what Wisconsin had previously adopted. My understanding is that despite the adoption of the CCSS, state law continues to provide local school districts with the ability to choose which curriculum materials to use and which instructional delivery methods to employ in educating their children.

Why our state would entertain adopting standards other than the CCSS is perplexing to me. When resources are already so limited and expectations toward more accountability are mounting, I cannot understand any moral reasons why our state leaders would want to take a large step back and start over with the development or adoption of a new set of standards. Much work and many resources have already been spent to align lessons and purchase materials that are aligned with the CCSS. The state has developed assessments and accountability measures with the CCSS as the foundation of these efforts. Even the amount of resources that it has taken for the legislature to micromanage the Department of Public Instruction and hold these hearings across the state seems to be a significant waste as far as I am concerned.

To me the real concern is not which standards we use to align our curriculum, but rather it has more to do with concerns related to Federal expectations related to high stakes testing. Certainly the achievement expectations set forth by the No Child Left Behind Act are not realistic, and the new requirements to obtain a waiver for continued Federal funding include more emphasis in several areas related to student achievement accountability in the core academic areas. It is concerning to me that so much emphasis is being put on standardized assessments and the core areas of education at the expense of many of the elective areas and fine arts that have helped define the ingenuity of America.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts and educate yourselves in regard to the CCSS. No matter what is decided at the state level, in Cadott we will continue on our mission of challenging each and every one of our students to reach his or her full potential.

Sincerely,

Joe Zydowsky

Joseph Zydowsky
District Administrator

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Fax 715-289-3748

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Matthew McDonough
Jr./Sr. High School Principal

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Jenney Larson
Elementary Principal

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"It is the school district's mission to challenge each and every student to reach his or her full potential."

**UNIFIED SCHOOL
DISTRICT OF DE PERE**

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Technology

MISSION

As a responsible partner with our families and communities, we provide a distinct educational edge that prepares all learners to be successful and contributing members in our global society.

October 24, 2013

Dear Wisconsin Representatives and Senators,

I am writing to you today to express my support and enthusiasm for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. My name is Shelly Thomas and I am the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Unified School District of De Pere. I started teaching in 1986 at the elementary level. I taught for 14 years in the Manitowoc Public School District and then became a building principal for the De Pere School District. I served as principal of our intermediate school for eight years and am now in my sixth year as the district's K-12 Director of Curriculum and Instruction. I am also a parent and step-parent of seven children ranging in ages from 17 – 31 who are all products of the public schools in De Pere.

I'm sure you have received many letters telling you what the Common Core Standards are as well as what they are not. The purpose of my letter is not to regurgitate all of that rhetoric, but rather to give you some insight into how the Common Core Standards and the work that we have done with them has improved the quality of education in De Pere, and for that matter, Wisconsin.

When I was a new teacher twenty-eight years ago, curriculum development and improvement of instruction were left up to each individual teacher. Oh, there were guidelines, but they were general and could be interpreted in a variety of ways. Don't get me wrong - I worked hard, as did the other teachers in my school - but I rarely, if ever, discussed curriculum or instruction with my grade level colleagues across the hall. The learning goals that I had for my students were determined by me and me alone, as were many of the topics I chose to teach. I was okay with that at the time because my lens was focused only on my classroom. I cared about my students, but I didn't give a lot of thought to the kind of education other students in the grade level were receiving.

In 1998 the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards were released. These standards described what students should know and be able to do at the ends of grades 4, 8 and 12. This was the impetus for grade level discussions in our district, and I found myself talking with my colleagues to determine what the standards actually meant. We discussed what needed to happen in all of the other grades so that students could achieve the standards at grades 4, 8 and 12. As I said, we had many conversations, but at the end of the day, I went back to my room and continued to teach the topics that I thought were most pertinent to my students with no regard to what my colleagues were teaching.

In 2000, I was hired as a principal. My lens changed, and I began to look at curriculum, instruction, and assessment from the broader, school level. I began to see the importance of guaranteeing curriculum for all of our students. I came to realize that the knowledge, skills, and understandings that were taught in one fifth grade classroom

should be the same as those taught in all the fifth grade classrooms. I led the staff in many, many conversations to decide “the what” – what should be taught in every classroom. These were great conversations, but I knew that at the end of the day, many of the teachers were going back to their rooms and teaching the same topics, concepts and ideas that they always had – still with no regard for a consistent curriculum.

When I was hired as Director of Curriculum and Instruction my lens became even broader. I was now looking at creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all subject areas, K-12. Parents would pull me aside and talk to me about the “teacher lottery” – they said that what their child learned in a class depended upon whom they had as a teacher. This bothered me greatly, but again, our state standards were of no help. It only made sense to me that the curriculum in our Grade 9 ELA classes was consistent across all of our 12 teachers. I was also disturbed because we could never get to the more important conversations that focused on learning about effective instructional practices, how to meet the needs of diverse learners, and truly measuring our students’ learning.

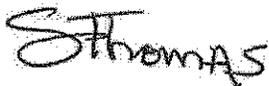
As a curriculum director, I attend meetings sponsored by DPI as well as CESA 7. I began to notice that so many of the districts in Wisconsin were working really hard to figure out “the what”, and few districts were ever able to find time to talk about “the how”. We were all focused on the same thing, but we were coming up with different grade level curricular goals and objectives. When I looked through a statewide lens, it only made sense to me that what third graders in De Pere were learning in math should be the same as what third graders in West De Pere or Ashwaubenon were learning.

When the Common Core was released and we began working on it three years ago, it was a “seachange” in our district. For the first time, “the what” had been spelled out for us and it was no longer negotiable. I was able to stand up in front of the teachers and tell them that we all needed to get onboard because the Common Core State Standards were not going away. Initially, some teachers pushed back. They felt like their freedom had been taken away. In a way it had, but something amazing began to happen with our conversations. After we spent a year unpacking the standards so that we all had a clear understanding of what each one meant, we were able to shift our conversations toward what we are really good at as educators – figuring out the best way to help our kids learn. We could now share ideas about what worked and what didn’t. We could finally develop common assessments because we all had the same learning targets for our students. Teachers formed collegial groups so that they could examine student data and share ideas and strategies. Gone were the days of independent contracting! The sense of worth and efficacy of the teachers grew as they began to see results – their kids were learning and at levels that they hadn’t seen or expected before.

We have devoted all of our professional development time and funding to implement the Common Core State Standards, but our work isn’t just about the standards. It is about expecting ALL students to achieve at high levels and working with them to scaffold their instructional experiences so that they can learn. It is about teachers realizing that their colleagues have a lot to offer and much can be learned from sharing and problem solving together. It is about teachers analyzing data from common assessments to see if the students really have learned the targets. It is about being able to work together to problem solve next steps for kids who are struggling or who need extra challenge.

To back away from the Common Core State Standards would be a devastating move for De Pere — a devastating move for Wisconsin. Great things are happening in public education in Wisconsin. I have not seen anything this positive or this powerful in all of my twenty-eight years as an educator. Amazing things are happening in our district, but don't just take my word for it. Please come and visit us. Don't let the political posturing and propaganda influence your decision. Come and see what is actually happening in our schools. I think you, like me, will realize that we are headed down the right path — the right path for ALL of our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "SThomas". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the "S" being particularly large and looping.

Shelly Thomas

Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Good morning,

I attended last night's hearings. They were very interesting.

In light of the conversation comparing State's to other nations, I found this report that was released today interesting, and I thought you would as well:

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/studies/2013460.aspx#section1>

I would like to note that Wisconsin is out-performing California, so I would not recommend that we replicate the process California has in place for standards.

In addition, there was a question about textbooks and textbook selection. When I was a principal, I lead a school team through textbook selection for reading to align to the Common Core. While there are only three remaining large publishers in education, they all three "had the sticker on their books" that they were aligned to the Common Core. To determine if this was accurate, one teacher per grade level for our elementary team, listed each standard for their grade level and then searched for where and how the standard was taught in each book. What we found was that not all standards were presented in every textbook for every grade level. In addition, standards were frequently not presented in an adequate fashion to ensure students would learn at high levels. Regardless of the textbook selected, teachers would continue to need to use their professional wisdom to make decisions, plan, and provide instruction to students in a manner that fit with the background and culture of the students.

I encourage you to continue the adoption of the Common Core, but concurrently convene a committee to write more rigorous standards specific to the needs of Wisconsin students. By the time the arduous and politically charged process of writing standards is complete, schools will be well-positioned for higher standards.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Koenitzer
1955 5th Avenue
Chetek, WI 54728
715/837-1327

Let the law suits begin! Are these the statements of a bully? Stop Common Core.
Ruth Elmer

http://www.leadertelegram.com/news/front_page/article_d19329f8-3c6b-11e3-b0c9-001a4bcf887a.html

But Evers, who has been vocal in his support for the Common Core, has said that won't be easy.

He believes the committees will see value in the Common Core, but, if they don't, **state lawmakers don't have the authority to repeal the standards**, Evers said in a phone interview Tuesday.

"I think the Legislature's ability to derail this is somewhat limited. I believe the constitution of the state gives me that authority," to set educational standards, Evers said.

Evers said if lawmakers challenge his authority, the matter could wind up before the state Supreme Court.

Swedien can be reached at 715-833-9214, 800-236-7077 or jon.swedien@ecpc.com.

Dear Representative Thiesfeldt,

I did not make the meeting in Eau Claire yesterday so I wanted to submit my written "testimony":

1) Regarding the portions of Common Core that were approved by our state government in 2010, when were the public hearings on this important issue? When did the people of this state get a chance to let their government know what they thought? When was the debate? In fact, since local control of public schools is part of the State Constitution and law, when were the constitution and law changed to alter or eliminate local control? I can't tell you how frustrating it is for "we the people" out here, when we have a ruling class who seem to think that they can do whatever they want! We get enough of that from Washington, we don't need more from Madison. I understand that this happened under a former administration, so we have hope that we now have a government that understands that it is bound by our constitution and laws, and the will of the people.

2) As I'm sure you know, the only two actual subject matter experts on the Common Core Validation Committee were Drs. Sandra Stotsky and James Milgram. **Neither** of them signed off on the common core standards. So while the DPI and others are touting its "high standards", a little investigation shows that this is not true, and in fact it is being used to introduce, in many cases, left-wing material such as speeches by Mr. Obama, as well as dumb-downed material such as a modern version of the Declaration of Independence in Milwaukee, for an "advanced placement" government class. Our schools should not be places of indoctrination, or social engineering by a particular segment of society!

There were obviously many with vested interests involved in developing Common Core. Unfortunately, the interests of parents and their children were not chief among them.

Thank you,
Andy Shakal
Bloomer

"See, I am sending an angel before you, to guard you on the way, and bring you to the place I have prepared. Be attentive to him and heed his voice. Do not rebel against him, for he will not forgive your sin. My authority resides with him. If you heed his voice and carry out all I tell you, I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes." (Exodus: 23: 20-23)

Dear Legislators:

IF what I read below from Tony Evers is where we are at in terms of protecting local control of our schools AND the freedom of teachers to teach as THEY believe best for their classroom THEN lets get the law suit started NOW. The WILL law firm in Milwaukee issued a letter and press release **last week** stating that Superintendent Tony Evers, **does not have the authority** he is claiming to control curriculums. If you go to WI State Statute 118.30 (1g) (a) (1) you will read: **"...each school board shall adopt pupil academic standards in mathematics, science, reading and writing, geography and history"**. This CLEARLY states that our **local school boards** have the power and the responsibility to determine what curriculum shall be used in their LOCAL school district. Mr. Tony Evers is suffering from hubris obviously and needs a hair cut of some kind not performed by a barber.

What we now see is the bureaucracy in operation. Give it more and more power and soon you have made it a dictatorial agency which NOBODY is to challenge.

I for one will spend money to stop Tony Evers and his ilk from being allowed to trample on the rights of the parents, children, local school districts and taxpayers of this state. I suspect others will be reacting accordingly.

To all the legislators receiving this it is clear that Tony Evers has just told you that all your Common Core public hearings are for NOTHING, you are wasting your time with these frivolous meetings. Hope you wake up to this and tell Mr. Evers the legislature will protect local control of our public schools and not allow any bureaucrat to play dictator with this matter.

In closing, let me point out that over 18 states have already taken action to either stop Common Core's implementation or restrict it in various ways. This was made clear in the Fond du Lac hearings on Common Core last week. That would make me believe Wisconsin's legislature or Governor Scott Walker have the same authority

Sincerely,

Edward Perkins
Appleton, WI

Good day! Please get WI out of Common Core. Washington DC cannot educate children better than parents and local officials.

Thank you,

Thomas & Heather Ross
faithsaves.net

Dear Representative Thiesfeldt,

I'm deeply concerned about the open-ended nature of the Common Core Curriculum. I believe it will be used by some teachers to push a leftist political agenda. Instead of listening to those activists who are telling you how wonderful it will be, I ask you to listen to parents who are concerned about their children being manipulated by those who don't have their best interests in mind. Also, I believe it is never a good thing for education when local control is diminished. Thank you for helping to bring attention to this critical matter.

Monica Tagliapietra
90 Sunset Circle
Fond du Lac, WI

My name is Pamela Wall
2538 Damon Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701-2649

I live here in Eau Claire and was a special education teacher and general education teacher in the ECASD for 35 years.

I am a mother of two graduates of Memorial High School and CVTC.

I am now the grandmother of and childcare provider for my two grandsons.

I have a vested interest in education in this state and especially this school district.

I am a proud graduate of the LaCrosse public schools and UW-LaCrosse, BA-Psychology Summa Cum Laude, French, MST-LD,ED.

My ancestors were in Wisconsin before it became a state, some before the founding of this nation, and some were active participants in its founding.

I'd like to speak to the standards issue wearing all those hats....

I understand where the standards came from as an outgrowth of No Child Left Behind which continues to be the law of the land. I was a classroom teacher when it became the law and have recognized its negative and positive effects. The problem of states being punished for having higher standards than others was real. We here in Wisconsin have always been proud of our high performing schools and our students who have excelled as have our midwestern neighbors. The current programs of accountability have been in place for over a decade and have not produced the desired results of giving every student the opportunity to succeed.

The standards are unproven. There were no trials before implementation. If there had been, I suspect teachers of children in the early years, the elementary years where I spent my career would tell you that they are developmentally inappropriate. The emphasis on rigid instruction schedules and a curriculum that does not adjust to individual needs is disturbing to me as an educator, as a mother, as a grandmother, and as one who was trained in psychology before attaining an education degree.

Then there are the tests. The standardized tests. Tests do not improve learning. Teaching improves learning. Instruction improves learning. Relationships improve learning. A strong safety net for families improves learning. Tests only give us data and children are not data points. Even the methods for testing students are not developmentally appropriate. The use of timing and computers/keyboards have been contraindicated in the research for young children.

So what should we do? I like to refer to Stephen Covey's 7 Habits: Begin with the end in mind. Seek first to understand. Sharpen the saw. You know the rest. Let's agree that every child in this state deserves what each of us considers "good enough" for each of our family members. Let's agree that we want children in this state to have strong family and community supports from birth on throughout their school years. Let's agree that we want children to have the best education from early childhood on. Let's agree that integrating schools and the community will improve both. Let's agree that we will use peer reviewed research to build the education system of the future. Let's at least agree to develop a feedback loop to review and revise the

implementation of CCSS. Our children, our students, our kids are the future. Let's put our money where our values are, where our future is. In our children.

Wisconsin has a long history of having a strong education program, a strong reliance on local control, and a strong investment in our children. Let's begin by going back to strong fiscal support for all our public schools and all the children they serve. Let's use the CCSS as a base to modify and adjust to meet the needs of Wisconsin students. Let's put our money where our values are. Wisconsin has a legacy to live up to from the Progressive era and founding of the first kindergartens to Chapter 13 and the goal of educating ALL children. Wisconsinites believe all children can learn. Let's pass that kind of thinking on to the next generation and generations to come.

Your assignment:
Read!

The Death and Life of the Great American School System by Diane Ravitch
Reign of Error by Diane Ravitch
Kids First by David L. Kirp
Making the Grades by Todd Farley
Finnish Lessons by Pasi Sahlberg

But FIRST you must read.....
Schools Can't Do It Alone by Jamie Vollmer

or AT THE VERY LEAST:
<http://www.jamievollmer.com/blueberries>

Other resources:
Great Lakes Center for Education Policy and Research
greatlakescenter.org
National Education Policy Center
nepc.colorado.edu

Pamela Wall
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2538 Damon Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Dear Representative Thiesfeldt,

I am writing in support of the Common Core Literacy Standards. My 33 years as a teacher have included work as a social studies teacher, reading teacher, literacy coach and district literacy support teacher in the Madison Metropolitan School District. After my retirement, the last 6 years I have worked around the state, Midwest, and country on professional development for teachers in disciplinary literacy instruction. This work intersects significantly with the Common Core Literacy Standards. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the Common Core Literacy Standards for a number of reasons:

1. The standards bring much needed rigor to classroom literacy instruction. There is no way to talk about them with teachers but to emphasize that these standards represent a substantial shift to students reading increasingly more complex texts, to students growing their ability to access and comprehend from that vast reservoir of sources of knowledge that may be merely a "google" away, to students who can read carefully and thoughtfully from a wide range of texts, and to students who can communicate their understandings clearly and articulately as speakers and writers. These standards are very ambitious, and teachers are well aware that these standards expect a much higher "growth curve" for students in literacy and much more intensive instruction from them as teachers. We know that our students definitely have a ways to go—as teachers we are nervous about the rigor—but this is the right direction and we can do it.

2. The standards are world-class (a much abused phrase, I fear). Yet the literacy standards truly are designed to boost our students to the highest possible levels in literacy in the world. We hear much about international comparisons, and American students' disappointing showings, and at some point we have to conclude that every last international measure can't be flawed, that indeed our students do need to lift their skill set for a 21st century life and workplace. We often ascribe our diminished standing to the high number of students living in poverty, but just recently studies have emerged which compared middle class American students with their middle class counterparts in countries that are achieving higher results, and even our advantaged students are comparatively not measuring up. It is no accident that business and workplace literacy proponents have been behind these standards.

3. The standards do not mandate curriculum and instructional approach. I think this is wise. The openness of this facet of the standards allows for local and district decision making on how to reach these lofty goals. Some promising models are emerging, but districts will need to decide what makes best sense for them as they strive to change to higher expectations. The standards documents are very clear about this. For example, the standards offer examples of complex text at different grade levels and in different disciplines in its Appendix B. I have found this to be an extremely helpful resource, as these "exemplars" provide teachers with very concrete examples of how challenging the texts we are expected to target need to be. And I appreciate that these are examples, and not suggested texts and certainly not required texts. Those decisions are wisely left local and district decision making.

4. The standards posit literacy development across the curriculum and in all disciplines. My life's work has centered on this huge need. All disciplines communicate their knowledge, practices, and insights through written texts, and these standards expect that students will receive the

instruction and mentoring that makes it possible for them to thoughtfully read and learn from the texts of social studies, science, mathematics, technical and career subjects, and all other disciplines. The standards emphasize classrooms that increasingly move from "telling" students what they should know to students informing themselves by accessing disciplinary texts. This is truly exciting and a "game changer" in our preparation of students in literacy. The standards' adamant emphasis on reading information texts in all disciplines is a move away from a predominant emphasis on reading as merely a "language arts" activity that centers on reading fictional works.

5. Wisconsin's adoption of the standards places Wisconsin students in an advantageous position. Wisconsin has traditionally compared well with other states in literacy measures, and we need to keep that edge. Two strong proponents of the literacy standards are the ACT and the College Board. The ACT has increasingly expressed serious concerns with the number of college-bound students who are not prepared to read college and career complex texts, and their revolutionary and much praised analysis in 2006 concluded that only 51 per cent of college bound students demonstrated this proficiency on their measures. The SAT has concurred (their 2012 data shows only 49 per cent of college bound students reaching this needed level of proficiency). The new President of the College Board is David Coleman, the co-author of the Common Core Literacy Standards, and we can expect these crucial college assessments, which include Advanced Placement (AP) tests, to increasingly reflect these rigorous Common Core literacy standards. Wisconsin students cannot afford to be left behind with these shifts to higher levels of expected performance.

You can tell by this letter that I am a strong believer in the standards, but I hardly think implementing them will be easy for our districts and our teachers to realize. Students and parents will also have to adjust, but I can't imagine a parent who does not want for his or her child as fine an education as is available in our ever-shrinking world. Our current standards do not aim for this expectation; it seems often that we are willing to "settle" for less. As a sports fan, I know that those programs that are most successful aim to be the best and their preparation will not tolerate lesser goals. Everybody says this is their philosophy, of course, but some programs transcend "saying" and deliver "doing." I truly believe that the Common Core Literacy Standards provides us with the impetus to achieve the best for Wisconsin students.

Most sincerely,

Doug Buehl,
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