

Good evening.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you tonight. Before I get started, I wanted to mention that, while I appreciate that you both are taking notes about the testimony that you are hearing tonight, I would like to recommend to those giving testimony that they submit a video or written copy of their testimony to Stop Common Core in NYS. They are looking to collect copies of everyone's testimony so that there is a "complete" record of what is said in these meetings.

I am a parent of two school age children. I do not have all the answers to fix everything that is wrong with Common Core. But at least I recognize that I am not an educator, and therefore, I am not qualified to bring you specific answers. I can, comment on what I see as problems.

As for the specific issues that I see with Common Core....I could go on for hours, but I tried to trim this down because I am only given three minutes.

There are the assessment tests, yes...They are not the only thing, but they certainly are a major part of it. Number 1-My children will NEVER take a test for anyone that I am not able to review in its entirety-the test questions and my child's answers and what was marked right and wrong. Never, ever, ever. Number 2-The tests are flawed from the age inappropriate questions to the answers that even adults can't agree on, right on through to the floating cut marks that are set AFTER the test is taken just to prove someone's "prediction" and to meet their agenda. Number 3-Results that don't come back until August and only come back with a grade of 1, 2, 3 or 4 are of such minimal use, that I am not going have my kids waste days upon days taking tests (which is Number 4, by the way) when those days could actually be spent learning. Number 5-Not only is the concept of tying teachers' evaluations to the students' improvement in test scores an absolute absurdity, but this leads to the obvious consequence of teaching to the test. Keep in mind that these are tests that Gov. Cuomo himself called meaningless. I could continue on about the assessment test issues, but I want to move on to other topics.

Common Core-whether it is "standards" or "curriculum", I don't really care-is ruining children's love for learning. With all of the non-fiction close reading that my children have to do, it is of no surprise to me that my children do not have the same love for school that I remember having when I was their ages. How will we

create life-long learners, when we suck the fun out of school for them at such a young age?

My daughter was talking about her “recess” this year. She said she doesn’t get much time for recess because they ‘combined’ recess and lunch. She explained that “Recess” is actually what is left of their lunch period AFTER they are done eating-IF they have enough time. Sometimes she just gets outside and it’s time to come back in. Seriously? We are expecting our children to sit (and sit still) in a hard chair the entire school day, to listen...and learn. And most of that learning is Math and ELA. Science, Social Studies, Art and Music just don’t seem nearly as important anymore. I wonder how many of us could have sat still for that many hours back in school and still be paying attention by the afternoon? Heck, we couldn’t even do it today.

Last but not least, is my issue with Common Core Math. I have heard some say that they understand Math much better ‘that way’, and that it never ‘clicked’ for them in school. I am very happy for those maybe 5 out of 100 people (in my own experience), and for students today whose brains work like that. However, I just don’t get why it is felt that because those 5 people ‘get it’ “The Common Core Way”, the other 95 need to learn it THAT WAY. Also, I can’t understand why we are teaching kids math functions at a higher level before we have allowed them to master the basics and gain some confidence. If you really want to help kids learn, give teachers (the professionals) the freedom to figure out which way a kid’s brain operates and tailor the instructions from there.

<<<My three minutes were up here, so I stopped and did not finish this last paragraph>>>

If you are looking to repair the roof on your house, you don’t contact Bill Gates to fix it just because he offers to help you pay for it. And you don’t hire Pearson or Questar as a subcontractor just because they are owned by one of your friends. If you want your roof fixed properly...you call a roofer. If you truly want to fix education in this state/in this country, you need to work with educators-not corporations.

Maureen Wood