

-- The math standards are equally dismal. Mathematics Professor R. James Milgram of Stanford University, the only mathematician on the Validation Committee, refused to sign off on the math standards, because they would put many students two years behind those of many high-achieving countries. For example, Algebra 1 would be taught in 9th grade, not 8th grade for many students, making calculus inaccessible to them in high school. The quality of the standards is low and not internationally benchmarked.

-- When the new Common Core educational standards were crafted, penmanship classes were dropped. But at least seven of the 45 states that adopted the standards are fighting to restore cursive instruction. Pennsylvania is not on the list of states fighting back to restore cursive. Where does PA stand on this?

-- What will Pennsylvania students be reading as part of the new standards? In other states sexually explicit books were part of the classroom experience. These include Time of the Butterflies, Black Swan Green and Dreaming in Cuban.

The Common Core math standards were written by three people: Bill McCallum: PhD in mathematics; Jason Zimba: PhD in mathematical physics; Phil Daro: Masters degree in English. Dr. McCallum said in 2010, "the overall standards would not be too high, certainly not in comparison other nations, including East Asia, where math education excels." Also in 2010 Dr. Zimba said, "[Common Core's] concept of college readiness is minimal and focuses on non-selective colleges." Just recently Trevor Packer, the Senior VP at the College Board in charge of its AP program, speaking at the 2013 annual conference of School Superintendents Association indicated that Common Core is less rigorous than what high schools routinely teach today and, consequently, the College Board is considering eliminating AP calculus.

The bloated Common Core program is underfunded. Local school administrators have already started complaining that the grants aren't enough to cover the requirements behind them. "We were spending a disproportionate amount of time following all the requirements," said Mike Johnson, the superintendent of Bexley schools in Ohio, which turned down the last half of a \$100,000, four-year grant this school year. "It was costing us far more than that to implement all of the mandates." How much will this unfunded mandate cost Pennsylvania school districts/taxpayers?

How will such a total rewrite of Pennsylvania's standards to require substandard learning impact our Commonwealth's children, our future ability to thrive? Can we be truly competitive on the national and international scene? Common sense tells us that the PA Core Standards are not the answer.

Sincerely,

Diane Gramley  
President