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Subject:Re: Parents comments- Why are they not being incorporated into the draft 2016 ELA and Mathematics Standards?

Date:Fri, 2 Dec 2016 06:16:06 -0700

From:AZ SchoolChoice <AZSchoolChoice@cox.net>

Reply-To:AZSchoolChoice@cox.net

To:Douglas, Diane <Diane.Douglas@azed.gov>

CC:Lippert, Carol <Carol.Lippert@azed.gov>, Moore, Jonathan <Jonathan.Moore@azed.gov>, Laddie Shane <lshane@az.gov>, Karol Schmidt <Karol.Schmidt@azsbe.az.gov>, Dawn Wallace <dwallace@az.gov>

Superintendent Douglas,

I am very familiar with the process your department went through, as you very well know. I am also aware of the meeting that was held with several members of the Arizona Standards Development Committee (ASDC) and this is the reason for my original e-mail. I was also present for the SBE symbolic vote to repeal any further versions of Common Core from the federal government. However, we are Rebranding Common Core in our state if we are keeping the very prescriptive examples in the standards that dictate "how teachers should teach" and "how students should solve problems;" and if we are keeping the same developmentally inappropriate standards that are damaging our kids in the classroom in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. It is unacceptable that a Developmental Child Psychologist was not used to review these standards. It is unacceptable that these same Common Core Standards will continue to cause trauma to our children, frustrate them, and more and more of them will be unmotivated to succeed.

We have countless examples of the trauma caused under Common Core in the classroom including through the AzMERIT assessment. These standards will be driving more and more parents to home schooling as well if we keep the status quo. If that is the goal of the department, the working groups, and so-called educators across the state who commented on the standards then they can pat themselves on the back for their good work. I know it is *not* your goal to keep the status quo, so I ask you again, "How are the voices of parents incorporated in these standards if our concerns were ignored?" We elected you to represent us and to "Restore Local Control and Repeal Common Core." We do not feel our voices have been heard.

We implore you to stop this work and listen to us!

-Jennifer Reynolds

Leader of Arizonans Against Common Core

Member of "Mommy Lobby AZ"

<http://arizonansagainstcommoncore.com/>



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On 12/01/16 20:23, Douglas, Diane wrote:

Dear Mrs. Reynolds;

I want to thank you for your passionate commitment to the education of Arizona's children. It is a commitment and passion that we share.

A major step to removing Common Core Standards in Arizona was taken when, at my request, on October 26, 2015 by a vote of 6-2, the State Board of Education (SBE) repealed its adoption of AZ College and Career Ready (a.k.a. Common Core) as the official standards of Arizona.

I recently invited several members of the AZ Standards Development Committee (ASDC) to my office to help provide my staff with feedback on the revisions to the draft English Language Arts (ELA) and Math standards as we prepare the final recommendations for the ASDC and the SBE. While this invitation was limited to only a few members of the ASDC, of which you are not a member, I will be glad to set up an additional review meeting for you.

Prior to any revision of the AZ College and Career Ready (a.k.a. Common Core) Standards a public comment period was opened. During this period approximately 2,000 comments were collected from Arizonans as a starting point for consideration by ELA and Math working groups comprised of Arizona teachers.

These working groups were comprised of 230 teachers, representing 10 counties and more than 60 school districts from across Arizona. These teachers dedicated in excess of 7,000 hours over more than a year to develop the draft standards and the subsequent revisions.

Since the release of the initial ELA and Math drafts my staff has received almost 8,000 additional comments from AZ parents, teachers, administrators and citizens without children in our public education system - anyone wishing to provide input was welcome to do so. I have traveled the state on the We Are Listening Tour (after next week we will have conducted 17 meetings in 2016) to provide Arizonans all across our state the opportunity to share comments and concerns about our education system - including standards.

In addition to SBE technical reviewers primarily from Arizona Universities, I hired the three preeminent Common Core critics in the nation, Drs. Sandra Stotsky, James Milgram and Ze'ev Wurman, to provide me with their feedback on our draft standards. All of their recommendations were reviewed and considered by the teachers' working group then incorporated as was appropriate - except in the cases where the recommendation leaned more to curricula than standards.

Every single comment, from every source, including your input, has been compiled, reviewed, and considered for incorporation by the teachers' working groups. The charge to these teachers, by the SBE through the AZ Standards Development Committee it created, was to review, revise and improve Arizona standards for Arizona students.

Once the revised standards are adopted by the SBE the next major step will be to ensure that districts reflect the new standards in their curricula to eliminate the types of instruction and assignments that have been so detrimental to our children. Much of the public comment that was received has aligned directly to curricular and



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instructional decisions. My team stands ready to assist teachers by providing professional learning opportunities specifically designed to eliminate the problems revealed through public comment.

Because I understand that continuous improvement is essential in order to maintain high standards for our children, I am also committed to a continual process of review and revision for all Arizona standards. In fact, through my administration, a formal standards review timeline has been developed by my team and is prominently posted on the department's website at:

<https://cms.azed.gov/home/GetDocumentFile?id=584040fcaadebe0e30b8ed90>.

I do not support another rebranding of Common Core. I campaigned on a promise, once elected, to work to remove the Common Core Standards from Arizona education. It is a promise that I will do everything within my power and the authority vested in my office to keep on behalf of the citizens of Arizona who elected me to be their voice at the state level in the education of their children. It is a privilege and responsibility I take very seriously.

Once again I thank you for your dedication to the children and parents of Arizona.

Regards,

Diane Douglas

Diane M. Douglas

AZ Superintendent of Public Instruction



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----- Forwarded Message -----

Subject:Parents comments- Why are they not being incorporated into the draft 2016 ELA and Mathematics Standards?

Date:Thu, 1 Dec 2016 11:25:30 -0700

From:AZ SchoolChoice <AZSchoolChoice@cox.net>

Reply-To:AZSchoolChoice@cox.net

To:Douglas, Diane <Diane.Douglas@azed.gov>

CC:Lippert, Carol <Carol.Lippert@azed.gov>, Moore, Jonathan <Jonathan.Moore@azed.gov>, Laddie Shane <lshane@az.gov>, Karol Schmidt <Karol.Schmidt@azsbe.az.gov>, Dawn Wallace <dwallace@az.gov>

Superintendent Douglas et al,

I'm deeply concerned, yet again, that parent's comments are being ignored in the 2016 standards review process for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. I lead the parents team who reviewed the draft 2016 Mathematics Standards so my comments will be focused on Math. Lisa Fink led the parent's team for ELA.

We have experienced daily, through our children's homework assignments and our involvement in the classroom with our children's teachers, the damage caused by the Common Core Standards (aka Arizona College and Career Ready Standards). I personally consider it child abuse to force a child to use prescriptive methods to solve math problems. No child learns in the same way and that does not mean a child is in *any* way less of a "critical thinker" if the Common Core math methods do not work for them! I have seen this over and over again, with my younger two children, and I have experienced firsthand their frustration having to use Common Core math methods when they could easily solve these problems in their head. These same two children are now excelling 2 grade levels ahead in Math courses *without* these Common Core prescriptive methods since we switched schools! These standards are developmentally inappropriate which has been proven by countless child psychologists and standards experts from across the nation.

Our parent groups- Arizonans Against Common Core, Opt Out AZ and recently "Mommy Lobby AZ"- have worked diligently to expose these problems with the Common Core standards to whomever would listen, and we thought we finally had the opportunity for "our voices to be heard" through the Arizona Standards Development Committee Process. We also met with Governor Ducey when this process began on April 28, 2015 to make it known what we expected- a voice in this process- and to not be ignored. We have been let down yet again if we are told our comments have no value, so they won't be incorporated, and/or a [standards review] affiliated with Achieve, Inc. (the DC Think tank that created the Common Core standards in the first place) were of *more* value than parents, national standards experts, or child psychologists from across the nation. We are let down if we are told no comments were received- especially on the "Standards for Mathematical Practice"- when *clearly* these comments were sent in by parent groups.

I submitted our combined parent comments on the draft 2016 Mathematics Standards by the SBE deadline of October 3rd on their website. I sent a copy of these directly to the ADE by e-mail on October 19th. I also gave Superintendent Douglas a hard copy (Math Standards Review Final Comments again attached). I presented our concerns personally to SBE Executive Director Karol Schmidt how these mathematics standards are developmentally inappropriate across the grade levels especially the "Standards for Mathematical Practice" and read an example of these at the SBE Public meeting in Chandler on September 19, 2016. I also handed her 3 comments at the Chandler meeting which called out these standards as well and hand wrote these out. Here is a



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<p>Chandler</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are minimal changes to the math standards; this is problematic. • Are these standards developmentally appropriate? • These new standards will frustrate students and cause them not to like math. • The progression of mathematics is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The addition of phonics in grades K-5 is wonderful. It is great that the foundational skills were beefed up. It is also great that spelling is now in the standards, but it should be carried on into the upper grades. • How will cursive be assessed? • It is good that the examples were taken out. • The progression of the standards is very good. • I am very pleased with the text complexity- I like that I can determine where they are in the text and get to choose the reading- I like that I can make those decisions to get the students to where they need to be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that these standards are not developmentally appropriate for kindergarten students. Kindergarten students should not be expected to have analytical thinking. • Need more time to review the standards. • If the standards are going to change, does that mean the state assessment will change as well? • After an extensive review of the 2010 standards compared with the 2016 draft standards, there are not that many changes. • There was not enough inclusion of parents in the development of the 2010 standards. • These standards look very similar to common core. • There is a concern about student privacy and testing.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did educational psychologists assess the standards? • Concern that common core standards are too coercive by the federal government and that AZ's improvement on NAEP scores is only because other states did worse. • We need to look at education as a whole and not just standards. • Teachers are scared to death that the standards are being changed again and how the standards will be rolled out
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screen capture of those comments from the SBE website for the Chandler meeting:
<https://k12standards.az.gov/sites/default/files/media/Public%20Hearing%20Comments.pdf>

In the first column, bullets 1-3 are mine, "There are minimal changes to the math standards; this is problematic; Are these standards developmentally appropriate; These new standards will frustrate students and cause them not to like math." Second column- third bullet, "It is good the examples are taken out." Last column are Cara Palmer's and my comments combined.

I can attempt to screen capture all of our parent comments as proof from the SBE "2016 Standards Comments" file (<https://k12standards.az.gov/sites/default/files/media/2016%20Standards%20Comments.pdf>) but I feel the evidence I shared here should be more than sufficient.

So what was the overall goal of the "Arizona Standards Development Process?" Was it to Rebrand Common Core, change a few words here and there, and call it the new "2016 Arizona ELA and Mathematics Standards" to appease parents? According to Governor Ducey's speech at the SBE meeting on March 23rd, he said "As you know, I am against Common Core and spoke out against it on the campaign trail. That has not changed. **Like you, I have high expectations and am for high standards for our students. We cannot excel without them. So, Arizona's standards must reflect the goals, expectations, and input of Arizona's parents and teachers.**



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I encourage every Arizonan to get engaged in this process of creating new standards and assist the State Board of Education in the work ahead. Attend public meetings. Make calls. Write letters. Use social media. **Make your voice heard. If like me, you are opposed to the federal government's increased involvement in our K-12 system, this is the quickest, best and most responsible way to fix it. If Arizona is going to be the best place in the nation to educate a child, then Arizonans must lead the way.**"

(<http://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/im-arizona-standards>)

Parent's voices were NOT heard and here we have another Rebrand of Common Core. I urge you stop your efforts today and listen to parents!

This message will be posted far and wide on social media and to the press until we are heard and this process includes parents! Our goal has always been to "Restore Local Control and Stop Common Core" and we will continue in this effort for future generations.

For our precious children,

-Jennifer Reynolds

Leader of Arizonans Against Common Core

Member of "Mommy Lobby AZ"

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