

**Ben Cook**

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**From:** Cindy Bishop <csbspeedyfingers@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 11:14 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB 4276 bill

PUT ME ON RECORD TO Please SUPPORT HB 4276, stop the insanity of government out of control!. Stop the implementation of common core in Michigan. Please submit my email into the record.

Sincerely,  
Cynthia Bishop  
Onaway, MI. 49765

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Zeev Wurman <zwurman@gmail.com> on behalf of Ze'ev Wurman <zeev@ieee.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 2:50 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB-4276 testimony  
**Attachments:** HB-4276 Wurman Testimony.pdf

Dear Mr. Cook,

Attached is my written testimony for the Committee on Education hearing on HB-4276 this coming Wednesday.

Sincerely,

Ze'ev Wurman

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Zeev Wurman <zwurman@gmail.com> on behalf of Ze'ev Wurman <zeev@ieee.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 2:50 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB-4276 testimony  
**Attachments:** HB-4276 Wurman Testimony.pdf

Dear Mr. Cook,

Attached is my written testimony for the Committee on Education hearing on HB-4276 this coming Wednesday.

Sincerely,

Ze'ev Wurman

## Why Michigan Standards are Better for Michigan Students

Ze'ev Wurman, Palo Alto, Calif.

March 20, 2013

Chairwoman Lyons, Committee Members,

**My professional background:** I am a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution. From 2007 to 2009, I served as a Senior Adviser at the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development in the U.S. Department of Education. Throughout the development of the Common Core standards in 2009-2010, I analyzed the mathematics drafts for the Pioneer Institute and for the State of California. In the summer of 2010 I served on the California Academic Content Standards Commission that reviewed the adoption of Common Core for California. In the late 1990s I participated in the development of California mathematics content standards and framework and I served on the mathematics content review panel for the California state test since its inception in 1999. I have published professional and opinion articles about education and about the Common Core, among others, in Education Next, Education Week, Sacramento Bee, Boston Globe, San Francisco Chronicle, Austin American-Statesman, and City Journal. In my non-educational life I am an executive with a Silicon Valley semiconductor start-up.

In my testimony today I will focus on the following points:

- The mediocrity of the Common Core standards;
- The low level of Common Core's definition of college-readiness;
- The argued benefits of common national standards are weak and questionable, while the major increase in cost of assessment, and the loss of state autonomy, of public review, and of educational innovation are real and immediate.

### 1. Quality of the Common Core Mathematics Standards

Michigan math standards have been rated very high by the Fordham Foundation. Yet despite that high rating, Michigan achievement on the NAEP is close to the national average. This clearly shows that standards in themselves are insufficient to assure success. Throwing away your own standards and your own ability to improve them, and hoping that hitching your wagon to the Common Core mediocre standards will somehow magically improve your children success is naive. But in the process you will lose your own ability to innovate, and your sovereignty.

The Common Core proudly announces it will focus on only a few topics in each elementary grade because, it claims, that is what other successful countries are doing. Yet if one looks at Singapore or Korea, prominent members of that successful club, one sees that they are not nearly as narrow or as limiting as the Common Core. It seems that in its haste to be "lean and mean," the Common Core ignored many skills that those countries – and Michigan's own standards – expect of students. For example, the Common Core starts introducing the concept of counting money only in the second grade, while Singapore and Michigan wisely suggest starting in the first grade. Common Core forgets to teach prime factorization altogether, so it cannot ever teach least common denominators or greatest common factors. It postpones 5<sup>th</sup> grade topics like finding the area of a triangle, or the sum of angles in a triangle, to grades 6 and 8, respectively. Worse yet, even when it comes to fractions, the topic of which it is most

proud, Common Core completely forgets to teach conversion among fractional forms – fractions, percent, and decimals – which has been identified as a key skill by the National Research Council, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and the National Advisory Math Panel. Frank Quinn, mathematics professor at Virginia Tech summarized his findings on Common Core’s fraction instruction as follows:

*The Common Core Standards [about fractions] not only do not support skill development, they encourage practices that result in dysfunctional skills.<sup>1</sup>*

There is more. Even in its core focus, basic arithmetic, the Common Core opens the way for the pernicious “fuzzy math” to creep back into the curriculum. On the one hand, it expects – even if years later than our international competitors – that eventually the standard algorithms for the four basic operations be mastered. On the other hand, many prior years are full with intermediate standards that repeatedly demand students to explain their actions in terms of crude strategies based on various concrete and visual models or invented algorithms applicable only to specific cases. The consequence of this skewed attention is that students will end up confused and frustrated by the variety of pseudo-algorithms they are forced to study.

Stanford professor James Milgram, a member of the Common Core Validation Committee, captured it well in his testimony before the California Academic Standards Commission, saying, “*Within the document itself, there seems to be a minor war going on and this is not something we should hand over to our teachers.*”<sup>2</sup> Small wonder that even a classic fuzzy math text like *TERC Investigations* can claim that “*there is strong alignment between Investigations and the [Common Core] Math Content Standards*”<sup>3</sup>

In the middle school, the Common Core does not expect students to take Algebra 1 in grade 8, despite the fact that a large fraction of students in Michigan and across the nation already take it. All the high achieving countries, like Singapore, Korea, and Japan, expect essentially all their students to take Algebra I in grade 8, or complete Algebra I and Geometry by grade 9. Common Core abandoned this goal that promoted much of our nation’s mathematics improvement over last decade, and offers it only as an afterthought, unsupported by instructional materials or assessment. Yet taking Algebra I in grade 8 is of critical importance for those who want to reach calculus by grade 12 and enroll in competitive colleges. When the standards don’t prepare all children to be algebra ready, only the children of the affluent and well-educated will be pushed and supported by their families to strive and achieve. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds will have no chance to reach so high, as they won’t have out-of-school tutoring.

In summary, by the middle school the Common Core mathematics falls one to two years behind our high achieving international competitors. Professor Milgram put it succinctly when he refused to sign off on the Common Core:

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Quinn, *Fractions in Elementary Education*, 2013 (in preparation)

<sup>2</sup> Appendix B in S. Stotsky, Z. Wurman, “Common Core Standards Still Don’t Make the Grade,” July 2010, includes a detailed review of the Common Core standards by Prof. Milgram. His e-mail to the Validation Committee refusing to certify them is attached to this testimony. <http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/common-cores-standards-still-dont-make-the-grade/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://investigations.terc.edu/CCSS/faqs.cfm>

*The standards are not at the level of those of the high achieving countries or the top state mathematics standards – including California, Minnesota, Indiana, and Massachusetts. Moreover this difference in level is significant, being approximately 1 - 2 years at the end of eighth grade.*

## **2. Common Core high school mathematics and its inadequate definition of college-readiness**

Common Core's high school mathematics are partially experimental and of middling quality. Its promise of college readiness for all rings hollow and will cause even larger rates of remediation in college.

But you don't have to believe me: Jason Zimba, one of the main authors of the mathematics standards, testified in front of the Massachusetts Board of Education<sup>4</sup> that Common Core's "concept of college readiness is minimal and focuses on non-selective colleges." It is hard to see how such a low level of college readiness will benefit Michigan students.

The Common Core-recommended Algebra 1 course includes only a subset of typical Algebra 1 content. More specifically, it introduces a focus on functional aspects of algebra, while de-emphasizing its computational and technical foundations. Yet algebra is not a goal in itself, but rather a tool to support further mathematics on one hand, and support the learning of sciences on the other. An algebra course such as promoted by the Common Core will only weakly support the study of chemistry or other quantitative sciences.

Common Core replaces the traditional foundations of Euclidean geometry with an experimental approach. This approach has never been successfully used in any sizable system; in fact, it failed even in the school for gifted and talented students in Moscow, where it was originally invented. Yet Common Core effectively imposes this experimental approach on the entire country, without any piloting.

Essentially all four-year state colleges across the country, including Michigan own universities, require at least the Algebra I/Algebra II and Geometry courses as prerequisites for enrollment. This is a rather minimal expectation for college readiness, as the growing number of students in remedial courses attests. To get a better sense of how marginal this requirement is, one may look to California's assessments for college readiness used by the California State University system conducted in grade 11. Results indicate that among students who just take Algebra 2, only 7% are ready and 22% are conditionally ready (i.e., they need to take another year of math in grade 12). In contrast, among students that take a math course beyond Algebra 2, 22% are ready and 67% are conditionally ready – a huge difference.

Yet the Common Core chose to lower the standards *even more* and eliminate Algebra 2 content like geometric and arithmetic sequences, or combinations and permutations, from its own version of *Algebra 2* that it offers as a measure of college readiness.

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<sup>4</sup> Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, March 23, 2010, p.5. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/minutes/10/0323reg.pdf>

### 3. The purported benefits of common national standards

Promoters of the Common Core tout the many advantages these standards are supposed to bring. Key among them are (a) comparability across states, (b) ease for students moving across state lines, (c) economies of scale in development of instructional materials, and (d) economies of scale in developing novel assessment. Further, they also argue that all high-achieving countries have national standards.

The last argument is, perhaps, the easiest to dismiss. Most countries in the world have centralized education systems and hence national standards. Yet this is true of both the best performing countries as well as of the worst performing countries, and in itself means nothing. Most countries are not as large or as populous as the United States, and do not have a strong federal system. But those who do have a federal system with a decentralized education, like Canada or Australia, do very well on international assessments. Further, countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, or Finland, have widely differing math standards yet they all achieve highly on international assessments. The belief that there is only one “right” way to teach math, and that all states in this country must follow this one way to successfully compete, is baseless.

Comparability among states can be easily achieved by using a common reference like National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to compare states. Another way to compare would be to use a computer-adaptive test like Measure of Educational Progress (MAP) from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) that is widely used across the country in both public and private schools. The Fordham Institute frequently argues these days for the need of common standards for comparability, yet in 2007 it was the Fordham Institute that easily compared standards in multiple states using precisely such methodology.<sup>5</sup> An advantage of using the NWEA test is that it can be quickly aligned with each state’s standards, and it can provide comparison with private schools to boot. Not least, it will keep the federal government out of your schools.

Cross-state student mobility is another myth used to justify the need for common standards. U.S. Census Bureau data shows that less than three tenths of one percent of students move across state lines every year.<sup>6</sup> It seems difficult to justify giving up on the state’s ability to chart its own destiny for a potential advantage to so few students.

This brings me to the promised economies of scale in procuring textbooks, professional development, and developing assessment. Rather than representing cost savings, they represent Michigan’s inability to innovate and chart its own path to educate its own students. Michigan has over 1.6 million students in grades K-12, and it can get a good price on any textbook it chooses. The federally funded shared assessment, however, already promises to be many times more expensive than your existing one. After all, the big money in assessment is not in its development but in its administration. Sharing the test among multiple states offers little help in its cost of administration.

Today, Michigan annually tests roughly 850,000 students (grades 3-8 and one high school grade) and spends almost \$20M on that effort, or about \$22/student on MEAP, and that includes also testing in science and social studies. Smarter Balanced (SBAC) estimates its assessment to cost around

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<sup>5</sup> The Proficiency Illusion, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Washington, DC. October 2007.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, [table C07001](#), 2011.

\$25/student for math and ELA, but that does not include the cost of scoring the performance task. It seems that Smarter Balanced believes that teachers should score student assessments for free during their professional development. Scoring performance items is actually estimated to cost between \$25 and \$40 per student. Even taking the low estimate this already adds to more than double what you pay now, and it doesn't even include the cost of technology needed to administer the assessment. We are told by Smarter Balanced that this assessment can be administered with paper and pencil instead of on computer. Yet the SBAC assessment is a computer-adaptive assessment, and that aspect will be completely lost with paper and pencil model, not to mention the additional cost of scoring paper forms, on the order of \$7. Paper and pencil will also take away much of the benefits of rapid turnaround of results, and it will take away most testing accommodations that rely on computerized administration. Moreover, the cost of technology that the SBAC assessment imposes on schools is conservatively estimated at \$50 per tested student every year.<sup>7</sup> Given these numbers, Michigan should expect its annual testing budget to jump from \$20M today to about \$50M in school-year 2014-15 without using technology, and to at least \$85M annually with the use of technology.

In summary, the Common Core math standards are mediocre based on any international benchmark, despite claims to the contrary. Moreover, their prescriptive nature will require Michigan to replace much of its teacher training and professional development by content developed in Washington, DC, and take away much of your teacher's autonomy in the classroom. Furthermore, your ongoing assessment costs are bound to increase fourfold for assessment that doesn't even include science or social studies. Finally, the Common Core standards will tie Michigan's hands to remote Washington bureaucrats and will take away your ability to care for your own children the way you want, rather than the way those people in Washington want.

A year ago, in the face of anti-Common Core rumblings in South Carolina, Arne Duncan wrote: *"The idea that the Common Core standards are nationally-imposed is a conspiracy theory in search of a conspiracy."*<sup>8</sup> Yet President Obama stated in his recent State of the Union address: *"Four years ago, we started Race to the Top, a competition that convinced almost every state to develop smarter curricula and higher standards, all for about 1 percent of what we spend on education each year."* Which one of them should we believe?

Thank you for your time.

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<sup>7</sup> This ballpark estimate is quite simple. An inexpensive \$500 computer amortized over 5 years with 20% annual cost of support and insurance comes to \$1000 over 5 years, or \$200/year. Such computer can be shared among 4 tested students, bringing the per-student cost to \$50/year. This simple calculation does not even include the cost of extra electrical, extra HVAC, and extra bandwidth needed to support them. Further, it is unreasonable to expect those computers to be used in regular classroom setting—imagine what would happen to the superintendent who finds many of those computers only partially functional on the day assessment starts.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/statement-us-secretary-education-arne-duncan-1>



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Attachment  
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Date: Sun, 30 May 2010 19:17:24 -0700 (PDT)  
From: Jim Milgram <milgram@math.stanford.edu>  
Subject: Re: Validation Committee Sign Off  
To: Chris Minnich [chrism@ccsso.org](mailto:chrism@ccsso.org)  
CC: ...

Everyone,

I have attached my detailed analysis of the May 25 final draft Math Standards. My conclusions are as follows with regard to the seven guiding questions we were asked to answer.

1) Reflective of the core knowledge and skills in ELA and mathematics that students need to be college- and career-ready

I conclude that they are, but with significant reservations that will be explained below.

2) Appropriate in terms of their level of clarity and specificity

I conclude that they are, but "appropriate" needs to be clarified. The standards are not at the level of those of the high achieving countries or the top state mathematics standards – including California, Minnesota, Indiana, and Massachusetts. Moreover this difference in level is significant, being approximately 1 - 2 years at the end of eighth grade.

3) Comparable to the expectations of other leading nations

This is where the problem with these standards is most marked. While the difference between these standards and those of the top states at the end of eighth grade is perhaps somewhat more than one year, the difference is more like two years when compared to the expectations of the high achieving countries -- particularly most of the nations of East Asia.

4) Informed by available research or evidence

This is also a problem area. First, as indicated in the first paragraph of my report, there are a very large number of important standards that are unique to this document, not reflective of any expectations I am aware of that appear in the standards of the high achieving countries, or that have been supported by any reliable research I am aware of. The individual standards listed on the first page of my report are analyzed in considerable detail in the body of that report. For most of them, I have indicated reasons for serious doubts as to the likelihood that serious research would validate them.

5) The result of processes that reflect best practices for standards development

I believe that they are the result of processes that reflect best practices, but the timetable was simply too short to develop a set of standards that could meet all the expectations above. For example, there are a number of actual mathematical errors in the current document that certainly would not have been present if the development had been less hurried.

6) A solid starting point for adoption of cross state common core standards

I think that they actually are a good starting point, but only that. There are problems with the approach to geometry for example. It is possible -- indeed likely -- that this approach can be worked over to be very successful. But at this time there is no research basis for it. Nor are there very many teachers in either K-8 or in the high schools who have a sufficiently strong background in mathematics to deliver it effectively. Consequently, the approach needs considerable research both in the details of implementation and in terms of developing appropriate pre-service courses to support it, before it can be validated for what are effectively national standards.

7) A sound basis for eventual development of standards-based assessments

At this time, and for the reasons indicated, the final draft standards do not appear to be a sound basis for the development of tests. But with further work I believe that the standards could become a very sound basis indeed.

Thus, I find that I cannot currently sign off on these standards. There is always the possibility that I have misunderstood aspects of the standards, and if any of you have comments on the discussion in my report, I am certainly open to reconsideration.

As I indicate in my report there are a number of excellent areas in these standards, better than the discussions in all the state standards that I am aware of. I am sure that with more time to work on the document, all my reservations could be easily handled, and the resulting document would be first rate by any reasonable standards. As a result, I am certain that if the authors had somewhat more time to complete their work, I would be easily able to sign off on the resulting document.

Yours,  
Jim Milgram

## Ben Cook

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**From:** stephenie@chebteaparty.org  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2013 11:08 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** Email testimony for Wed committee hearing

Hello,  
Could you please enter the following into the testimony for HB 4276? Thank you.

Hello Representatives,  
Please support HB 4276 and stop the implementation of common core in Michigan. Our children deserve better than unconstitutional top-down federal bureaucracy. The decline of our education system can be directly attributed to the amount of government meddling.

Thank you,  
Stephenie and Tony Jacobson  
7950 Golf View Drive  
Cheboygan, MI 49721

## Ben Cook

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**From:** cconnin@roadrunner.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2013 8:34 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** support for H.B.4276

To: Education Committee Clerk, Ben Cook,

I would like to ask that my support for Representative Tom McMillin's House Bill 4276 to end Common Core here in Michigan be recorded in the testimony for the education committee. I would also ask that this Bill be moved out of committee and on to the House for a full vote.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Chipper L. Connin  
Precinct Delegate  
Morenci City  
(517)458-2085  
610 W. Main St.  
Morenci, Michigan 49256

**Ben Cook**

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**From:** Dr. Dawn Lancaster <drdawnlancaster@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2013 1:30 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** Support for House Bill 4276

Dear Mr. Cook ~

I am contacting you to ask that my support be recorded for the 2013 House Bill 4276: Ban mandating "common core standards" in the testimony for the Education Committee. I am urging the committee members to move this bill out of committee and on to the House for a full vote.

Thank-you.

Best regards,

Dawn Asper  
District 7 Precinct Delegate  
5594 Kathy Court  
Newport, MI 48166

**Invited Testimony for a Hearing in Michigan on  
House Bill 4276  
Sandra Stotsky  
Professor Emerita of Education Reform  
University of Arkansas  
March 20, 2013**

I thank State Representative Tom McMillin for the invitation to testify in favor of House Bill 4276. House Bill 4276 requires school districts to provide students with a core academic curriculum for accreditation and prohibits the state board of education from adopting and implementing Common Core's standards or participating in the development of tests based on these non-rigorous standards. I explain why Common Core's English language arts standards will not develop "critical" thinking or college readiness, will reduce the quality of your teaching force, and cannot be changed unilaterally by Michigan educators no matter what legislators and parents are told.

**My professional background:** I was a senior associate commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education from 1999-2003 and, among other duties, was in charge of development or revision of the state's K-12 standards in all major subjects, licensing regulations for teachers and administrators, teacher licensure tests, and professional development criteria. I reviewed all states' English language arts standards for the Thomas B. Fordham Institute in 1997, 2000, and 2005. I co-authored Achieve, Inc.'s American Diploma Project high school exit test standards for English in 2004. Finally, I served on Common Core's Validation Committee from 2009-2010.

I will speak briefly to the following points.

1. **Why Common Core's non-rigorous English standards will reduce college readiness and the ability to do "critical" thinking.**
2. **Why they lack a research base, international benchmarking, and qualified authors**
3. **How the English class can prepare students for authentic college coursework**
4. **Where Michigan can get ideas from for a first-class core academic curriculum**
5. **What Michigan can do to increase student learning in all subjects**

1. **Why Common Core's non-rigorous English language arts standards will reduce college readiness and the ability to do "critical" thinking.**

*Common Core's college-readiness standards are chiefly empty skills.* That is why they are not rigorous; skills training (e.g., how to use Google or find a main idea) alone cannot prepare students for college. High school students need to be taught how to understand

the content of difficult and complex literary texts in order to “read between the lines” and do analytical thinking. Unfortunately, Common Core expects English teachers to spend less than 50 percent of their reading instructional time on literary texts at every grade level. It sets forth 9 standards for literary texts and 10 reading standards for informational texts at every grade level, K-12. (An informational text conveys information about something, e.g., gravity, bicycles, World War II.)

Common Core’s 50/50 mandate decreases students’ opportunity to develop the analytical thinking once developed in just an elite group by the vocabulary, structure, style, ambiguity, point of view, figurative language, and irony in classic literary texts. It also reduces the quality of those who become English teachers. Most English teachers want to teach literature, a major reason they become English teachers.

***Common Core reduces what English teachers are trained to teach: literary study and literary/historical knowledge.*** English teachers are not prepared as literature majors to teach informational texts. They are prepared to teach literature and literary/historical knowledge. But Common Core does not specify in its standards the literary/historical knowledge students need. It offers no criteria for selecting literary (or informational) texts for study. It provides no list of recommended authors, never mind works. It requires no British literature aside from Shakespeare.

***Common Core’s middle school writing standards are an intellectual impossibility for average middle school students.*** Most children have a limited understanding of what “claims,” “relevant evidence,” and academic “arguments” are, and Common Core’s writing standards are not linked to appropriate reading standards and prose models to develop their understanding. Moreover, Common Core confounds the difference between an academic argument (explanatory writing) and persuasive writing.

It is not surprising that such deficient standards received a grade of B+ from the Fordham Institute and that the Fordham Institute claims Common Core’s standards are superior to those in most states. Fordham Institute received at least \$1,000,000 dollars from the Gates Foundation to promote Common Core’s standards. The top officials at the Fordham Institute changed the evaluation form (and grading scheme) it had used in earlier reviews of state ELA standards in order to claim that Common Core’s ELA standards were better than those in most states.

**2. Common Core’s standards lack international benchmarking, a research base, and credible authors.** Common Core’s Validation Committee, on which I served, was supposed to ensure that its standards were internationally benchmarked and supported by a body of research evidence. Even though several of us regularly asked for the names of the countries the standards were supposedly benchmarked to, we didn’t get them. Nor were we given citations for research evidence supporting the idea that an increase in instruction in informational reading in English or other classes will make students college-ready.

We did not get evidence on international benchmarking because Common Core is not about “rigor for all” but, in grades 6-12, about “rigor for none” or educational *rigor mortis*. Its high school mathematics standards do not aim to prepare a regularly increasing number of students for college freshman calculus courses. Jason Zimba, one of the mathematics standards-writers for Common Core, told the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education at a public meeting in March 2010 that college-readiness means readiness for admission to a non-selective community college.

Reading researchers acknowledge there is no research to support Common Core’s claim about the value of informational reading instruction in English or other classes for college-readiness. Not one of the organizations or individuals that developed these standards (CCSSO, NGA), promoted them (NASBE, PTA, Achieve, Inc.), or examined their validity (David Conley at the University of Oregon and William Schmidt at Michigan State University) offers evidence that Common Core’s standards meet current entrance requirements for most colleges and universities in this country or elsewhere. The Gates Foundation not only funded these scholars and organizations but also chose the chief writers of Common Core’s English language arts and mathematics standards (David Coleman and Jason Zimba). Neither has ever taught in K-12 or published anything on curriculum and instruction in K-12.

**3. How the English class can prepare students for authentic college coursework.** In the English class, the study of complex literature, not informational texts, leads to college readiness. Literary study was the focus of the Massachusetts 1997 and 2001 ELA standards, helping Bay State students to get to first place in grades 4 and 8 on NAEP’s reading tests in 2005 and to stay there.

Moreover, from about 1900—the beginning of uniform college entrance requirements via the college boards—until the 1950s, a challenging, literature-heavy English curriculum was understood to be precisely what pre-college students needed. The decline in readiness for college reading from the 1960s onward (acknowledged in the Common Core document) reflected in large part an increasingly incoherent, less challenging literature curriculum that was propelled by the fragmentation of the year-long English course into semester electives, the conversion of junior high schools into middle schools, and the assignment of easier, shorter, and contemporary texts—often but not always in the name of multiculturalism.



4. **Where Michigan can get ideas from for a first-class core academic curriculum.** The Core Knowledge Foundation spells out a coherent curriculum sequence for K-8. The Junior Great Books Foundation provides excellent discussion questions for both literary and non-literary texts. The English language arts curriculum framework available *at no charge* on my home page at the University of Arkansas provides a coherent sequence of standards and a list of suggested authors for K-12. [http://www.uaedreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2000/01/Stotsky-Optional\\_ELA\\_standards.pdf](http://www.uaedreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2000/01/Stotsky-Optional_ELA_standards.pdf)

5. **Why Michigan's own ELA Standards didn't increase student learning enough:** The fact that the Bay State's standards have been more effective than those in other states can be attributed in large part to simultaneous changes in the academic requirements for teacher and administrator training programs, licensure tests, and professional development. *High quality in a state's standards is not enough.* Raising the academic bar for admission to an education school and embedding the content of strong academic standards into all educator preparation programs, licensure tests, and professional development will over time lead to increases in achievement for all students in reading and mathematics, as it did in Massachusetts. Massachusetts also has an outstanding network of 26 regional career-technical high schools for grades 9-12, most with long waiting lists. Students in these schools must pass the same tests that students in other high schools do, and the opportunity to work simultaneously on occupational skills of their choice motivates them to pass state tests at a higher rate than students in other high schools do.

### **Final Comment**

Let me repeat some basic facts first. (1) Common Core's standards are NOT internationally benchmarked and will not make our students competitive. (2) Common Core's standards are NOT rigorous. Would any state have adopted them if it weren't told they were rigorous? (3) There is NO research to support Common Core's stress on "informational" reading instruction in the English class or in any other high school subject. (4) Michigan does not need Common Core to find out how its students compare with Iowa students. It can use NAEP's results to find out.

All state standards should be reviewed and revised if needed at least every 5 to 7 years by identified Michigan teachers, discipline-based experts in the arts and sciences, and parents. All state assessments should be reviewed by Michigan teachers and discipline-based experts in the arts and sciences before the tests are given. This can't happen with Common Core's standards and assessments. Michigan's main task is simply to pay for their costs. The future costs for staying with Common Core will far outweigh the costs for leaving while leaving is still possible.

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Robin Nowak <robin\_nowak@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 17, 2013 8:37 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB 4276

Through much research about Common Core, I ask that my opinion be recorded. Please vote yes on HB 4276 to repeal the previously adopted Common Core Curriculum.

Robin Nowak  
Lillian Sue Bows - Boutique Dresses & Bows  
<http://www.etsy.com/shop/lilliansuebows>

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Karen Lewis <karenlewis4918@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2013 1:20 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** House Bill 4276

Ban mandating Common Core Standards in Michigan Schools.

Representative Cook,

As Education Committee Clerk, I am writing to ask that you include my name and information along with others who support House Bill 4276 which will ban the mandate for Common Core standards in Michigan schools. Please move this out of committee and onto the House floor for a vote. It is time for the state of Michigan to step forward and be a sovereign state once again. There is very little that a centralized federal government has done that has been positive. Common Core is just another of the pushes that represents an overreach of the federal government. There should be a push to rescind the 2010 resolution where these standards were adopted. At that time little had been revealed to the public at large --- and still not enough. This bill, HB 4276 is supported by many and we will continue to fight the Common Core standards for the good of our children and grandchildren.

Karen Lewis  
3617 Lakeshore Drive  
Monroe, MI 48162

## Ben Cook

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**From:** ruspencer@charter.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2013 10:39 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** 2013 House Bill 4276

Please record my support in the testimony for the Education Committee. Urge the committee members to move this bill out of committee and on to the House for a full vote.

Russell Spencer  
Michigan Republican State Committee

**Ben Cook**

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**From:** rola12@reagan.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 16, 2013 6:39 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** H.B. 4276

Mr. Clerk:

Please record my name (for support of Representative Tom McMillin's bill, H.B. 4276) in the testimony for the Education Committee.

Ronda Keck  
7620 Sand Creek Hwy.  
Sand Creek, MI 49279  
517-436-3404

**Ben Cook**

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**From:** Greg George <GGeorge@afphq.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 11:26 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** AFP-MI Testimony, Support HB 4276  
**Attachments:** 2013 HB 4276 - AFP Testimony, End Common Core.pdf

Ben,

Attached you will find material Americans For Prosperity-Michigan would like to submit for the Education Committee hearing on HB 4276 to make sure all members receive a copy.

Please reply that you have received this email and attachment.

Thanks,

**Greg George**  
*Government Affairs*  
(517) 853-9073 | Work  
(517) 449-4810 | Mobile



# AMERICANS FOR PROSPERITY

MICHIGAN

## Testimony in Support of HB 4276, End Common Core in Michigan

March 20, 2013

Chairman and Committee Members:

On behalf of more than 87,000 Americans for Prosperity-Michigan activists, I am writing in support of House Bill 4276, which would end Michigan's participation in Common Core.

The federal government has required states to raise their academic standards at least five times over the last two decades with little success. President Bill Clinton's Goals 2000, President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind, and President Barack Obama's Race to the Top have all asked states to raise their standards, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has subsequently found no significant improvement in student achievement.

Common Core standards are essentially another federal government "knows best" mandate that adopts the same failed strategies over the last 40 years by simply calling for higher standards. It has undergone no field testing or evaluation and was never voted on by Michigan lawmakers.

We accept in other industries — technology, health care, automotive and manufacturing — that competition drives innovation, lowers prices and all-around improves standards for both products and services. New standards are demanded continuously by the customer and improvements are made as a result. Why don't we do the same with education? Why does what works elsewhere get discarded so quickly, and what doesn't work gets tried ad nauseam?

Education is too important for society and prosperity to be controlled by those furthest from the students. Lindsey Burke of The Heritage Foundation sums it up best when she says that, "Adopting Common Core national standards and tests surrenders control of the content taught in local schools to distant national organizations and bureaucrats in Washington. It is the antithesis of reform that would put control of education in the hands of those closest to the student: local school leaders and parents."

That fact is not all students are created alike, and a one-size fits all education platform is not the answer to improving education. Parents should be given more choices and local school districts and teachers should be given more flexibility to provide the higher standards students deserve. Common Core removes parents from important decisions regarding their child's education undermining the very nature of accountability. Do we want teachers and schools to be accountable to parents and their children, or to lawmakers in Washington, D.C. who can't even pass a budget?

If lawmakers are serious about improving education, then they should pursue reforms that embrace market mechanisms. Common Core in Michigan is entirely the wrong approach. Americans for Prosperity-Michigan is proud to support HB 4276. I urge your colleagues to support this important legislation and look forward to working with you in the future.

Regards,

Scott Hagerstrom  
State Director, Michigan

## Ben Cook

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**From:** John Stears <proudamerican2@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 11:32 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** Request for testimony HB4276; House Education Committee

To whom it may concern,

I would like to submit this testimony in favor of HB4276. The state of Michigan should never submit to or adopt any educational standard created or managed by any entity beyond its borders. The Common Core standards as proposed are political in nature, an overreach by the federal government into local control of our children's lives and an unfunded mandate on Michigan taxpayers.

Please keep yet another progressive federal program out of our children's lives and use this opportunity to push for the elimination of all liberally biased curriculum currently negatively affecting their lives each and every day.

Respectfully yours,

John Stears  
5786 E. UV Ave.  
Vicksburg



Dear Chairman Lisa Posthumus Lyons  
Members of the House Education Committee

I am writing to urge you to eliminate the Common Core Standards in Michigan. I am old enough to remember the one room school house that once was common here in Michigan and elsewhere. I attended such a school through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at which time our district consolidated with a larger district and I started riding the bus to school instead of walking.. The teacher in that one-room school was accountable to the local parents for not only what was taught but how it was taught. Our 6<sup>th</sup> graders were able to read better than a lot of 12<sup>th</sup> graders these days. All students knew the alphabet as well as they knew their own names. Parents had access to the teacher and instant redress of any issues or complaints.

Over the decades, school districts have grown larger both in the number of students and geographic area. Continued growth has taken local accountability away. I would guess that most citizens now can't name their local school board members' names much less tell you what any particular School Board Member views as critical to a student's education.

Control of education has gradually shifted from the local districts to the State Board of Education. Now with Common Core the National Government is stealing what little remaining power Michigan citizens have to set curriculum standards and student benchmarks in Michigan. Our children will be taught what our Federal Government mandates... Teachers will have no option but to "teach to the test" or risk losing "**Federal Dollars,**" which is actually "**our money**" taken from us and returned to our state only if we behave in the way that our Federal Government deems appropriate. With Common Core Curriculum our children are no longer treated as individuals but as part of the collective.

Please support Representative Tom McMillin's HB 4276, a bill that will end Michigan's participation in Common Core and will retain State control of our schools.

Respectfully,

Connie Lapham  
10059 Lakeside Drive  
Perrinton, MI 48871

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Burkey1209@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 2:32 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB4276

Dear Representative Cook,

As a Michigan resident and voter, I am asking that you support HB 4276.

Thank You,

Michelle Burke  
Troy, Mi 48098

**Ben Cook**

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**From:** jim mckindles <jmckindles77@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 4:10 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Cc:** Rep. Greg MacMaster; David Mead; Rep. Frank Foster; Rep. Gail Haines (District 43);  
Speaker James Bolger (District 63); Rep. Peter Pettalia; Rep. Wayne Schmidt (District 104)  
**Subject:** HB4276

To Clerk B. Cook;

Please enter the following in to the Congressional Record;

I support HB4276.

I believe the Common Core Program is nothing more than another federal intrusion into the people's lives. This program was created by bureaucrats in order to achieve their agenda of which does not seem to reflect that of a Free people.

Said differently, this is a load of commie crap invading our already socialist indoctrination centers also know as public schools.

I urge this body to stop the implementation of Common Core.

Respectfully;

James McKindles  
Presque Isle County Republican Delegate  
Member of Cheboygan TEA Party Patriots  
Presque Isle County Coordinator Campaign for Liberty  
18439 Iroquois LN  
Ocqueoc, MI 49759  
989 938 6554

Chairwoman Lyons, members of the committee, and Representative McMillin:

Thank-you for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

I am here today to ask for your support of HB 4276 to repeal Common Core in Michigan.

I have multiple concerns about the implementation of Common Core. First, the Math and ELA standards were adopted sight unseen with no input from the parents and teachers who live and work with our children every day. The State Department of Education unilaterally made that decision for me and every other parent, student, and teacher in this state.

There is also no evidence to suggest that the Common Core Standards will raise student achievement. There were no field studies conducted to measure the effectiveness of the standards. Common Core is merely a massive experiment. The problem is we are experimenting on the children of Michigan.

Another concern I have is that the standards are expected to change over time. As a member of my district's curriculum committee, I received a copy of the Common Core Standards and its related documents. In the introduction to the standards, it is stated that "The standards are intended to be a living work...the standards will be revised accordingly." However, local districts and the State of Michigan will have no authority to reject any revisions or to revise the standards if problems are encountered. Who knows what Common Core may look like in the future?

The teachers with whom I am working generally like the high school ELA standards for Common Core, but this is merely for superficial reasons. First, the Common Core ELA standards are better organized than the standards for the MMC. The standards are differentiated between expectations for 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade and expectations for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. There are also fewer standards for high school ELA, (41 compared to Michigan's 91), so they appear to be more manageable. However, these are not compelling reasons for re-inventing an entire K-12 curriculum. There are educated people right here in Michigan with the expertise to organize and consolidate Michigan's standards to better meet the needs of our students.

A few years ago the State of Michigan adopted new curriculum standards and as a result teachers in districts across the state spent numerous hours in curriculum meetings realigning curriculums to meet the new standards. Then the State of Michigan adopted the Common Core Standards, and as a result teachers in districts across the state are spending numerous hours of valuable classroom time, again, and spending energy outside of our classrooms, again, busily re-inventing the wheel of curriculum, again, rather than focusing on teaching the students sitting in our classrooms. Arbitrarily changing the standards every few years only adds that much more burden to teachers working in an increasingly hostile environment. There is no guarantee that Common Core is going to raise student achievement; it is just another superficial band-aid that fails to address the systemic problems in our public schools.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Thank-you,

Lisa M. Keller  
Lmschaffer15@yahoo.com  
810-434-8542

. In fact, according to a study released by the Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings in April 2012, it was found that there is “little to no association between the quality of learning standards... and either student achievement at a single point in time or gains in student achievement over time.”

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Joan Grindel <BubbleBuddies@Earthlink.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 8:31 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** Please. No on Core Curriculum for Michigan

Dear Rep. Cook,

It is vitally important that we do not accept the Core Curriculum coming from the Federal Government. Not only is this unconstitutional, it is a deliberate attempt to remove parental control over children and establish the Federal Government as the arbiter of what gets taught. This is a local and State prerogative and should remain so. Michigan has higher math standards than the Core curriculum and there are several who have examined what is in place for Core Curriculum and are decidedly vocal that it is dumbing down our kids besides indoctrinating them. When well known literature is passed over for reading presidential mandates and decrees, we should all revolt and say no. Please, take the time to understand just what the Core Curriculum is all about and why Michigan should say NO!

Joan Grindel, former teacher in Farmington Public Schools  
30757 Charleston Court,  
Farmington Hills, MI 48331  
248 661 1928

## Ben Cook

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**From:** HSLDA Legal E <legale@hslida.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2013 6:40 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** Testimony Concerning HB 4276  
**Attachments:** MI\_House Education Committee\_HB 4276\_3-18-13.pdf

Dear Mr. Cook,

Please find attached a letter to the House Education Committee from Mike Donnelly regarding House Bill 4276.

Thank you so much for your service!

Gregory Escobar  
Legal Assistant to Michael P. Donnelly, Esq.

Home School Legal Defense Association  
Post Office Box 3000  
Purcellville, VA 20134-9000  
Phone: (540) 338-5600  
Fax: (540) 338-1952

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MICHAEL P. FARRIS, JD, ILM  
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DEWITT T. BLACK III, ESQ.  
SENIOR COUNSEL (AR, SC, DC)

SCOTT A. WOODRUFF, ESQ.  
SENIOR COUNSEL (VA, MO)

JAMES R. MASON III, ESQ.  
SENIOR COUNSEL (DC, OR)

DARREN A. JONES, ESQ.  
ATTORNEY (CA)

# HSLDA

ADVOCATES FOR HOMESCHOOLING

THOMAS J. SCHMIDT, ESQ.  
ATTORNEY (CA)

MICHAEL P. DONNELLY, ESQ.  
ATTORNEY (MA, NH, WV DC)

WILLIAM A. ESTRADA, ESQ.  
ATTORNEY (CA)

PETER K. KAMAKAWIWOOLE, ESQ.  
ATTORNEY (MO)

MARY E. SCHOFIELD, ESQ.  
OF COUNSEL (CA)

SCOTT W. SOMERVILLE, ESQ.  
OF COUNSEL (VA, MD)

March 18, 2013

VIA EMAIL

House Education Committee  
Care of Committee Clerk and  
Representative Lisa Posthumus Lyons (Chair)  
124 North Capitol Avenue  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

From: Michael P. Donnelly, HSLDA Staff Attorney<sup>1</sup>

Re: *Testimony Regarding HB 4276 (2013)*

Dear Chairman Lyons and Members of the Committee,

The Home School Legal Defense Association ("HSLDA") advocates for the rights of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children. With nearly 85,000 member families worldwide it is the world's largest homeschooling association.

HSLDA favors House Bill number 4276 which would protect Michigan families by preventing the implementation of common core standards as articulated by the National Governors Association and used as a federal grants standard in the "Race to the Top" grant program.

In 2010, the National Governors Association published their "Common Core State Standards" (CCSS). These were meant as voluntary math and English guidelines which individual states could adopt. HSLDA, along with numerous other organizations, is concerned about attempts to impose national standards on public schools.

Although courts have held spending programs like Race to the Top are constitutional, it is concerning that many states have used this as an excuse to align their state curriculum with the CCSS, resulting in de facto national standards. We are concerned that increasing standardization driven by federal regulation even if by constitutional grants like race to the top will create a de facto national curriculum leading to a national testing regimen. There are many reasons why this is not a smart strategy for public school systems. We are concerned for our constituents, including over 3000

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Donnelly is an adjunct professor of government at Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Virginia and staff attorney and Director for International Relations for the Homeschool Legal Defense Association serving tens of thousands of families in 8 states and 200 countries. He is a homeschooling parent of seven and is admitted to the New Hampshire, West Virginia Massachusetts, District of Columbia and United States Supreme Court bar.

HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL OFFICE • ONE PATRICK HENRY CIRCLE • PURCELLVILLE, VA 20132 • 540-338-5600 • 540-338-1952 FAX  
CAPITOL HILL OFFICE • 119 C STREET, S.E. • WASHINGTON, DC 20003



families in Michigan, who homeschool and will face increasing pressure to use this national curriculum, even if not required to by law. This concern is echoed by numerous private schools and private school organizations around the country.

In his 2012 State of the Union speech, President Obama stated, "We've convinced nearly every state in the country to raise their standards." However, most states only responded to the CCSS program in order to obtain federal money. President Obama added adopting the CCSS as a criterion for states to gain points in the Race to the Top education federal grant program, regardless of whether the state already had comparable or superior educational standards. States with the highest points are more likely to win the competitive Race to the Top federal grants.

Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have adopted the CCSS since 2010. Only Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia have not. In reviewing the common core standards we have considered whether public schools will benefit from CCSS. We have determined that there is a growing controversy over whether the CCSS are beneficial at all to public schools. Although many states invested years adopting their own state standards the CCSS has prompted some to throw those state curriculum in order to "get the money." Some have said that the CCSS weakens English learning and reduces analytical thinking. Others criticize the weak math teaching while others point out that the CCSS will cost billions of dollars to implement. Although CCSS are similar in some respects to other state developed curriculum content standards for public schools, a national standard still contains the same problems as even many state driven standards.

These standards prevent local school authorities from experimenting with what works for their students. Top-down, centralized education policy does not encourage parental engagement and stifles creative teachers in the public and private sector. CCSS removes state and local control in favor and puts it in the hands of unaccountable education policy experts who are far removed from the parents and teachers who are most critical to a child's educational success.

#### Will the CCSS Affect Homeschools?

While we have considered the general impact of CCSS, criticism that is not unique, our association is primarily concerned with the potential impact CCSS will have on private education, in particular homeschools. Although CCSS does not affect private schools unless they receive government dollars (online charter school programs have no such protection), we are seriously concerned that adoption of CCSS has the potential to negatively affect private education, including home education.

HSLDA has consistently opposed national education standards since they were first suggested two decades ago because national standards inevitably lead to national curricula and, worse, nationalized assessment measure and tests. The subsequent pressure on privately and homeschooled students is that in order to "measure up" on the standards which will be used by employers and post-secondary education institutions, they will need to be taught the same curricula and measured on the nationalized assessments. The CCSS "one-size-fits-all" approach to education extinguishes some of the most important factors that contribute to positive education outcomes for children, in particular local control and teacher creativity.

The College Board—the entity that created the PSAT and SAT—has already indicated that its signature college entrance exam will be aligned with the CCSS. We are concerned that colleges and universities will adopt policies that disfavor homeschool graduates who apply for admission unless their highschool transcripts are aligned with the CCSS. Policy of this sort has already been promulgated in the State of California. Perhaps our greatest concern is that as CCSS is fully adopted by all states policy makers will eventually attempt to change state legislation to require all students—including homeschool and private school students—to be taught and tested according to the CCSS.

#### Common Core State Standards Spreading

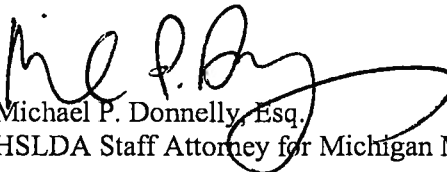
Although the National Governors Association first focused the CCSS on the subjects of math and English, there is movement to create CCSS in numerous other subject areas. The National Governors Association is also urging states to align early education programs for young children. This is also encouraged by the federal government's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge. Current federal law prohibits the creation of national tests, curriculum, and teacher certification. Therefore, governors and state legislatures are the only policy makers with authority to adopt the CCSS. While the federal government has encouraged the states to adopt the CCSS through federal incentives, the states are completely free to reject the CCSS. Forty-five states have adopted the standards but there is a growing movement among the states, Michigan included, where states are either repealing or curtailing the use of the CCSS in their own states.

#### Michigan Solutions for Michigan Problems

As a federal republic one of our greatest national treasures is the system of dual sovereignty. Over the years the federal government has used its taxing power to cajole and bribe states to adopt nationalized standards in a host of areas. While states are free to adopt these standards they lose the ability to control and direct educational standards for their own constituents. In effect the state legislators are avoiding their own responsibility to legislate and govern their states by delegating that authority to unelected so called national education policy experts. While there is nothing wrong with looking to experts for advice, it is another matter altogether to place the control of education standards in the hands of a few unelected "experts." The people of Michigan deserve better, they deserve legislators who actively engage with the educational problems of their states. Michigan solutions for Michigan problems. That is why constituents voted for you –to solve problems – not to avoid responsibility through delegation to unaccountable national experts.

HB 4276 will re-establish control with Michigan policy makers – where it belongs. We encourage you to vote in favor of this legislation.

Very truly yours,



Michael P. Donnelly, Esq.  
HSLDA Staff Attorney for Michigan Member Affairs

## Ben Cook

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**From:** beth beyer <izzybee77@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2013 8:40 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB4276

Dear Rep.Cook,

I am contacting you about the hearing on HB4276 that will take place on 3/20/13. I am asking you to support this bill because it is bad for Michigan and our future generations. The unconstitutional over reach by our Federal Government into our education system must be stopped. The Common Core was implemented without public or legislative input. This was rushed through by the executive branch and the legislature did not even get to vote on this monstrosity, which I believe is not correct procedure. Sounds kind of shady and underhanded to me. There must be something that is being kept from the taxpayers.

I believe the children's welfare is not being considered in the implementation of the Common Core. It's all about control, and our youth will suffer. When fully implemented, Common Core will make our children less competitive and plain old "common", since everyone will be learning at the same level, not pushed to strive to be better. The parents will be left out of their children's learning, and since they pay for it, I believe they should have a say in what their children learn and how they are being taught.

I am a very visible small business owner who is using the influence of my position to inform people of the injustice being served on our nation's future with this impending decision to further integrate Common Core into our State's and Nation's educational fabric. I urge lawmakers to be very deliberate when considering usurping rights guaranteed by the State and US Constitution, and more importantly our Creator. You are a public servant and will be held accountable by the citizens you represent and the Creator who decides your eternity.

Please remember to support this bill and send it out of committee to the House for a full vote. Remember, you are the peoples' employee, and the people deserve a say in what is going on in education. Thank you for your time.

A concerned citizen and grandparent to future learners,

Beth Beyer

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Eric Sowatsky <sowatsky5@att.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 19, 2013 11:49 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** HB 4276

I ask that my support for the HB 4276 be recorded in the testimony for the Education Committee. I urge the committee members to move the bill out of committee and on to the House for a full vote.

Sincerely,

Eric Sowatsky

## Ben Cook

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**From:** Rachel Greb <[rgreb@oakdaleacademy.com](mailto:rgreb@oakdaleacademy.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 19, 2013 4:11 PM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Cc:** TOM MCMILLIN; Melanie Kurdys; Deb DeBacker  
**Subject:** Written testimony for HB 4276  
**Attachments:** Greb Testimony on HB 4276.pdf

Hi -

I'm attaching the pdf file of my written testimony per Rep. Tom McMillin in support of HB 4276 for tomorrow. Please make copies and distribute accordingly.

I plan to attend the hearing tomorrow.

Please let me know if you have questions. Best number to reach me is 586-243-0971.

Thanks!

Regards,

Mrs. Rachel Greb, Headmistress  
Oakdale Academy  
3200 Beacham Drive  
Waterford, MI 48329  
248.333.4309  
[www.oakdaleacademy.com](http://www.oakdaleacademy.com)  
[rgreb@oakdaleacademy.com](mailto:rgreb@oakdaleacademy.com)

March 20, 2013

Legislative Hearing on House Bill #4276

Written Testimony by

Rachel J. Greb, Headmistress of Oakdale Academy

It is not unusual for private school advocates and public school advocates to be at odds on many issues. Indeed, private schools are often considered an alternative option for education for parents who feel that their child's unique needs are not otherwise being met in a public school. Today, I am not here to explore these issues or to promote private school as an option for parents. I present here testimony in support of House Bill No. 4276, and join my voice with others in the public school arena who share my concerns regarding the implementation of Common Core State Standards in Michigan. While others have eloquently stated the challenges and concerns of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in relation to public schools, I offer here my thoughts on the unique challenges and concerns for those of us engaged in private education.

The implementation Common Core State Standards certainly represents a broad sweeping change to the landscape of education. (If this were not true, textbook publishers wouldn't be clamoring to be the first to provide CCSS-aligned books.) While private schools are sometimes able to insulate themselves from educational changes if so desired, CCSS is so far-reaching and dramatic that it is difficult to see how long private schools would be able to continue to maintain autonomy from these changes. For instance, private schools often use similar textbooks to public schools (in many cases, the exact same texts) but place emphases in different areas of learning or teach the material from a different perspective. As textbook publishers seize the opportunity to revise existing texts to promote the content as aligned with CCSS, fewer and fewer non-aligned CCSS texts will be available for private schools to obtain. There will likely be a glut at first of gently used texts for sale from used book sellers, but in a few years that supply will be gone as more and more CCSS-aligned texts are produced and non-aligned texts become obsolete altogether. This is both a financial and philosophical burden for private schools. If private schools are no longer able to make the claim to parents that they are able to provide content that is different from public schools, private schools either must conform to CCSS or become obsolete themselves.

Secondly, in the past private schools often utilized the same standardized assessment, such as Iowa Test of Basic Skills or MEAP, as local public schools in order to present parents with an "apples to apples" comparison when parents are considering choosing private school. Unless a private school elects to participate in the assessments put forth by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Consortium (PARCC) or the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), it will be very difficult for a private school to measure itself against public schools since public schools are required to use PARCC OR SBAC for assessment. While it is recognized that the United States Department of Education "did not expressly mandate states to adopt the CCSS in order to participate in the Race to the Top Fund

competition...many [were] induced to do so by the prospect of Race to the Top grants.”<sup>1</sup> One may argue that the Race to the Top money is not the motivation for states to adopt and implement the PARCC or SBAC, but the authors of “The Road to a National Curriculum” point out that “a state earns ‘high’ points if it is part of a standards consortium consisting of a *majority* of states that jointly develop and adopt common standard.”<sup>2</sup> One may then argue that implementing one of the consortia assessments is separate from CCSS, however, the USDE wrote, “It is the expectation of the Department that States that adopt assessment systems developed with Comprehensive Assessment Systems grants [Race to the Top Assessment Program] will use assessments in these systems *to meet the assessment requirements in Title I*... As with the Race to the Top Fund, the Race to the Top Assessment program effectively promotes the Common Core standards. More importantly, this program funds the consortia that are developing assessments that will, in turn, inform and animate K-12 curriculum and instructional material based on Common Core standards.”<sup>3</sup>

Even if a private school does participate in the PARCC or SBAC in order to provide a comparison to local public schools, the public school assessments are still not a true comparison. “The assessments must evaluate all students, including English learners and students with disabilities.”<sup>4</sup> This essentially means that the “apples to apples” comparison of public versus private schools will cease to exist, since many private schools lack the resources and personnel to serve students with disabilities and English learners. Indeed, the assessments appear to be geared toward measuring the achievement of the school and how well it has implemented CCSS, not the achievement of individual students. If a school does not choose to align with CCSS, the PARCC/SBAC assessments will produce invalid results.

While some private schools will choose to align with CCSS in order to avoid looking like they are lagging behind in the current trends, there will be those who will continue to produce their own standards which are above and beyond CCSS, although it will be hard to prove empirically that they are successfully attaining and surpassing these standards without the benefit of using the public schools as a benchmark. In an article published by Education Week, Nina Rees, the president and chief executive officer of the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, says, “Common core is the basics you need to cover, but you can go above and beyond that.”<sup>5</sup> Certainly whatever it is that we are striving for here in this discussion, it is not merely to attain “the basics.” One charter school proponent of CCSS, Stacy Emory (director of curriculum and resources for the K-8 San Carlos Charter Learning Center in California), acknowledges that the CCSS are lower than California’s current state standards and emphasize “covering fewer topics.”<sup>6</sup> Regardless of where we stand on the private versus public spectrum, I think we can all agree that “covering fewer topics” is not the key to success for our students in Michigan.

Additionally, while covering fewer topics like Ms. Emory suggests, another CCSS advocate quoted in the same article sees one of the strengths of Common Core as providing standards at a low level. Catherine Whitehouse (founder and principal of a charter school in Cleveland) says, “[Common-core] standards made so much sense to us because we have always tried to boil

things down to what are the big ideas that children really need to understand and understand in depth.”<sup>7</sup> Boiling down? Covering fewer topics? Basics? No one here is suggesting that Michigan education is without its problems, but we can do better.

In a state that depends so heavily on math, science, and engineering, it would be nothing short of devastating to the future of Michigan to lower the standards in these areas, which appears to be a serious problem in CCSS. There has been great concern regarding the content of the science standards in particular. As recently as January 29, 2013, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute issued its second serious critique of the gaps in the science and math standards. William Schmidt, professor of education and statistics at Michigan State University, lent his voice to the 71-page document. The Fordham Institute, historically an ally of CCSS, offers this criticism regarding the science standards: “In an apparent effort to draft fewer and clearer standards to guide K–12 science curriculum and instruction, the drafters continue to omit quite a lot of essential content. The pages that follow supply many examples. Among the most egregious omissions are most of chemistry; thermodynamics; electrical circuits; physiology; minerals and rocks; the layered Earth; the essentials of biological chemistry and biochemical genetics; and at least the descriptive elements of developmental biology.”<sup>8</sup> The new science standards lacking in “essential content” is not the only problem. Also noted by the reviewers is that the standards are not setting the bar high enough, and in fact, are lowering it the point of detriment. “The effort to insist on ‘assessment boundaries’ in connection with every standard often leads to a ‘dumbing down’ of what might actually be learned about a topic, seemingly in the interest of ‘one-size-fits-all’ science that won’t be too challenging for students.”<sup>9</sup>

The “one-size-fits-all” moniker resonates closely with another proponent of CCSS, Bobbi Farrell, a middle school teacher in Oakland, Maine, where “kids are responsible for attaining proficiency in each standard.”<sup>10</sup> That alone is a separate issue, but Farrell then refers to CCSS as “mass-customized learning.”<sup>11</sup> With smaller class sizes than most public schools, private schools often are able to offer more individualized instruction, which is usually seen as a strength. I have yet to meet a parent who puts their child in any school – private, charter, or public – in the hopes that he or she will receive “mass-customized learning.”

In terms of aligning the science standards to the current math standards of CCSS, the Fordham Institute paper expresses concern in this area also. “Although the ‘alignment’ of NGSS math with Common Core math is improved, there also seems to have been a conscious effort by NGSS drafters not to expect much science to be taught or learned of the sort that depends on math to be done properly. This weakens the science and leads, once again, to a worrisome dumbing down, particularly in high school physics—which, as the reviewers note, ‘is inherently mathematical.’”<sup>12</sup> Once again, Michigan depends so heavily on math, science, and engineering that one could hardly acknowledge that dumbing down of these standards will produce an acceptable level of proficiency when it comes to real world application.



The financial burden for charter schools is highlighted by Education Week as well. “Despite states’ best efforts, many charter schools, as well as regular public schools, are struggling to finance high-quality professional development. . . Beyond the professional-development challenge, the reality is that many districts and charters are not ready for the technological demands of the common core.”<sup>13</sup> Schools “worry about finding the money to beef up [the] technology infrastructure in preparation for online assessments.”<sup>14</sup> If the financial burden for charter schools is heavy, the private schools are even less likely to be able to shoulder the costs. As private schools are usually heavily dependent on tuition dollars to fund operational costs, the expenses associated with the implementation of CCSS in new texts, professional development, and the technology upgrades are unequivocally prohibitive.

These are just a few of my overall concerns with CCSS, which I ask you to consider carefully here. Not addressed explicitly here but of concern are violations of privacy laws (FERPA), legal and constitutional concerns, and additional content and philosophical concerns. Many of these concerns have been addressed by others in a much more informed and eloquent way, so I refer you to them for better exegesis.

I leave you with a parting thought – a lesson from ancient history and literature. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas (a Trojan) describes the fall of Troy to the Greeks to an audience. He laments poignantly that it was not the strength of the Greek army, nor the skill of the best Greek warriors that ultimately brought about the fall of Troy after ten long years of war. It was simply a lie that the Trojans believed, having been deceived into thinking that the gift that awaited them came without consequences and without any strings attached.

“This fraud of Sinon, his accomplished lying,  
Won us over; a tall tale and fake tears  
Had captured us, whom neither Diomedes  
Nor Larisaeon Achilles overpowered,  
Nor ten long years, nor all their thousand ships.”<sup>15</sup>

Ladies and gentlemen, we would do well to remember the words of Aeneas, and not to repeat the same error, thus bringing about our own demise from within.

Respectfully submitted March 20, 2013 by Mrs. Rachel J. Greb, Headmistress, Oakdale Academy, Waterford, MI

## Endnotes

1. Eitel, Robert S. and Kent D. Talbert. "The Road to a National Curriculum." *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* 81 (February 2012). Print.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ash, Katie. "Charters Adjusting to Common-Core Demands." *Education Week*, January 22, 2013. Web. Accessed January 23, 2013.
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8. Gross, Paul R. and Douglas Buttrey, Ursula Goodenough, Noretta Koertge, Lawrence S. Lerner, Martha Schwartz, and Richard Schwartz. "Commentary and Feedback on Draft II of the Next Generation Science Standards." *Thomas B. Fordham Institute* (January 29, 2013): Print.
9. *Ibid.*
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12. Gross, Paul R. and Douglas Buttrey, Ursula Goodenough, Noretta Koertge, Lawrence S. Lerner, Martha Schwartz, and Richard Schwartz. "Commentary and Feedback on Draft II of the Next Generation Science Standards." *Thomas B. Fordham Institute* (January 29, 2013): Print.
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## Ben Cook

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**From:** Jeff Phillips <itsjeffery@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 20, 2013 9:46 AM  
**To:** Ben Cook  
**Subject:** Please support HB4276, allow local control to opt-out of Common Core

Greetings,

I am a trustee on the Kingston Board of Education and am writing in support of HB4276 and in objection to the Common Core agenda. I have found within my own county that the specific educational deficiencies vary greatly from one community to the next, and even our immediate neighboring districts face vastly differing challenges to our own. One of the tremendous beauties of the American republic form of government is that We The People are intended to maintain the power to be held locally, such that each community may best evaluate and meet its own needs as a self-governing entity. This is the bedrock of freedom and liberty.

Naturally bad ideas will exist along side the good. However, given the venue of freedom of speech we are allowed to communicate with one another as peers. When we find ourselves facing a difficult challenge and find that our own ideas are lackluster in addressing such concerns, we may turn to what other districts have done. What has been tried and failed? What has achieved success? Naturally bad ideas will fall by the wayside as local boards will strive to emulate those districts which have faced similar challenges and achieved success in their manner of approach. This peer functionality is necessary to the maintenance of a free society.

We are in the midst of revolutionary changes in education. New technology allows students to work through digital curriculum at their own pace, changing the job description of teachers such that they are less focused on lecture time and more focused on one-on-one personal interventions and coaching in each struggling student's individual educational improvement efforts. Governments are linking our schools together with high bandwidth fiber optic networks. These allow curriculum and digital course-ware materials to be centralized, but it comes at a cost of opening a Pandora's box of concerns about privacy, data security, program content, and most especially a dangerous centralization process whereby which local control is diminished.

Imagine if, in between board meetings, a controversial content item is added to a digital curriculum program that no employee in my district even knows about, but a student sees it. Imagine if that content is challenged elsewhere and removed before we ever knew that our students were susceptible to its influence. This is only the tip of the iceberg of concerns that we must not only write policies to address, but carry out with due diligence efforts to review and enforce that policy upon all vendors and content providers.

I would much prefer to see us turn the table around on this high tech approach. I would like to see us focus our intrastate and interstate efforts on standardization of protocols and file formats. I would like to see our local teaching talent become empowered to record and produce their own curriculum content for specific concept points that they have unique and exciting ideas on how to convey to students in a captivating and interesting manner. I would like to see an online venue whereby which these materials can be posted and exchanged in a peer-to-peer environment, while also being classified and tagged by various coalitions and interest groups as to their opinions of the content produced. There should be a fully transparent, zero cost mechanism of exchanging peer-review information board-to-board, teacher-to-teacher, parent-to-parent, church-to-church, etc.

Ideally I see zero reason why we can't give parents more specific choices in the content of their children's educational content. Why can't a parent click through a web portal to select which lecturers their student will see inside these digital course-ware content applications so that any biases will no longer be decided by the school but rather by the family?

We should really challenge our teachers to be competitive in establishing the most creative and effective approaches at conveying concepts. To do this we should allow them to exchange their efforts as peers. We should not have states and national governments telling our teachers what content to teach. Rather, we should be encouraging them to create their own, put it out there, and allow local communities, local families, and local teachers to decide what content to utilize to best suit their local needs.

We are greatly crippled in our ability to address local needs if we have the state telling us what to teach and when to teach it. My own district has had to cut its metal and wood shop classes entirely out of the program offerings in order to comply with state mandates for curriculum content, while keeping within restrictive budget limitations. While there may be some great milestones achieved within the content proposed as "Common Core", we must maintain the local control to decide which specific parts of it we desire to utilize vs where our resources would be better focused in addressing specific educational deficiencies in our local community. If curriculum content is centrally planned and collectivized, then I must question what the point of even having a local school board to begin with? After all, isn't curriculum the most important decision our board should be faced with?

I'm sure you are being told that Common Core will help struggling inner city schools that have not achieved the performance that is comparable to other parts of the state. I must question why we expect performance to be equal when it is blatantly obvious that such cities are simultaneously dealing with numerous external influences... violent crime, gangs, drug usage, broken families, welfare dependency, etc. While these challenges are everywhere, they seem to congregate in certain urban areas that "coincidentally" have been locally governed by a certain political party for many decades. Perhaps the answer is not in the schools at all, but in the community government. While I am speculating, I would have to point out that if the students are unable to be prepared for education given their home and community environment, and there probably is much that can and should be done to reach out from the academic institutions, eroding the effectiveness of other schools in communities that lack these sorts of problems by encumbering them with mandates intended to improve the educational outcomes in urban centers is not a solution. We can not lift anyone up by imposing upon them mandates from afar which only cause the most successful districts to be weakened in their efforts.

I must also challenge you to look at history and treat any bill or agenda that seeks to centralize the decisions of curriculum content in any way as a very dangerous trend. The tools that may be intended for good and wholesome purposes may also be used for evil, and we must remember this. If curriculum is centrally planned, then even though those implementing it may have good intentions there may be other interests at play behind the scenes. Certain content may be merely overlooked by those implementing the program but may be deliberately omitted by other influences of those who have a vested interest in the effort. Certainly much corruption exists in or governmental bureaucracies, and we should not dare trust central planning as a structure or model for our curriculum because we may find that our freedom becomes lost in just one generation that may, heaven forbid, be deliberately left ignorant in certain key specific aspects of our constitutional republic form of government. With the increasing demands for teachers to spend class time on anti-bullying programs or preparing for standardized tests, the opportunity to go above and beyond the core curriculum requirements diminishes, and the specific weaknesses of the core content, even those subtle in nature that we don't immediately recognize may be detrimental to the maintenance of our constitution in the hearts of a young, aspiring generation.

Please, please do read through or watch this account of Kitty Werthmann (pasted below), a Holocaust survivor who grew up in Austria and saw first hand Adolf Hitler come into power, being voted in by a landslide, and his efforts to centralize the educational curriculum.

We know the results of this, and we should do everything we can to ensure that local school board members are empowered to make their own choices so that their oath of office to uphold the constitution may be affirmed. This is far more critical than I think any of us realize.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mr9777ugCiM>

Sincerely,

Jeff Phillips  
Board of Education Trustee  
Kingston Community Schools  
989-683-0004

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Kitty Werthmann testimony:

“What I am about to tell you is something you’ve probably never heard or read in history books,” she likes to tell audiences.

“I am a witness to history.

“I cannot tell you that Hitler took Austria by tanks and guns; it would distort history.

If you remember the plot of the Sound of Music, the Von Trapp family escaped over the Alps rather than submit to the Nazis. Kitty wasn’t so lucky. Her family chose to stay in her native Austria. She was 10 years old, but bright and aware. And she was watching.

“We elected him by a landslide – 98 percent of the vote,” she recalls.

She wasn’t old enough to vote in 1938 – approaching her 11th birthday. But she remembers.

“Everyone thinks that Hitler just rolled in with his tanks and took Austria by force.”

No so.

Hitler is welcomed to Austria

“In 1938, Austria was in deep Depression. Nearly one-third of our workforce was unemployed. We had 25 percent inflation and 25 percent bank loan interest rates.

Farmers and business people were declaring bankruptcy daily. Young people were going from house to house begging for food. Not that they didn’t want to work; there simply weren’t any jobs.

“My mother was a Christian woman and believed in helping people in need. Every day we cooked a big kettle of soup and baked bread to feed those poor, hungry people – about 30 daily.’

“We looked to our neighbor on the north, Germany, where Hitler had been in power since 1933.” she recalls. “We had been told that they didn’t have unemployment or crime, and they had a high standard of living.

Austrian girls welcome Hitler

“Nothing was ever said about persecution of any group – Jewish or otherwise. We were led to believe that everyone in Germany was happy.

We wanted the same way of life in Austria. We were promised that a vote for Hitler would mean the end of unemployment and help for the family. Hitler also said that businesses would be assisted, and farmers would get their farms back.

“Ninety-eight percent of the population voted to annex Austria to Germany and have Hitler for our ruler.

“We were overjoyed,” remembers Kitty, “and for three days we danced in the streets and had candlelight parades. The new government opened up big field kitchens and everyone was fed.

Austrians saluting

“After the election, German officials were appointed, and like a miracle, we suddenly had law and order. Three or four weeks later, everyone was employed. The government made sure that a lot of work was created through the Public Work Service.

“Hitler decided we should have equal rights for women. Before this, it was a custom that married Austrian women did not work outside the home. An able-bodied husband would be looked down on if he couldn’t support his family. Many women in the teaching profession were elated that they could retain the jobs they previously had been required to give up for marriage.

“Then we lost religious education for kids

Poster promoting "Hitler Youth"

“Our education was nationalized. I attended a very good public school.. The population was predominantly Catholic, so we had religion in our schools. The day we elected Hitler (March 13, 1938), I walked into my schoolroom to find the crucifix replaced by Hitler’s picture hanging next to a Nazi flag. Our teacher, a very devout woman, stood up and told the class we wouldn’t pray or have religion anymore.

Instead, we sang ‘Deutschland, Deutschland, Uber Alles,’ and had physical education.

“Sunday became National Youth Day with compulsory attendance. Parents were not pleased about the sudden change in curriculum. They were told that if they did not send us, they would receive a stiff letter of warning the first time. The second time they would be fined the equivalent of \$300, and the third time they would be subject to jail.”  
And then things got worse.

“The first two hours consisted of political indoctrination. The rest of the day we had sports. As time went along, we loved it. Oh, we had so much fun and got our sports equipment free.

“We would go home and gleefully tell our parents about the wonderful time we had.

“My mother was very unhappy,” remembers Kitty. “When the next term started, she took me out of public school and put me in a convent. I told her she couldn’t do that and she told me that someday when I grew up, I would be grateful. There was a very good curriculum, but hardly any fun – no sports, and no political indoctrination.

“I hated it at first but felt I could tolerate it. Every once in a while, on holidays, I went home. I would go back to my old friends and ask what was going on and what they were doing.

A pro-Hitler rally

“Their loose lifestyle was very alarming to me. They lived without religion. By that time, unwed mothers were glorified for having a baby for Hitler.

"It seemed strange to me that our society changed so suddenly. As time went along, I realized what a great deed my mother did so that I wasn't exposed to that kind of humanistic philosophy.

"In 1939, the war started and a food bank was established. All food was rationed and could only be purchased using food stamps. At the same time, a full-employment law was passed which meant if you didn't work, you didn't get a ration card, and if you didn't have a card, you starved to death.

"Women who stayed home to raise their families didn't have any marketable skills and often had to take jobs more suited for men.

"Soon after this, the draft was implemented.

#### Young Austrians

"It was compulsory for young people, male and female, to give one year to the labor corps," remembers Kitty. "During the day, the girls worked on the farms, and at night they returned to their barracks for military training just like the boys.

"They were trained to be anti-aircraft gunners and participated in the signal corps. After the labor corps, they were not discharged but were used in the front lines.

"When I go back to Austria to visit my family and friends, most of these women are emotional cripples because they just were not equipped to handle the horrors of combat.

"Three months before I turned 18, I was severely injured in an air raid attack. I nearly had a leg amputated, so I was spared having to go into the labor corps and into military service.

"When the mothers had to go out into the work force, the government immediately established child care centers.

"You could take your children ages four weeks old to school age and leave them there around-the-clock, seven days a week, under the total care of the government.

"The state raised a whole generation of children. There were no motherly women to take care of the children, just people highly trained in child psychology. By this time, no one talked about equal rights. We knew we had been had.

"Before Hitler, we had very good medical care. Many American doctors trained at the University of Vienna..

"After Hitler, health care was socialized, free for everyone. Doctors were salaried by the government. The problem was, since it was free, the people were going to the doctors for everything.

"When the good doctor arrived at his office at 8 a.m., 40 people were already waiting and, at the same time, the hospitals were full.

"If you needed elective surgery, you had to wait a year or two for your turn. There was no money for research as it was poured into socialized medicine. Research at the medical schools literally stopped, so the best doctors left Austria and emigrated to other countries.

"As for healthcare, our tax rates went up to 80 percent of our income.

Newlyweds immediately received a \$1,000 loan from the government to establish a household. We had big programs for families.

"All day care and education were free. High schools were taken over by the government and college tuition was subsidized. Everyone was entitled to free handouts, such as food stamps, clothing, and housing.

"We had another agency designed to monitor business. My brother-in-law owned a restaurant that had square tables.

"Government officials told him he had to replace them with round tables because people might bump themselves on the corners. Then they said he had to have additional bathroom facilities. It was just a small dairy business with a snack bar. He couldn't meet all the demands.

"Soon, he went out of business. If the government owned the large businesses and not many small ones existed, it could be in control.

"We had consumer protection, too

Austrian kids loyal to Hitler

"We were told how to shop and what to buy. Free enterprise was essentially abolished. We had a planning agency specially designed for farmers. The agents would go to the farms, count the live-stock, and then tell the farmers what to produce, and how to produce it.

"In 1944, I was a student teacher in a small village in the Alps. The villagers were surrounded by mountain passes which, in the winter, were closed off with snow, causing people to be isolated.

"So people intermarried and offspring were sometimes retarded. When I arrived, I was told there were 15 mentally retarded adults, but they were all useful and did good manual work.

"I knew one, named Vincent, very well. He was a janitor of the school. One day I looked out the window and saw Vincent and others getting into a van.

"I asked my superior where they were going. She said to an institution where the State Health Department would teach them a trade, and to read and write. The families were required to sign papers with a little clause that they could not visit for 6 months.

"They were told visits would interfere with the program and might cause homesickness.

"As time passed, letters started to dribble back saying these people died a natural, merciful death. The villagers were not fooled. We suspected what was happening. Those people left in excellent physical health and all died within 6 months. We called this euthanasia.

"Next came gun registration. People were getting injured by guns. Hitler said that the real way to catch criminals (we still had a few) was by matching serial numbers on guns. Most citizens were law abiding and dutifully marched to the police station to register their firearms. Not long afterwards, the police said that it was best for everyone to turn in their guns. The authorities already knew who had them, so it was futile not to comply voluntarily.

"No more freedom of speech. Anyone who said something against the government was taken away. We knew many people who were arrested, not only Jews, but also priests and ministers who spoke up.

"Totalitarianism didn't come quickly, it took 5 years from 1938 until 1943, to realize full dictatorship in Austria. Had it happened overnight, my countrymen would have fought to the last breath. Instead, we had creeping gradualism. Now, our only weapons were broom handles. The whole idea sounds almost unbelievable that the state, little by little eroded our freedom."


"This is my eye-witness account.

"It's true. Those of us who sailed past the Statue of Liberty came to a country of unbelievable freedom and opportunity.



"America is truly is the greatest country in the world. "Don't let freedom slip away.

"After America, there is no place to go."

 Kitty Werthmann

March 20, 2013

Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing in support of HB4276 which is to rescind the state board's adoption of the Common Core State Standards initiative coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. These Common Core State Standards in effect is the nationalization of our nation's education.

The constitutional authority for education rests with states and localities, and ultimately with parents – not the federal government. Researcher Lance Izumi writes, "Nationalizing education standards and testing is exactly the type of federal scheme that goes against the intent of the Constitution and the wisdom of the nation's founding fathers."

In 2011, Senator Marco Rubio issued an impassioned warning against the Obama Administration's efforts to institute national standards and tests. In a letter to Education Secretary Duncan, Rubio wrote: "I am concerned that the administration's requirements for granting a waiver from NCLB would entail states having to adopt a federally-approved "college and career ready" curriculum: either the national Common Core curriculum standards, or another federally-approved equivalent...Such activities are unacceptable; they violate three existing laws: NCLB, the Department of Education Organization Act, and the General Education Provisions Act. All three laws prohibit the federal government from creating or prescribing national curriculum."

Federal intervention in education does not improve academic performance. An example is the Head Start preschool program. In 1965 the Federal government created the Head Start preschool program designed to improve the kindergarten readiness of low-income children. Taxpayers have spent more than \$180 billion on the program. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) scientifically-rigorous study of 5,000 children revealed that Head Start failed to improve the literacy, math and language skills of the four year-old cohort and had a negative impact on the teacher-assessed math ability of the three-year-old cohort. Head Start also failed to improve the parenting outcomes and child-health outcomes of participants. (The Heritage Foundation Commentary "Head Start's Sad and Costly Secret—What Washington Doesn't Want You to Know," by Lindsey Burke, January 13, 2013)

Ceding authority over education to national organizations and Washington bureaucrats won't improve academic outcomes and will be a costly loss of educational liberty.

University of Arkansas professor Jay P. Green noted in testimony before the House Education and the Workforce Committee: The best way to produce high academic standards and better student learning is by decentralizing the process of determining standards, curriculum, and assessments. When we have choice and competition among different sets of standards, curricula, and assessments, they tend to improve quality to better suit student needs and result in better outcomes." He went on to explain that centralized standards "lack a mechanism for continual improvement and warned that are nearly impossible to amend once implemented. And if we make a mistake we will impose it on the entire country."

Curriculum expert Grant Wiggins wrote in Education Week, September 27, 2011, "the mathematics components of the Common Core State Standards Initiative are a bitter disappointment. In terms of their limited vision of math education, the pedestrian framework chosen to organize the standards, and the incoherent nature of the standards for mathematical practice in particular, I don't see how these take us forward in any way."

Compare a math problem in a 1877 math textbook with one in the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Everyday Mathematics Common Core State Standards.

**1877 Elementary mental math problem:**

A boat worth \$864 of which  $\frac{1}{8}$  belonged to A,  $\frac{1}{4}$  to B and the rest to C was lost. What loss did each sustain if having been insured for \$500?

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Everyday Mathematics Common Core State Standards math problem:**

Julie makes \$4.00 per week for washing dishes. She pays her sister Amy \$.75 each time Amy does the dishes for her. Is that fair? Explain.

The Common Core State Standards were approved by the State Board of Education without public comment, legislative review, or cost analysis of full implementation. I request the HB4276 be voted out of committee.

Respectfully,

Paula Seiter