

Friday, February 20, 2015

Dear honored legislatures,

I am writing to share why the Common Core is a good program for Kansas kids. But first, I would like to address the concerns behind it. There was a huge push on Facebook of people showing “assignments” given to students to complete. If these were actually true assignments, they were NOT a result of Common Core but as a result of ONE teacher interpreting these standards in this way. No matter what we are given to teach, there will always be teachers who slip in their agendas in some way.

The old standards were horrific to teach to students. I know we spent weeks trying to teach children Mean, Median, Mode and Range. While these concepts aren’t bad to know, I would challenge anyone to come to my 3rd grade classroom and explain WHY they should know this at this age. The old standards had many concepts to get taught in the school year as well. We got everything covered but nothing mastered. Students passed the test but if they were asked to apply this information, I imagine few would.

With the Common Core, students are given less content to learn. In that way, teachers are able to spend more time for them to master the skills. We have the time to get hand’s on projects out there for students to experience WHY they need to know something. We have had the time to show students HOW something works. Did you know that division actually takes the numbers into their place value in order to be divided? Our students do now. Instead of following a set rules that meant nothing (multiply now subtract) they have a deeper understanding of WHY and HOW the math works.

Please use your good judgment and listen to the teachers BEFORE you change rules on us again. Show us that we ARE the professionals in our field and we know what works and what doesn’t. We have had to throw out our old lessons and get creative in inventing the new ones for Common Core. Please don’t make us do that again unless you have heard enough proof from the professionals that something else would be better. I can promise you the No Child Left Behind standards left many behind!

Thank you,
Kindra Rowley