

While I have been retired since 2004, I taught math at Robinson Middle School in USD 501 in Topeka for 20 years. While I have read some articles and listened to arguments for and against Common Core, my comments stem from my observations as a teacher and with my own granddaughters in grades 1, 3, and 7 in the states of Kansas and Arizona. The confusion created for these girls and the frustration felt by their parents one, who was a teacher, has been unbelievable. Concepts that could be presented in clear and concise ways, require "around the bush" logic and unnecessary steps for students to understand and solve problems. I have spent countless hours on the phone with my 7th grade granddaughter, only to be told they "couldn't do it that way," but that "my way" made so much more sense than what she had to do. Sadly, it doesn't seem to be understood that all students of a given age are not emotionally, developmentally or educationally able to be at a given level at a given time or to grasp a concept in only one way. As a teacher, I expected to assess at what level my students arrived in my classes, and then attempt to take them as far as possible during the school year.

I am disappointed teachers are taking so much blame for student failure without considering other factors, such as attendance, lack of parental involvement, and placement of developmentally challenged students in classes where they often achieve low levels of success, but are tested on the same standards. When parents fail to maintain an interest in their student's attendance, completion of class assignments, or expectation for success, it is impossible for a classroom teacher to teach every student successfully and at the same achievement level.

Decisions concerning education in Kansas should be made here in our own state with the involvement of our own educators. I don't want anyone telling me how to manage my classroom curriculum from Washington DC. It seems those who want to influence decisions in education aren't successful teachers, haven't been successful teachers, or have not been in the teaching profession; however, they seem to feel they have the knowledge to decide what is best for those in our classrooms every day.

Common core is going to lead to "watering down" our curricula so everyone can be successful. Without high expectations for our students, they will continue to fall behind in their education. We became the greatest nation in the world with a population who believed in respecting the necessity for education, and teaching students to be responsible for their success in school in order to be successful in the "real world." Today, we seem to be more interested in making sure everyone "feels" good about themselves, rather than teaching them that failure from irresponsibility has consequences.

I fear I've rambled, but it is so obvious to me our Federal government cannot manage itself. Why should it become involved in Kansas education, when we as Kansans are more than capable of assessing the needs of our students and can manage quite nicely without the involvement of the Federal Government.

Thank you,

Carolyn Kuhn