

From: ContactForm@state.pa.us
Sent: Friday, October 18, 2013 8:03 PM
To: Help
Subject: IRRC Website - New Message

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A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website

First Name: Traci

Last Name: Eshelman

Company: Little Linguists, Inc.

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Subject: IRRC no. 2976

Message:

Dear Mr. Sumner, The past year I have been following with great interest the evolution of Common Core which has now been renamed "Pa Core Standards". I look at these standards as first and foremost, a mom. Secondly I look at them as a business owner and third as a citizen of the United States. I'm not a member of the Tea Party, a 9/12 group or any other organization that has been demonized during the "outing" of these standards. I'm just a mom and a small business owner trying to give my children the very best. We live in a phenomenal school district with phenomenal teachers, administrators, support staff and parents. The past year I've seen people in all of these positions completely stressed out. Off the record, teachers call the Common Core math a "train wreck". They are being forced to teach math two different ways because they know what works, but they know the methods they have been using aren't the same methods that that will be on the Keystone tests. I have a 7th, 8th and 10th grader. My 10th grader is fine. He will not be affected by these high stakes tests and the Pa Core standards. My 7th and 8th graders are not nearly as fortunate. I've spent many nights trying to figure out how I can send them to private schools so they can continue with the exceptional education they've had up until now. It is no fault of our great teachers. The standards and assessments are dictating the curriculum. My children take more tests than take instruction. It would be one thing if these tests were for our teachers so they could determine which lessons to go over more, but these tests are becoming mechanisms for collecting data. In math, my 7th and 8th grade daughters excel. My 7th grade daughter has always done exceptionally well, understanding key concepts very quickly. Last year she had a 95% in math. We put her in Common Core 7/8 which is essentially pre algebra. We didn't want to do what the school is now recommending all students do: wait until 9th grade to track into Algebra I. You see, in order to take Calculus I as a senior, students need to take Algebra I by the 8th grade. Our school is in the top 30 school districts in Pennsylvania. For the past 15 years our school's math track had been on par with all of the top performing countries. Our school was already very competitive. We offered and encouraged our students to take Algebra by the 7th and 8th grades just like Singapore, Japan, and other top math performing countries. Our students by their senior year have been able to take THREE levels of calculus and place out of Calc I & Calc II in college saving parents money, but also enabling these students to compete in the top engineering schools in the country. This is one of the reasons we moved to this school district. With the onset of Common Core Math, this sequence has been pushed back. The

Common Core aka Pa Core Standards, now dictates that Algebra I is taught in 9th grade, Common Core 8 in 8th grade, Common Core 7 in 7th grade and Common Core 6 in 6th grade. The entire sequence is pushed back by one and even two years. Those of us parents who have been following this prepared our children over the summer and tried to get them familiar with the Common Core methods so they would be able to continue on the track that they were. My daughters want to go into a STEM career which means in order to get into a top school, they need to have Calculus in high school. Children are lost, Mr. Sumner. Teachers are pulling their hair out. Children are actually giving up gym class to go to another period of math because there simply isn't enough time to teach what the teachers have been given to teach. My daughter who once loved math and did exceptionally well is now struggling to get a "C" and is so frustrated she hates math. She's never had a "C" in her life and it wasn't for poor standards or curriculum. What is that doing to her aspirations to become a mathematician? A scientist? A doctor? Engineer? These kids are smart. They are honors students that have had the best tutors, curriculum and parents who deeply care about education. Two students in her class "get it". The rest are LOST. This is just the math. The ELA standards have affected us in an adverse manner as well. We have teachers, again, retiring early or just quitting because they are no longer able to teach full texts. Students are reading only a couple of chapters of "To Kill a Mockingbird" and ONE ACT of the Odyssey in the 9th grade. The teachers must forsake these classics in order to teach what Common Core calls "Informational Texts". My children now have to spend their summer reading texts that they should have read in school. I will tell you that after being in school for six hours, my children have to sit at the kitchen table for hours more to cover material that was not covered in school because Common Core standards dictate our teachers teach in a way that is completely ineffective AND teach to a high stakes test. Thank God my husband is an engineer and has a mathematical mind. Thank God I am educated and am aware of what my children are no longer getting at school. My children will hopefully be ok, even though it is not fair they have to spend all this time in school to learn less than what they used to and they have to be enriched and re-taught at home. I'm willing to do that for their future. What concerns me more than anything are the children that don't have parents in the know... the children with a single mom who is working two jobs and sees her children a couple hours a night... the children with illiterate parents... the children with parents who just don't care. Those are the children I'm very concerned for. Here in our little bubble the parents will continue to pay top dollar for tutors and learning centers to compensate for what the Common Core standards forsake. Our children will get what they need. However, children across the state and the country for that matter are going to get lost in this. That is what our legislators and school board administrators cannot see in all of this. I am urging you to please, with whatever power you have, put a stop to Pa Core Standards until the true ramifications can be ascertained and parents and teachers can share with our legislators and the state board exactly what is happening at ground zero, our schools. Thank you for your consideration, Traci Eshelman Ramey