

Breaking News

NEW YORK TEACHERS TURN ON COMMON CORE on Politico Jan 26

“The board of the **New York state teachers union this weekend unanimously withdrew its support for the Common Core standards** as they have been implemented — a major blow for Common Core advocates who have been touting support from teachers as proof that the standards will succeed in classrooms nationwide.

“‘We’ll have to be the first to say it’s failed,’ said Richard Iannuzzi, president of New York State United Teachers. Iannuzzi said he has talked with union leaders in other states who may follow suit. ‘We’ve been in conversations where we’re all saying our members don’t see this going down a path that improves teaching and learning. We’re struggling with how to deal with it,’ he said....

“The NYSUT, which represents about 600,000 teachers, retired teachers and school professionals — and accounts for 15 percent of national teacher union membership — is demanding ‘major course corrections’ before it can consider supporting the standards again. Iannuzzi said the union still believes ‘the potential is there’ for the standards to succeed, but said that won’t happen unless the state brings everything to a halt and **effectively starts from scratch.**

“‘Were this a small union no one would take notice,’ said Jim Stergios, executive director of the Pioneer Institute, a think tank that has been active in opposing the Common Core. **‘But the size and breadth of NYSUT tells even the casual observer that the wheels are coming off Common Core in NY.’** The vote, he said, ‘clearly gives lie to view that teachers support the whole Common Core apparatus. **The fact that NYSUT cuts across over a thousand local unions speaks to how widespread opposition has become.**’

“Carol Burris, an award-winning principal in New York who has been outspoken in opposition to the new standards, called the vote ‘both courageous and significant.’

ABOUT CCSS

“The Common Core standards are a central plank in President Barack Obama’s education agenda. They were **developed by nonprofits** and organizations representing states, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, but have been heavily promoted by the White House and by Education Secretary Arne Duncan.

“Several states, including Alaska, Pennsylvania, Florida and Georgia, have backed away from prior commitments to use new Common Core exams funded by the federal government to assess their students’ progress and measure their achievement against kids in other states. Other states are going further still and considering **revoking the standards altogether.**”

<http://www.politico.com/story/2014/01/new-york-common-core-teachers-schools-education-102614.html#ixzz2tvDAD3Ja>

DATA MINING

“The resolution underscores NYSUT’s longstanding, strong opposition to corporate influence and privatization in public education and calls for an **end to New York’s participation in InBloom**, a ‘cloud-based’ system that would collect and store sensitive data on New York’s schoolchildren.”

<http://www.nysut.org/news/2014/january/nysut-board-approves-no-confidence-resolution>

Governor Cuomo [of New York] created a panel to review the flawed rollout of the Common Core. The governor invited the public to offer suggestions. Here is one from Jeff Nichols, a parent of children in the New York City public schools and a professor at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City of New York:

My suggestion is very simple: **Withdraw from the Common Core.**

No recommendation this panel can come up with will salvage the CCSS,

*for a very simple reason. Ever growing numbers of parents like me reject the entire concept of **federally mandated standards**. And when **standards are tied to funding**, that is a form of mandate.*

I consider myself a liberal Democrat. I voted twice for Barack Obama. But I am as offended by the design and implementation of CCSS as the tea party Republicans who oppose all federal interventions in their lives.

*Why? The **CCSS are expensive**, mediocre, redundant and were adopted without due democratic process. They are, in short, a boondoggle perpetrated on the public by politicians who are either ignorant of real educational needs or under the sway of private interests that stand to **profit enormously from this initiative**.*

*As a taxpayer, I want the state's education dollars dedicated to measures that actually improve student learning. The **Common Core standards are completely unproven** and, judging from early results, ineptly designed — too demanding in early grades, not demanding enough in later ones. Moreover, they come twinned with a new wave of useless and **phenomenally expensive standardized tests**. My wife and I will opt our children out of all state tests at least until all of New York State has implemented universal pre-K and high quality day care for low-income working families, until every child has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and has access to the kinds of libraries, gyms and other vital faculties that children who live in affluent communities take for granted.*

*Our position is not going to change because NYSED acknowledges some errors in its implementation of CCSS. We demand **the return of control over curriculum and teaching methods to educators, parents and local communities**. The state can feel free to issue recommendations for curriculum, but not the kinds of mandates that have been flowing from CCSS.*

All my wife and I want is for our children's teachers to have the same intellectual freedom to practice their profession according to their best judgment as that enjoyed teachers in the exclusive private schools attended by the children of Barack Obama, Arne Duncan and John King.

*That was the reality in my own childhood, growing up attending locally controlled rural public schools in Indiana. In that not-so-distant time and place, **high-stakes standardized tests didn't exist** prior to the SAT — and that was optional. Teachers assessed children; principals, fellow teachers and parents assessed teachers. It worked a heck of a lot better than the test-based, wasteful and counterproductive accountability systems of the NCLB era.*

The Common Core, like all assaults on democracy, is the product of fear — in this case, that our children will fall behind in the global economy. But what those of us who are actually raising the next generation of Americans understand is that the way to address that fear is not to cede control of our children's schools to David Coleman and Arne Duncan.

Americans of all political persuasions know that the only thing we should fear and fight against is the erosion of our democracy. A pluralistic, locally governed and free public school system is the bedrock of that democracy, and it will be restored — not by state and federal bureaucrats, but by families like mine.

<http://dianeravitch.net/2014/02/19/jeff-nichols-advises-governor-cuomos-panel-on-common-core/>