

March 3, 2014

Dear Honorable Georgia Representative,

I am urging you to support the passage of SB 167. As a twenty-five year experienced math teacher in Georgia, I have to tell you we are not getting the job done. As a university system instructor of incoming freshmen, I have observed less preparation and more compromising of high standards. What looks good at graduation night and on paper, is not translating into high quality training. The common core initiative is just the latest effort to “solve” the problem. The real problem is the belief system of educational leadership, the break up of the home and a lack of courage to face the core issues. Until we address that, little will happen. By not acting, before long you will hear of a new plan needing more funding and on and on.

The problem is not Common Core. It is people who use the process of needed revision of curriculum to hijack it as an opportunity to push an agenda. I have no problem with the math in common core. I know it, I taught it, I taught future teachers it, and I have reviewed it carefully. The problem is with people and groups that implement it. The solution is more local control and freedom.

I served on the Science Team of Georgia for the Next Generation Science Standards in 2012-2013. My two year experience with this effort showed me revising standards is not a transparent process. For example when I learned that evolution was going to be presented as a fact in K-12, I resisted this inclusion and had difficulty getting information. After the Georgia Team gave feedback, the final version put out by Achieve looked much different and we were told we could do little. I am a key witness to how this process works. I was heavily in contact with key people in the machinery.

This experience taught me education leadership is political, hidden from the public, and resistant to any person or educator not onboard with the plan. Education has become a power game serving the interest of the establishment and not the classroom. As a classroom teacher, my efforts at effective instruction were often not because of but in spite of the establishment. The taxpayer has no idea what is happening.

Support this bill. It is not perfect but has teeth. Educational leaders like superintendents and even teacher unions will oppose any effort they see challenging their core power. SB 167 will take this power away and provide a real opportunity to return it to the rightful owner. These are the parents and the tax payers of Georgia. The educational establishment has forgotten they are servants to the public and not the other way around.

In my work at challenging the evolution in science education the following was learned. Most people do not take the time to learn how education works. Many in education do not make this easy. Much time and money is wasted. The process has become almost entirely political and if you are not on the inside, good luck in getting anything done or your message out.

Passing this bill will not solve all the problems. But it will give the people the power and opportunity for a new beginning. Won't you seriously consider your support for SB 167.

If I can be of any service please do not hesitate to contact me.

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