Who Deserves the Blame for Poor Student Test Results in South Dakota?
10/4/2019

The blame for poor student testing results (a measure of academic performance) lies squarely with the state of South Dakota first and the public school districts second. Attempts to deflect the responsibility onto poor students, parents, and ultimately the taxpayer is hypocrisy at its highest form. The Trojan horse that is Common Core must be protected at all costs! Remember when the educational authorities promised us that throwing away traditional instruction for research approved Common Core methods of teaching was the golden ticket to elevation of everyone's educational success including a reduction in the student achievement gap? Well I do. It started with math.

As a mother with a doctoral degree in science, I was aghast with my first conversation with my child's Common Core math teacher. Correct answers were to be marked wrong and doing calculations in your head was prohibited and punished because the emphasis was on showing multiple ways to resolve a problem. Better grades were given to those who tediously wrote down every step and derived the wrong answer. The math teacher stated, "this is the new way of math and it would be best if parents did not help their child with homework." Yes, that's right, Rapid City Area Schools actively discouraged parents from helping with homework. We were to be more like cheerleaders on the sidelines, so please do not turn around and put the blame of academic failure on the parents. I do not blame the classroom teachers either as they are required under penalty of employment loss to follow the approved curriculum which ultimately is mandated at the state level.

Common Core was implemented piecemeal. Each year, kids who have had at least some years of the traditional K-12 curriculum graduate and leave the testing pool. The day has arrived where we are finally seeing the testing results of students who are essentially fully immersed in Common Core instruction. Where are the improving and elevated scores that we were promised? As a trained scientist I know the data must speak for itself. Not only are there no improvements in testing scores, we are not even holding steady. **The student testing scores are steadily declining along with our children's futures. It is time to acknowledge the failure of the Common Core Trojan horse and address the heart of the problem if we really want to save our schools.**

In South Dakota, Common Core has been rebranded and renamed "South Dakota Content Standards." https://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/ Don't worry, regardless of the name, Common Core is fully intact and it still is the same ticking time bomb destroying K-12 academic performance in South Dakota. Check it out for yourself, my child's current Math book proudly proclaims on the back cover that it is "powered by Common Core."

Sincerely,
A very concerned South Dakota mother