

Jama Hansonbrook, Parent

"I have three children, and since common core has been implemented I have observed a dramatic reduction in the quality of education my kids have received. Projects and meaningfully immersive units of study, especially in science and social studies, have been abandoned to make more time for the lengthy and unnecessarily time-consuming instruction in math. ELA instruction has changed entirely from a focus on literature and writing to a simple unengaging formula of simple reading comprehension and a spitting back of the text. True close reading of a text means reading something that is challenging enough it can inspire debate and deep enough that students have something to chew on, but the testing encourages teachers to focus on simple non-fiction with clear undebatable meaning, thus no depth to plumb. Small reading groups that teach different skills to kids of different reading levels are now gone. Teachers are eschewing creative writing assignments that target kids' interest in favor of bland responses to non-fiction that only demonstrate kids have read and understand the basic material but not the deeper meaning. My kids are bright and they have become less and less engaged in school. Since so many kids begin to lose the love of reading and start disengaging from school in late elementary/ early middle school, it is truly egregious that this focus on testing and the new common core syllabus exacerbates, rather than remedies, this problem. Additionally, we have found that the new curriculum and focus on testing in the elementary schools poorly prepares our kids for middle school and high school. The skills they need to do well in high school, and on into college, are impeded. My eighth grade son has fewer labs in Earth Science than the high school teaching the same Regents curriculum, so that more time can be given to Math and ELA instruction. Students in higher grades need to be able to discuss ideas and concepts in depth. They need to read literature and write well. They are not learning any of this."