

Anne LaValle, Parent

<http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/story/opinion/valley-views/2015/11/14/common-core-remains-mess-and-must-eradicated/75465412/>

My name is Anne LaValle and I am a mother of seven children. I first became aware and concerned about Common Core in 2013 after my daughter took the 8th grade standardized ELA assessment. She came home and told me that she was uncomfortable writing the essay because she felt directed to express an opinion that was not her own.

She was assigned to "write an essay, explaining in detail why a structured work day of 8 hours of work, 8 hours of rest and 8 hours of recreation is best not only for an individual but for society at large". Students were not to express an opinion; simply to validate the statement using "persuasive writing technique".

I have been told that the question was intended to assess students' abilities to draw compelling aspects of an argument from a stated text; in this case, a speech by Samuel Gompers, an early union organizer.

The truth of the matter is that the value of a defined work day is a highly charged ideological and political concept. To have one side of any argument especially one with such powerful ideological impact, implied as a conclusion to a captive audience of middle school students is absolutely inappropriate and in fact, contrary to the most fundamental of all educational tenets; free thought.

The "question" in fact, inhibits even prohibits the students' consideration of the validity of the argument or any opposition to it. Rather, the concept that a structured work day is best for individuals and societies appears in the test as a conclusion which the students are assigned to affirm

Common Core and the Regents Reform Agenda claim to be oriented toward critical thinking. This assignment is not an example of critical thinking. Students were not evaluated on their ability to recognize persuasive argument, but their ability and willingness to identify and verbally validate a highly charged political and social ideology. This is not persuasive writing. It is controlled and directed expression. It opposes critical thinking and free thought and has no place in the educational institutions of a free society.

The covert nature by which this educational initiative was developed and implemented; the absolute lack of empirical evidence to support proponents' claims; the untested and unproven standards, content and methods; the binding conditions of the federal funding used to bait states into adopting the standards; the abundance of political and financial interest; the utter absence of public or legislative discourse and the overwhelming damning response from professional educators and standards experts including those on the Common Core's own Validation Committee are mind numbing.

Common Core is not about education. It is about control of our children's everyday lives through their education system by political and financial pirates.

Parents are recognized by federal statutory law as the primary educators of our children. Common Core eviscerates that legal reality. It must be stopped. Our children are NOT for sale or barter.