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"When I first heard about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in an English Department meeting during the 2011-2012 school year, I wasn't overly concerned. There was a gap between the rigor of high school and college texts that needed to be closed in order to support students taking that path. On this I agreed based on my own experience transitioning from high school to college. However, it wasn't until later that I understood and experienced the problems teachers working with younger students had been voicing frustration with. While the implementation and assessment of the CCSS has been a significant problem, the bigger issue is that the CCSS require young students to think in a way that is developmentally impossible. As the issue grows from there, the achievement gap will grow rather than shrink.

When the CCSS were implemented so quickly, it meant that students who were reading, writing, and thinking at grade level were suddenly considered well below grade level. As the rate of learning can only increase so much, students were and are unable to meet assessment standards regardless of teacher quality. Add the classified and alternative education students to the mix, and the gap grows exponentially because they were already below grade level across the board. These students become more likely to drop out of school due to frustration, stress, and anxiety. Those that do stay have to re-take Regents exams multiple times to graduate with a diploma. While there was an option for schools to phase in the Common Core Algebra and English exams, the tests are so dramatically different that teachers cannot conceivably prepare students for both exams in one course. Classified students who already had to retake multiple Regents exams to earn a diploma, now have to retake more exams. This creates an insurmountable mountain of stress and anxiety. For these students graduating with a Regents Diploma can seem like a pipe dream, and many drop out of school as a result.

While the CCSS and unrealistic exams have been a significant challenge for students, the problem is ultimately rooted in the fact that the standards themselves are not aligned appropriately with what we know about brain development. Young students are expected to think in ways that their brains are incapable of doing. This sets them up for failure from the beginning, leading to significant frustration, stress, and anxiety which is compounded as students get older and fall farther behind. The CCSS are also geared toward college readiness, which doesn't take into account the varied paths that students can take after high school.

As the issues with the Common Core compound themselves, we will find more students classified with disabilities, more students in alternative education programs, and more students dropping out of high school. The CCSS have been implemented incorrectly, are being tested unfairly, and do not align with

neurological development. If we stay on this one cookie cutter education path, then the problems the CCSS were supposed to solve will ultimately become worse."