

**Paul Perry, Teacher, New York State Science Teacher Association; New York State Association of Agricultural Educators**

Good evening,

Thank you for having these Regional Listening sessions, and for inviting me to testify.

My name is Paul Perry. I am a High School Science teacher at Vernon-Verona-Sherrill High School in Verona, NY. I teach Earth Science, Living Environment and an Agricultural Science elective. I serve as the Chairperson for the Mohawk Valley section of the Science Teachers Association of New York State. I am also the District 4/5 trustee for the New York Association of Agricultural Educators.

On one hand, I have no direct experience with the Common Core. I do not teach content that has been changed by Common Core. The Regents Exams that my students take in June are still teacher written, edited, and developed. Yet, Common Core has effected New York State education down to its base. The Common Core has affected every teacher, every student and every school in New York State.

I start with the premise that the Common Core Learning Standards is a great idea, which has been poorly implemented. Having a math lesson that is integrated with and supports science? I love it! Having an English reading passage that supplements your Social Studies activities? That sounds like an ideal way to learn to me. The reality of Common Core has not lived up to this vision.

The roadblock to achieving this result has been testing. School Districts, Administrators and Teachers are evaluated based on students' scores on specific tests – primarily English and Math. So instruction focuses on those subjects at the expense of others. Some teachers become focused on “teaching to the test”. This was not the intent, however in some cases, this has been the result.

Consistency between districts and between teachers is important. High standards for all teachers and students are essential – I do not think anyone will argue to the contrary. Yet, neither standards, nor consistency are so important that they should come at the expense of the creativity and enthusiasm that an individual educator may possess. Teaching is part art, and part science. In the push for consistency, we should not remove artistic freedom from the teacher's educational palate.

Agriculture and other electives have been teaching Common Core since before Common Core was implemented. My students can calculate the number of cubic yards of concrete needed when pouring a concrete slab if given the dimensions of the pad in feet and inches. This involves “real world” unit conversions and calculations. They will be able to tell if the invoice from the driver is correct, because they know how much we ordered, and know the price per yard. This is “hands-on” math. This is “real-life” math. This is what Common Core math is supposed to be.

Although Common Core, as it has been implemented might educate today's students, the rigid curriculum and over-reliance on standardized testing does not do enough to equip tomorrow's leaders.

Thank you for your time.

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