

Statement to State School Board October 26, 2014 Re HB1490 Workgroup Progress

My comments will serve as a historical record of what occurred in this year long process: **there was always a predetermined outcome by DESE that Missouri would indeed retain common core standards to a large extent and that the legislative intent of 1490 was thwarted by DESE and supported by the State Board of Education.**

I attended several of the ELA 6-12 meetings and the educational professional organization appointees were openly unwilling and hostile to using other states' standards as comparisons and national experts' opinions for writing new MO standards, even as the legislation directed they could be used as resources for developing new Missouri standards. This unwillingness was intentional and directed by federally funded out of state non-governmental organizations **who were contacted for financial/strategic help by DESE.** Freedom of Information Act emails received from DESE produced 6500 emails for this agency **just for the ELA 6-12 workgroup** and a few of these emails are attached to this statement showing DESE's collusion with out of state NGOs to retain Common Core in this state.

Emails from workgroup member Nick Kremer, appointed by then Speaker Tim Jones, clearly state his desire to retain the Common Core standards and he informs DESE of this intention. He was in close contact with DESE regarding workgroup matters. Mr. Kremer was the teacher who refused to leave the committee even after he was relieved of his duties by the Speaker. Sarah Potter of DESE alerted the media (AP, The Columbia Tribune, StL Post Dispatch) informing them of this drama, while at the same time, parents on that committee were accused of contacting the media and creating group chaos. This news coverage of the chaos was orchestrated by DESE, which legally had no official role in workgroup matters. The agency also recruited certain workgroup members and held 'regroup' sessions after official workgroup meetings in an effort to shut down constructive dialogue and the writing of new standards.

I have attended several State Board of Education meetings and have heard almost every member praise the standards. There appears to be a predisposition by many Board members to accept the pro common core NGO talking points which are not supported by research/data. At the same time, I have heard Board members utter marginalizing statements about citizens opposed to the standards.

Board members have indicated that minority reports will not be accepted or considered in its decision meaning no other reports will be in the record opposing the DESE agenda of retaining the standards. This is antithetical to the democratic process and the intent of HB1490. A recent editorial by an English teacher explained what she tries to teach her students, illustrating what Missouri citizens expect from their political institutions, political appointees and bureaucrats...and what was not experienced in ELA 6-12:

Learning is a valid lesson that is not political but is essential for politics: that one must support assertions with proofs, that one must consider counter arguments, that it's necessary to listen to what others say and that doing so may allow you to strengthen, or force you to alter what you think.

We have heard one Missouri education reformer state that people are dissatisfied with the standards because 'things didn't go their way' even as they were written/adopted via 'the democratic process'. The dissatisfaction from those truly educated in the facts about the Common Core State Standards Initiative stems from the proven fact that **any democratic process was doomed from the beginning. Just like 'outcome based education' goals, the goal to retain Common Core standards was set in place even before workgroups were constituted, national NGOs were contacted by DESE for assistance, and there was little to no chance that higher standards would be adopted in Missouri, regardless of the passage of HB1490.**

As the teacher continues in her op-ed (and which I contend Missourians expect from State Board members):

I'm reassured that I send forth young adults who, whatever political positions they adopt, will question before they conclude, and will respect others' rights to question and to conclude otherwise.

This was not the case in ELA6-12 deliberations and if the State Board of Education adopts these standards recommendations and refuses to acknowledge the Minority Report, then I suggest that the State Board is actively circumventing the democratic process as well.

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