

Dear Senator/Representative:

As Montague Area Public Schools Superintendent, I can tell you first-hand that an about-face with funding for the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment (through language included in the Fiscal Year 2013-14 budget) would be a complete fiasco. This irresponsible decision would reverse the positive instructional course our county has been on for the past three years and mean the loss of thousands of hours and millions of dollars in training time, materials, and effort.

This action would fail our children in multiple ways.

First, our children are already benefiting from new teaching strategies and lesson plans based on the new statewide standards. The new standards are successfully shifting instructional practices in order to focus on critical thinking and problem solving, as opposed to memorization of content. Our teachers, in cooperation with the ISD trainers and administrators, are excited and motivated by this fresh approach.

Second, thousands of teachers throughout our state have already spent hundreds of hours involved in grade-level specific, comprehensive, extensive training to learn how to implement the Common Core State Standards. In addition, the state has granted \$50 million to schools to technically prepare for the new computerized assessment. If you choose the about-face, you will be the cause of thousands of wasted hours and millions of dollars in training.

Our children will pay dearly for the decision of lawmakers to abandon the research-based Common Core State Standards and associated Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Finally, a decision to about-face the Common Core funding makes Michigan look backwards and out of step with national student achievement standards. It will also cause Michigan to lose its flex waiver to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. This means that every school in Michigan will NOT make AYP and will have to begin the costly NCLB sanctions accordingly. This will also mean less federal Title I funds for our neediest students.

Our children cannot afford to have nationally recognized, research-based standards (already being effectively implemented) to be tossed out with the trash. **Please, do not send Michigan's public schools backwards with an about-face on Common Core funding.** Support the Common Core State Standards adopted three years ago and the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Sincerely,

Nathan J. Robrahn
Montague Area Public Schools