

## Press Release: Senator Sheryl Nuxoll, District 7

Parents are the primary educators of their children. It was this way from the very beginning, even when there were no schools. However, parents may delegate this responsibility to those whomever they trust: private schools, tutors, public schools. Even though they may do this, the primary responsibility lies on the parents to ensure that these schools are following their educational philosophy.

The family is also the most basic unit of society. It is the smallest, most local unit of government. Therefore, the control of their children and their education is still supposed to be in the hands of the parents. In the founding of our nation, many children were homeschooled or in parochial or private schools. The parents chose these schools based on their children's personalities and the family's life style and beliefs. The schools in our country were varied and had different emphasis on certain aspects of education. No school was exactly the same. The parent chose the type of schooling that best fitted their needs for their children. Let's look at the common core structure and philosophy to see if it allows the parent to responsibly educate according to each child's needs?

SBAC is the acronym for the testing system of Idaho Core, a multi state test created by federal and private funds. SBAC is a form of extreme testing requiring up to 8 hours (7 hours for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders). The Idaho Department of Education says Idaho needs to have a nationwide test to be able to compare Idaho students with students across the nation. Do we want to require our children to be the "same" throughout the state and nation? Do we want our children to be robots: held back if they want to learn more or disinterested due to lack of motivation if they get lost? Each student needs individual attention to reach their full potential or destiny.

The SBAC test does not provide immediate feedback needed to help the classroom teacher formulate instruction. The main purpose of the test is to give data to statisticians while the main purpose should be to help teachers and parents. Our nation's schools have always taught according to tests; the teacher has always taught so that the students will do their best on the tests. The SBAC seems to be a tool to monitor, control, and manipulate teachers, students, and parents. Who is in control—the curriculum companies or the federal administration?

Since school districts cannot opt out of common core, what avenue do parents have to change the system? Parents have to choose curriculum that only the state can provide. The American people have long enjoyed local control in their public institutions. SBAC has no process to lodge a complaint or modify the test. In fact, one of the books on the reading list for high school is "Bluest Eyes", a horribly pornographic reading. The state cannot delete it from the list.

SBAC is using a technique where no outside information can be used for writing. This could be potentially harmful and discriminatory to young and vulnerable students. The passage may be asking a student to defend a belief that they morally or politically do not agree with. In fact, the grammar and literature of Idaho Core are eliminating many or big sections of our founding documents and classical literature while substituting informational manuals so that they can enter the workforce ready for a career. Doesn't this bother you that the tests are

formatted, not to promote, but to discourage critical thinking when there can be only closed answers to essay tests? Who is grading these subjective tests? Testing defines what a student learns. There surely are enough talented Idahoans who can prepare tests for Idaho students without needing help from other states.

SBAC does not take into consideration stages of child development. Do we want our very young children to flounder because common core is trying to force abstract concepts on them at the wrong stage of development? Young children learn through memorization mostly, but abstract concepts are being forced on our young which can cause discouragement and lack of motivation. Middle school children start to learn to discuss, but, if they are refused their own beliefs, how can they mature morally. High school students like to think and write critically with making their own judgments. Will this “career ready” preparation afford them this opportunity to teach them to write critically? In doing a math problem, a student may get more credit for working the problem using an approved process but getting the wrong answer, rather than a student that uses a non-approved process to get the correct answer. Many child development psychologists disagree with common core.

Remember that we are preparing our students for a career (according to Idaho Core—K thru career). These inflexible standards treat everyone like a cog in a machine. SBAC does not let the person determine the mission, but decides the mission or career for them. It bothers me that there is no mention of preparing your child to be the human person God created them to be. The human person that has a will to live and work, and an understanding to think and love.

Our nation formed great individuals through the education that they received. George Washington, Einstein, Thomas Edison, John Glenn, Walt Disney, Ronald Reagan are examples. Is our education system continuing to go the wrong direction that it did with Outcome based Education, Goals 2000, Race to the Top? Maybe we should look at going back to what made our nation’s individuals so great and change our curriculum and standards in a different direction.

Perhaps most common core supporters have good intentions. But if you are concerned as I am about common core, I urge you parents to relentlessly contact the State Dept of Education and ask that we use different testing rather than SBAC. Each time that the issue comes up to the Dept of Education, the Department indicates that we can get out at any time. Idaho can come up with its own tests or still use the SAT and ISAT. In our nation, testing of today determines how our country goes tomorrow. This is the time.