

Testimony given to District 81, Feb 22, 2006

Sherrie Stradley

Good Evening Mr Benzel, members of the board,

I have given Mr. Benzel a yellow folder, which includes a packet of information.

On page 1 of the packet:

[Washington received an “F” in the 2005 State of the State Math Report Card](#). The report calls Washington’s standards “poorly written, needlessly voluminous, and difficult to understand.”

Page 2 describes more problems with the standards, saying:

Some standards “have little to do with mathematics”, while others “include classroom activities that are only marginally mathematical and untestable”. Standards devoted to problem-solving are of especially low quality, while other standards focus on talking about solving problems, rather than solving them.

Page 3 of the packet points out a flaw in the 5th grade standards, which confuses fractions with quantities. This is a fundamental misinterpretation of the meaning of fractions.

Page 4 lists the authors of the “State of the State Math Report Card”

Pages 5 through 7 are the state of California’s Report Card. The report ends by stating that California’s framework is as close to perfection as any set of mathematics in the country, and should be a valuable model for other states.

Pages 8 & 9 are [California accepted curriculum](#).

We were recently told Connected Math was adopted because it so closely matched the Essential Academic Learning Requirements.

It should be no surprise that CMP closely matches Washington EALRS, the EARLS were developed based largely on research by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).(see footnote #3) [The NCTM was a paid partner](#) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in developing Connected Math. The 1999 US Department of Education panel that recommended CMP as “exemplary” and “promising” was comprised of NSF and NCTM members, but no practicing mathematicians. Shortly after the recommendation, a letter was written and published in the Washington Post asking Secretary Riley to withdraw the “exemplary” and “promising” endorsements. 200 mathematicians, professors, Nobel Prize winners, and high-ranking scientists signed the letter. The letter is included in the folder I gave to Mr. Benzel. Then there’s the NSF Systemic Initiative money. While individual schools receive less than of 0.1% of their running costs in NSF money, they are now bound to the NSF Initiative rules to make “fundamental, comprehensive, and coordinated changes in science, math, and technology education through attendant changes in policy, resource allocation, governance, management, content and conduct”. While the NSF Initiative money may seem like a great deal, it’s costing our children their education. We are not alone in our belief that this is a poor choice for our kids. [There are currently more than 13 states trying to get rid of](#) the curriculum, some doing so by lawsuits. I hope we can resolve this without going that far.

[California realized Connected Math was no good when SAT scores fell 28% over the 7-year period Connected Math was used](#). They set new, rigorous standards, and as a result have the highest math scores in the country. Washington ranks 46th.

We challenge every member of the board to do an [internet search](#) on Connected Math. Plan to invest a number of hours if you are brave enough to take this suggestion. If you do, we believe you will be absolutely astounded at what you find. We can find no indication that our community was made aware of these issues prior to the adoption of the new curricula, nor were any parents included on the panel that decided to implement this program. [Both of those facts are in direct violation of the NCLB act section 1112](#). Also violated in the omission of parental input are the District 81 Staff Behavioral Expectations which state “involve parents and guardians in the educational program”. The curriculum itself is in violation of the Washington State Education Law [RCW.28A.150.210](#) which states “Students will be taught to know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics”. It is also in violation of the Washington State Constitution, which states, “each district must provide extensive offerings in the basic skills areas of reading, language, math, social studies, science, art, health and physical education.”

We ask that no more of this curriculum be implemented at any level, and that we be given a choice of curriculum, as the law states. Thank you

Link #1: Thomas Fordham State of State Math Report
<http://www.edexcellence.net/doc/Math05AllStateReports.pdf>

Link #2: California State Board of Education
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/mthmain.asp>

#3: From the Washington State Handbook of Essential Academic Learning Requirements, available at your school

Link #4: National Science Foundation Systemic Initiatives: How a small amount of federal money promotes ill-designed mathematics and science programs in K-12 and undermines local control of education
Micheal McKeown, Mathematically Correct
David Klien, Cal State U.
Chris Patterson, Education Connection of Texas
<http://www.csun.edu/%7Evcmath00m/chap13.pdf>

Link #5: Mathematically Correct
List of Cities fighting Fuzzy Math
<http://mathematicallycorrect.com/citylist.htm>

Link #6:
<http://www.hobel.org/lwved/id25.html>

Link #7: United States Dept. of Education

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1112>

Link #8: Washington State Legislature

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.210>