

February 18, 2015



OPINION 16
DATE 2-18-14
NO 377 1

Montana PTA
P.O. Box 1269
Laurel, MT 59044

On behalf of more than 4,500 members across the state, Montana PTA comes to express our opposition to House Bill 377. Undoing Montana's Common Core Standards is a huge mistake.

Montana Common Core State Standards are legitimate internationally benchmarked standards and are better than any individual state standards that exist. Countries that have the most knowledgeable workforce have the strongest economic growth. We must dedicate ourselves to doing whatever is necessary to assure our children are prepared for college or career inside or outside of Montana. The Common Core levels the playing field and is the best chance that we have to prepare our students for the future.

Montana PTA strongly supports Montana's Common Core Standards. In our work across the state, I and other PTA board members have visited classrooms, talked with students, teachers and parents who are excited about the improvements happening within the schools due to the Common Core Standards. We see students being challenged. We have seen teachers enthusiastically embracing the new standards and we see parents becoming more engaged with their children's education. I see this in our Hamilton public schools, and in my own son's school work.

Montana PTA will continue to work with all education partners and parents to ensure the highest quality education experience is available for all of our children. Montana's Common Core Standards represent a bipartisan effort to raise the bar for our children. We must not allow anyone to undermine the standards.

It's important to note that with Montana's Common Core Standards, the local school district chooses the curriculum, guided by the grade level expectations of the Standards. The Standards do not dictate the details of academic curriculum; they only provide clear expectations for what each student should know in order to leave school prepared for college and career. Standards equal the end goal, or the WHAT. Curriculum equals HOW. These terms are not interchangeable.

To remain competitive globally, businesses across Montana depend on a highly qualified workforce prepared for jobs in the 21st century. That's why so many Montana business leaders support Montana's Common Core Standards. Today's workplace requires employees to be able to think on their feet, make decisions and solve problems. As the demand for highly skilled workers continues to increase, it is imperative that America's youth are prepared with critical thinking and reasoning skills. That's exactly what the Montana Common Core Standards focus on.

Montana PTA strongly urges you to vote NO on this bill and any bills that weaken Montana's Common Core Standards. Thank you.

State leaders who believe in improved educational outcomes for all students should reaffirm their commitment to the Common Core and celebrate the potential it offers for the students. If we can be of assistance, please contact Montana PTA's office at 406-628-9007 or email at ptamontana@rbbmt.org.

Sincerely,
Montana PTA Board Members

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherry Holderith".

Sherry Holderith, President Montana PTA