

Meg Norris letter

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Lori

5:45 PM

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----- Original Message -----

From: Lori**To:** lori**Sent:** Monday, November 25, 2013 3:38 PM

To My Students,

I did not return to the classroom this year and I want to apologize. I am truly sorry for having left you. It was the hardest decisions I have ever made. I want you to understand why I left. It had nothing to do with you. I still love you and believe in you. You are still amazing and you can do anything you want to do. I did not give up on you. I left to fight for you. I saw you struggling with Common Core skills. Even with the new curriculum from the district, no matter how I broke it down for you I could see you didn't understand. I saw the frustration on your faces. And when time ran out and we had to take the county's test (on the county's schedule), I saw the tears roll from your eyes. You failed. I saw you missing school more days than normal. I saw you with long sleeves covering up the cutting scars on your arms. I saw how the sparkle in your eyes dimmed. I saw the small bald spot on your head where you had pulled out your hair. And it wasn't just in my class. You hated going to math. You came early everyday for [homework help](#), but it didn't make any difference. You still could not understand.

want you to know none of this is your fault. It is not you. I know the school, the county and the state call it "rigor." That is a horrible word. Look it up in the dictionary for me. Rigor is for dead people. You are not failing because it is too hard. You are not failing because you are not working hard enough. You are not failing because of your teachers. You are failing because Common Core was not written by teachers. Common Core was not written to help you. Let me explain why this hurts you so much.

Your brain, as it develops, can only learn certain things at certain times. Common Core is trying to force you to learn things your brain is not ready to learn. Researchers for decades have found that the things Common Core requires you to do are impossible until you reach high school, at the earliest. No matter what your teachers do to get you to learn it, you aren't going to be able to. There is nothing wrong with you. Your brain was designed perfectly. Common Core standards were not.

Common Core was written by businessmen trying to [make money](#) off of you. You and your learning are a grand experiment in corporate profits. If you fail at school, if your teachers fail to teach you, these corporations can sell more books, workbooks, tests, software and technology to schools and even to your parents to try at home. None of it will work. These same businessmen want to convince states to let them and their companies take over your schools. Your parent's tax dollars would then go to these companies. Over \$600 billion is spent on education every year in this country. This money should go to your education, not to private companies. It is very similar to what was done to prisons several years ago. Common Core is the first time in the history of this country that a privately written and copyrighted plan has become public policy. There is no research to back it and it has never been tested. Politicians are pushing it because these corporations are giving them [money](#) to push it.

When I left I met with members of your Board of [Education](#) and told them what was happening. They ignored me. I went to the local newspaper and they ignored me too. When I spoke to the state Senate education committee they dismissed me as a political nut [job](#). When I came back to chaperone your fall dance I was told I was "no longer one of you" and I could not come in because of my position on Common Core. Ghandi once said, "First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, and then you win." We will win. We will win for you and every student after you. This is not political. This is for the future leaders of our country. These corporations don't want to teach you how to think.

It is time for you to talk to your parents. Help them understand that opting you out of state testing will protect your personal information as well as stop the data that is being used to unfairly judge you and your teachers. [Schools](#) where more than 80% of kids have been opted out are cancelling these stressful tests that measure nothing. There is a new test coming to replace the CRCT, which is why politicians like Governor Deal and Superintendent Barge want to keep Common Core. Have your parents demand a portfolio of your work be kept and that your hard work be used to decide if you should go on to the next grade, not a random test. Any test not written by and graded by your teachers should never be allowed in the classroom.

Please do not worry about me. I am strong and people have called me worse names and banned me from Standing up for what is right is not always the easy thing. I knew that when I left my classroom. I have :

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Exhibit 12

teachers from all over the country who are standing with me. I have education experts and child psychologists standing with me. I have politicians standing with me. I have famous authors standing with me. And the group is growing.

Just this week I got an email from Judy Blume, author of famous children's classics like *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Blubber*, *Are You There God, It's Me Margaret*, *Forever*, and *Tiger Eyes*. She shared with me that she was a horrible test-taker. She is very grateful that she is not in school taking the kinds of tests you are taking. Can you imagine how horrible it would be if our favorite authors gave up because they could not do well on standardized tests that meant nothing? I don't want to find out.

Talk to your parents and let them know what is happening in your classrooms. Every time you take a test or a [survey](#), tell your parents. Be brave and keep making me proud. You can be anything you want to be. I am always here for you.

Mrs. Meg Norris, Ed.S.

7th Grade (former) teacher

Georgia

Meg Norris is a doctoral candidate in education and a certified teacher in Georgia. After 18 months with Common Core in her classroom her observations compelled her to walk away from her dream [job](#) of teaching to fight against the implementation of Common Core and high stakes testing. She was banned from her former school because of her stance against Common Core.

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