

In February of 2014 my then 5th grader was subjected to a pilot of the Smarter Balanced test without my knowledge or consent. His principal apologized and sent out an email retroactively to all parents. In hindsight I'm not nearly as upset now as I was then because now I have legitimate reasons for not allowing our children to take the actual test for the first time next month. I've told the teachers and administrators that I will instead be taking our kids to Disneyland because their time will be better spent there than taking that test.

Why? There is no feedback or results. In this age of computers and sophisticated software, results should be immediate if not given out within the week. We still don't know how our son did on the pilot. The math portion of Smarter Balanced requires normal math calculations and then written explanations of how you got the answer. A student could get the calculations correct but not explain it correctly and get the problem wrong. I am opposed to this kind of subjective mathematics grading. You get it right or you get it wrong—it's not an English test. It is also hugely expensive to pay retired teachers to grade every child's written mathematics answers. These are just a few of my reasons for despising this federal government takeover of education.

Our youngest will probably not get the experience of attending public school beyond kindergarten due to Common Core curriculum and the Smarter Balanced testing. I refuse to let the federal government dumb down education and make parents look dumb because they can't remember the 7 different methods of doing long division and multiplication. This is socialism pure and simple and most states have bought into it hook, line and sinker thanks to the financial strings attached. As I've heard said time and time again as the plus side of Common Core, "We're covering less topics but covering them more deeply." Nope, I don't believe it and I won't ever believe it's what is academically best for our kids.

When the Oregon Education Association says it's a bad idea, why don't we listen to them? They may be a liberal organization in this liberal state, but if they feel it's a step in the wrong direction, doesn't that, if none of these other things do, raise a huge red flag?

Thank you for your time. Heidi Huddleston