

# Maria C. Guilott, Ph.D.

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October 19, 2015

Dear Regina,

Effective today, October 19, 2015, I am officially resigning as a member of the English Language Arts Curriculum Review Committee. When I was appointed to the committee, I was hopeful and believed it was an opportunity to have open discussions, to consider new possibilities, and to improve the existing document so that it more closely reflected the needs of students in Louisiana. To that end, you and I met with teachers in our school system and asked them what would make a positive difference in the standards as a guiding document. Without exception, teachers pointed to the need to address creativity directly, not just implied or understood. We, therefore, submitted an "additional" standard to the Louisiana Department of Education list of Common Core State Standards the committee was supposed to review.

- The actual suggested standard we submitted was that students ***generate thoughts and opinions that support divergent thinking.***
- The rationale for the addition was *to prepare students to be innovators and communicators of ideas and solutions.*

By noon on October 13, 2015 when we met in Alexandria, it was evident to me that the intent of the review process of the English Language Arts Committee was to minimize the number of changes to the existing document. In fact, 95% of the changes I had proposed that resulted from our meetings with teachers in St. Tammany Parish were not even considered in my small group. Consequently, it is no surprise that our proposed addition to the standards had no chance of survival. Since I had to leave at 4:00 PM, I called you to check to see if the group had approved our standard. When you told me they had not, I was more than disappointed. For me, the fact that the group would not even entertain the possibility of including one standard that focused solely on creativity was not acceptable and is the reason I am resigning.

At this point, I have the following questions of the committee:

1. Since an objection I heard from the group was that the suggested standard could not be tested, does that mean that everything that needs to be in the standards has to be tested on a standardized, high-stakes test?
2. At the end of the day, what do we want students to be able to do? Do we just want them to do well on a test or do we want them to be able to think for themselves?

I close with a heavy heart and a high level of concern for the direction that our state has taken in the education of our precious children.

Sincerely,

Margo Guilott

cc: Jane Smith

Representative John Schroder