

Following are my summary notes from the hearing:

- The first interesting piece was the name change from PA Common Core Standards to the PA Core Standards which I was not aware had changed. My guess is that the name changed due to the fact that since Pennsylvania was adding elements to the Common Core, we could no longer say we were actually “common” with others.
- Senator Dinniman pressed PDE on the following points: **1)** schools don’t have the resources to implement the common core and the related assessments; **2)** there are objections to having different notations on the transcripts such as passed the keystones by test or project. The latter can be viewed upon by colleges, etc. as less rigorous and thereby penalizing the student; and **3)** anyone can get out of the test by claiming a religious exemption. The senator also pressed PDE for a full accounting of how much this will cost the state and the local school districts.
- Senator Teplitz from Dauphin County asked how are the state’s common core different from the National Common Core? PDE responded by indicating that a crosswalk was done between the National Common Core, the PA Common Core and the previous state standards. Pennsylvania added elements in both the reading and math standards to show more rigor. The senator also echoed the concerns about funding and had an exchange about this issue with the panel members and ended this portion by stating, “You cannot separate the issue of funding from learning.”
- None of the senators were against higher standards but were pushing back hard on the issue that this is another “unfunded mandate” to be placed upon the local school districts. They indicated that as a committee they have been trying to release districts from unfunded mandates and they haven’t heard any assurances that the districts will be provided with the resources for the added remediation that will be needed as a result of the Keystone Exams.