

At the NABE 2012 General Membership Meeting on February 17, 2012, the following resolution was passed by majority vote:

***Whereas, there is no reliable, independently validated, empirical support for the Common Core Standards initiative, NABE opposes the concept of National Standards, and specifically opposes the Common Core Standards as adopted by the Council of Chief State School Officers.***

*Comment:* The Common Core Standards do not address the needs of English Language Learners, do not provide for appropriate scaffolding to diversify instruction, do not incorporate the crucial role of the first language for learning and assessment, and redirect essential resources away from learners. Therefore, NABE cannot in good conscience support the Common Core Standards.

Several relevant issues were considered by NABE members’ present prior to the vote on this resolution. The following summarizes the main points of the discussion:

In addition to the legitimate issues that were originally presented in framing the resolution (see 3 below), our deliberations included the following:

(1) As they stand, these standards will have a negative impact on English Language Learners, not only because no scaffolding or provision for diversifying instruction is offered, but also because the standards, operationally defined as “performance expectations,” will be tied to additional standardized testing that will be inappropriate and invalid for ELLs.

(2) The crucial role of the first language and the time that scientific inquiry has shown it will take for ELLs to achieve these standards is not even part of the conversation.

(3) The rationale provided to justify the CCS is false. It was summarized as background to the original resolution as follows:

Whereas the movement for national standards and tests is based on these claims:

(1) Our educational system is broken, as revealed by US students’ scores on international tests.

(2) We must improve education to improve the economy.

(3) The way to improve education is to have national standards and national tests to reveal whether standards are being met.

Each of these claims is false:

(1) Our schools are not broken. The problem is poverty. Test scores of students from middle-class homes who attend well-funded schools are among the best in the world. Our mediocre scores are due to the fact that the U. S. has the highest level of child poverty among all industrialized countries.

(2) Existing evidence strongly suggests that improving the economy improves the status of families and children’s educational outcomes.

(3) There is no evidence that national standards and national tests have improved student learning in the past.

No educator is opposed to assessments that help students to improve their learning. We are, however, opposed to excessive and inappropriate assessments. The amount of testing proposed by the U. S. Dept. of Education is excessive, inappropriate and fruitless.

The standards that have been proposed and the kind of testing they entail rob students of appropriate teaching, a broad-based education, and the time to learn well. Moreover, the cost of implementing standards and electronically delivered national tests will be enormous, bleeding money from legitimate and valuable school activities. Even if the standards were of high quality, they would not serve educational excellence or the American economy.

This resolution and the aforementioned discussion was also unanimously approved by the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) nine member national board of directors at its scheduled board meeting of March 15, 2012.