

Common Core Standards Aren't Cheap

Numerous states currently struggling in the midst of steep education budget cuts may have more fiscal problems than they realize. Though 45 states rushed to adopt Common Core standards in the past two years, many have not taken the time to evaluate what the adoption of these standards will cost them. States that jumped on the Common Core bandwagon in hopes of securing Obama administration grant money may find themselves increasingly strapped for cash in the next few years as implementation costs begin to accumulate. Most Common Core changes are expected to be in place by 2014, leaving states little time to back out of commitments they cannot afford.

The Washington state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction estimates that the new Common Core standards will cost the state more than \$300 million, at a time when Washington already faces a \$2 billion deficit. Local school districts will be required to pay for at least \$165.5 million of the new spending, and the cost of new textbooks alone is expected to top \$122 million — a fact that has even the standards' most enthusiastic endorsers worried. *Education Week's* Peter DeWitt praised the new standards implementation in a blog posting on November 19, but then admitted that the Common Core "will be uncommonly expensive for school districts."

Every new initiative, no matter how big or small, comes with unforeseen costs . . . For example, will school districts need to adopt new textbooks that are aligned to the Common Core? Does that mean that the thousands of dollars school districts have spent on textbooks in the last few years are no longer relevant to what teachers are teaching? . . . the Common Core is radically different enough that schools will be forced to buy new textbooks,

which should be concerning to educators. Was this a way for textbook publishers to get more money from schools?

DeWitt went on to point out several expensive results of the Common Core that have not often been considered:

Substitute Teachers — Schools have to send teachers to be a part of the curriculum mapping process for Common Core Standards. These trainings will be over multiple days which will take teachers out of the classroom . . . There is a cost to have a substitute teacher in the classroom for multiple days.

New Textbooks — Textbooks are outrageously expensive . . . even if we do find internet options, the publishers who created those options are

certainly not offering them for free.

The Cost of Time — Teachers spend a great deal of time trying to educate themselves on the changes from their old standards to those of the Common Core . . . The cost of time is a big reality for schools.

Training Teachers — Bringing in outside experts or consultants is very expensive. In order to properly train teachers, school districts must offer professional development in order to ensure that educators can master the Common Core Standards. These trainings are not a one-shot deal and will cost school districts money . . . Schools will have students who see more substitute teachers in their classrooms and districts will have less money for other supplies . . . Our only hope is that school districts are



given a proper opportunity to prepare for these new standards or the whole situation will be just another mandate that school districts cannot afford.

Implementation costs will be even more problematic in larger states like California. The California Department of Education estimates that Common Core will cost the state about \$760 million. Outside estimates place California's fiscal commitment at up to \$1.6 billion. California already expects a \$3 billion deficit at the end of fiscal year 2011, and a \$10 billion deficit in 2012-13. In addition,

(See *Common Core Standards*, page 4)

Civil Rights Office Promotes Racial Discrimination

Affirmative action is illegal, but that hasn't kept the Obama administration from finding ways to make sure classrooms remain enmeshed in the fight for so-called civil rights. New federal guidance documents, issued jointly by the Departments of Justice and Education on December 2, claim to give school administrators greater freedom by explaining how elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools can "lawfully pursue voluntary policies to achieve diversity or avoid racial discrimination." Rather than discouraging racial discrimination, however, the documents facilitate it by telling administrators that they do not have to use race-neutral methods of promoting diversity if these are not "workable." Examples of unworkable methods include inad-

equating racial diversity at an institution — though it's unclear just what determines sufficient diversity.

Elementary and secondary school administrators are encouraged to use the guidelines to "lawfully further diversity or reduce racial isolation" in areas including "school assignment, student transfers, school siting, feeder patterns and school zoning." Postsecondary institutions "may permissibly consider race to pursue their compelling objectives" in "admissions, pipeline programs, recruitment and outreach, and mentoring, tutoring, retention, and support programs." These guidelines replace those adopted in August 2008, which recommended that administrators not consider race at all when considering admissions.

Though the new guidelines purport to explain lawful ways to consider race in the classroom, their legality is at best disputable. National Association of Scholars (NAS) president Peter Wood said the documents

. . . represent a sharp departure from previous federal policy and on several points are unlikely to withstand judicial scrutiny. They seem to sanction common university practices which circumvent the law . . . they are very loose in their reading of Supreme Court rulings over the last decade. For example, they give college officials broad new powers to rely on their own 'judgment' for when and how to take race into account. This is contrary to the spirit of the existing law. The Obama administration has, unfortunately, put itself on the side of higher education's 'diversicrats' who have already been engaged in racial discrimination un-

der the pretext of pursuing diversity.

Even assuming the legality of such measures, an increasing amount of research shows that affirmative action does not advance minority advancement, but rather impedes it. As Jeff Jacoby wrote recently in the *Boston Globe*,

The inability of racial preferences to vault more minority students into high scholastic achievement shouldn't come as a surprise. When an elite institution relaxes its usual standards to admit more blacks and Hispanics, it all but guarantees that those academically weaker students will have trouble keeping up with their better-prepared white and Asian classmates. . . . This is the cruelty of affirmative-action "mismatch" — the steering of minorities to schools where they are less likely to succeed . . . If it weren't for race-based admissions policies, in other words, underrepresented minorities wouldn't be so underrepresented.

Jacoby goes on to cite San Diego law professor Gail Heriot, one of a three-member civil rights commission urging the Supreme Court to reexamine the relationship between racial diversity efforts and the Fourteenth Amendment:

Skin color was always an ill-conceived proxy for diversity of experiences and beliefs. What more than 30 years of race-based admissions have made clear, Heriot argues, is that "even with the best motives in the world, race-based admissions do far more harm than good." Especially to the students they are supposed to help.

Racially-based admissions standards not only hold back minorities, but also do a disservice to students whose academic merit is ignored in the rush to ensure adequate diversity. Susan Jones of

(See *Racial Discrimination*, page 4)

The following letter to the editor appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* on December 17, 2011:

Change in Science Ph.D. Students

Regarding your editorial "Green Card Progress" (Dec. 12): When I earned my Ph.D. in electrical engineering at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 1964, I was the only foreign graduate student in the department. When my daughter graduated from the same department a generation later, she was only one of two Americans in her group of 24. Recent statistics from electrical engineering departments indicate that the proportion of American Ph.D. awards has dropped to around 3% of the total.

American students entering universities find that they have to overcome too many deficiencies in math and the sciences. After a grueling four to six years of undergraduate studies they have accumulated sizable student loans.

There is very little incentive for them to apply for a graduate research assistantship that pays \$20,000 per year. When I attended UC in 1962, my stipend was \$7,500 per year. My family did not have difficulty living on this stipend. What makes this particularly appalling is that American graduate schools, the last bastions of U.S. supremacy, are mostly exploited by foreign countries. Like our budget deficits, it seems as if no one cared as long as we could fill our research labs with cheap labor, and there was always some country ready to loan us money.

Prof. Ezekiel Bahar
University of Nebraska, Lincoln



EDUCATION BRIEFS

A 9-year-old North Carolina boy was suspended from the fourth grade in early December when he told a friend he thought a teacher was "cute." The school told Chiquita Lockett that her son's statement, which a substitute teacher overheard, constituted a form of sexual harassment. "This is something that everyone needed to see, just to see what's happening within our school systems," Lockett told a local TV station. The school has apologized, stating that the suspension won't count against the student.

A new report by the Government Accountability Office says foster children are frequently prescribed dangerously large doses of mind-altering drugs. Senator Thomas Carper (D-DE), who asked for the investigation, said the level of psychotropic prescription drug use in foster children was "almost beyond comprehension." Foster children use mind-altering prescription drugs up to 13 times more than children in the general population. They are often prescribed several at a time, and in doses beyond what the Food and Drug Administration has approved.

The National Education Association (NEA) has lost more than 169,000 members in the past three years, requiring \$9.5 million in cuts at the national office this year. The union's total membership now stands at less than 3.1 million. A \$10 per member increase was approved at the NEA convention in July to help make up for the loss of membership dues.

Last month we reported that several for-profit colleges failed a recent GAO investigation into admissions and grading policies. Now, a just-launched study hints that for-profit colleges, many of which draw close to 90% of their revenue from Title IV federal student aid, may also be guilty of inflating CEO salaries. Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-MD) launched the investigation, stating, "... there is little evidence that lavish executive pay is linked to the well-being of the students they are supposed to educate. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that taxpayer funds are used first and foremost for the benefit of students, not to line the pockets of corporate executives."

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School District Sues California Over Lower-Than-Expected Budget Cuts

California's largest school district, Los Angeles Unified (LAUSD), announced on December 13 its plans to sue the state for the loss of \$248 million in school transportation funding. The transportation cuts, set to go into effect in January, are part of Governor Jerry Brown's decision to cut \$1 billion from the state budget due to lower than expected revenues. Education officials are furious, though they admit that cuts are not as deep as they'd expected.

Governor Brown, who told the media that "the alternative is to do what we've done for so many years and that is to just borrow, obfuscate, and delay" has suggested that districts make up the difference in transportation funding by cutting costs elsewhere:

Any school district that wants to spend on home transportation can do that. They have their funds, and this is local flexibility to make whatever decision they want. So you can view this as a cut to the overall school system.

Districts are also authorized to cut expenses by shortening the school year up to seven days, but state Finance Director

Ana Matosantos said such cost cutting measures are likely unnecessary because the funding cuts were so much smaller than expected.

Nevertheless, LAUSD superintendent John Deasy called the cuts unconstitutional, arguing that using classroom funds to pay for court-mandated busing would leave LAUSD with less money per student than is allotted to districts that aren't required to provide transportation. A 1981 court order, issued in the wake of a desegregation case, requires LAUSD to run buses for 35,000 students. State and federal laws mandate that the district also provide transportation for 13,000 disabled students. LAUSD filed suit against the state of California, its Department of Education, Finance Director Ana Matosantos, and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson within hours of Governor Brown's announcement, stating that

Without immediate relief to prevent the denial of crucial services to children with the most need or take money from funds that need to be spent educating kids in the classroom, the District and its students will suffer irreparable harm in violation of the California Constitution.



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



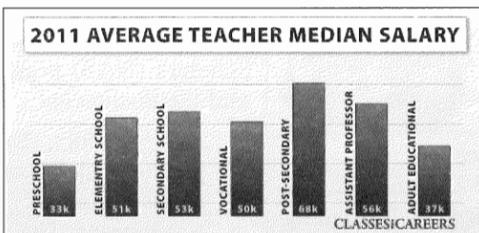
Union Encourages Professors to 'Double Dip' at Taxpayer Expense

About a thousand retired professors and librarians in the California State University (CSU) system take part in a program that allows them to simultaneously collect both a pension and a paycheck while working minimal hours. CSU's Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) has been criticized for encouraging retired professors to return to the classroom, where they collect generous salaries in positions that would otherwise be staffed more economically by qualified part-time faculty. Union officials have blocked university-led efforts to reform the taxpayer-funded system, which allows faculty members to work part-time for up to five years after retirement.

Program proponents say FERP saves the university money by keeping senior faculty on campus while shifting expenses to the pension system. "It was started as a

way to help senior faculty to move into retirement slowly and use them to mentor new faculty," said Andy Merrifield, a collective bargaining chief for the California Faculty Association (CFA), a union which represents 23,000 CSU faculty members. "With the savings on the FERP members, campuses could hire new faculty." "It's a win-win," said Kevin Wehr, president of the CFA's Sacramento chapter. "It allows for Sac State to retain highly qualified, talented senior faculty while having them work part time."

Many FERP participants collect more than their previous part-time salaries, making the program an attractive choice for senior professors who are eager to reduce their workload. Critics argue that asking California taxpayers to pay faculty members more money for less work is "ridiculous." Marcia Fritz, (See *Taxpayer Expense*, page 4)

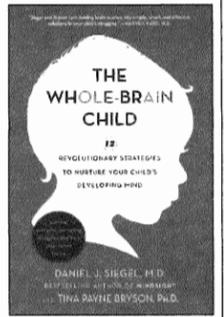


Book of the Month



The Whole Brain Child by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D., Delacorte Press: \$15.98

In *The Whole Brain Child*, psychiatrist Daniel Siegel and psychotherapist Tina Payne Bryson



combine very basic information on brain development and psychology with practical parenting tips in an effort to help parents train and nurture their children in the most developmentally-appropriate (and effective!) ways.

There's some risk to this approach: psychiatry and psychology are not always the most philosophically neutral disciplines, and well-meaning scientists have produced volumes of disastrous parenting advice over the decades. Siegel and Bryson avoid this problem by sticking close to some of the most basic, well-established facts about child development and the ways in which the brain's physical growth changes a child's mental and emotional needs. The authors also rely heavily on their own parenting experiences, making this a book in which common sense, concrete knowledge, and practical suggestions trump the potential philosophical problems engendered by some scientific approaches to human development.

Those who work with children, write the authors, usually know what is needed for healthy physical development. Unfortunately, parents don't always know how to encourage a child's internal growth. You know what your child's body needs — what do you know about her brain? What about his shifting emotional needs? *The Whole Brain Child* gives parents and teachers a broad overview of the ways in which basic knowledge of the brain's physical growth can help answer these questions and more.

Chapter summaries in the book's introduction offer a helpful overview:

The first chapter... introduces the simple and powerful concept at the heart of the whole-brain approach, integration. Chapter 2 focuses on helping a child's left brain and right brain work together so the child can be connected to both his logical and emotional selves. Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of connecting the instinctual "downstairs brain" with the more thoughtful "upstairs brain"...

Chapter 4 explains how you can help your child deal with painful moments from the past... Chapter 5 helps you teach your kids that they have the capacity to pause and reflect on their own state of mind. When they can do that, they can make choices that give them control over how they feel and how they respond... Chapter 6 highlights ways you can teach your children about the happiness and fulfillment that result from being connected to others, while still maintaining a unique identity.

FOCUS: Restoring the Liberal Arts

By: Bradley G. Green

“Non est consenesendum in artibus.”

“One ought not grow old in the study of the arts.”

Any true recovery of the liberal arts will be very difficult, at least any recovery on a grand scale. Having taught in elementary, middle school, high school, college, and seminary settings, I am pessimistic that we will see any meaningful restoration of the liberal arts in our day. It is not impossible. But before we consider the hope we should still have for the recovery of the liberal arts — even acknowledging we are hoping for nothing less than a miracle — let us understand the dire situation we face.

I have taught in a Christian college setting for the last thirteen years. And for some time I have been struck by an unsettling reality: the liberal arts seem to have little or no home in the contemporary university. That is, while one often hears the language and talk of “liberal arts,” it has become increasingly obvious that the liberal arts — at least in any sense that is meaningfully connected to those words — have no real place in the contemporary college or university. At present, the duty of those who believe in the value of the liberal arts is not simply to try and improve upon the practice of the liberal arts; rather, our duty is to work to recover the liberal arts. It is not overstating the case to assert that the liberal arts — on the whole — have disappeared from the contemporary college or university.

It is almost like some sort of odd science-fiction movie. The various characters are all using a certain lingo (*i.e.*, they speak of the “liberal arts”), but none of the characters actually know what they are talking about. They may have some vague notion of “learning” or of reading certain books. But the characters certainly do not mean “liberal arts” in any way which is meaningfully connected to the historical and traditional meaning of the term.

One of the tragedies of the loss of the liberal arts itself is that we Christians are — on the whole — not versed in the ways in which the classical/Graeco-Roman world was disrupted by the Christian understanding and vision of the world which emerged in the first century and the centuries following. This transformation entailed, at times, the rejection of certain practices (say, human sacrifice), or the co-opting and Christianization of other practices. This latter approach is probably the category in which we have to understand Christianity’s transformation of educational practices. Traditions such as teaching grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric (the *trivium* — or the first three liberal arts) certainly precede the Christian era. The really interesting questions are those that ask how the reality of the Christian movement led to a reworking of the things like grammar, dialectic and rhetoric in light of the fundamental realities of the gospel.

When we think of recovering or rehabilitating the liberal arts, it is essential to begin with the most basic and fundamental of questions. In particular, we must ask: what really are the liberal arts? Are they really worth recovering? And how might they be recovered? We need especially to think through what a Christian brings to all of these questions, first by asking in what way the Christian movement might re-shape and reconfigure educational practice (*i.e.*, the liberal arts) in light of distinctively Christian commitments and convictions; and second, by considering the ways in which key Christian commitments and convictions serve as the intellectual basis for the liberal arts.

When we speak of the “liberal arts,” we are speaking about the traditional seven arts usually grouped into the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*. While in the history of Western culture there have been different ways of construing and organizing these arts, we will work with what has become the “received” construal: the *trivium* (“three ways”), what we often think of as “language” arts, of grammar, dialectic or logic, and rhetoric, and the *quadrivium* (“four ways), what we often think of as “mathematical” arts of arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. Sister Miriam Joseph could write: “The liberal arts denote the seven branches of knowledge that initiate the young into a life of learning. The concept is classical, but the term liberal arts and the division of the arts into the trivium and the quadrivium date from the Middle Ages.” While these arts have been grouped differently at different times by different persons, for our purposes here we will take the seven arts as grouped under the trivium and quadrivium as “the tradition” in this essay.

Thomas Aquinas is a good example of how the liberal arts flourished and developed in Western Christendom, and of the way in which the liberal arts were brought into a coherent Christian educational tradition. Thomas consistently speaks of a certain sequence of learning — although this could vary:

1. *logic* (“which transmits the method of the sciences”)
2. *mathematics* (“of which even boys are capable”)
3. *natural philosophy* (“which, because of the need of experience, requires time”)
4. *moral philosophy* (“of which a young man cannot be a suitable student”)
5. *divine science* (“which considers the first causes of beings.”)

Let us tweak Thomas slightly, simply using language that is a tad more familiar and traditional:

1. *Trivium* — or, the traditional “language arts” of grammar, logic/dialectic, rhetoric
2. *Quadrivium* — or, the traditional “mathematical arts” of arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy

3. *Science* — or, here, the study of nature
4. *Moral Philosophy* — or, ethics
5. *Theology*

With Thomas’ schema (and my slightly edited version of the schema) before us, we can see that the liberal arts (and here we take Thomas as an exemplar of the broader perspective of Christendom), were part of a larger educational vision and its attendant set of practices. And once this larger educational vision began to crumble — as it most certainly has — it became virtually impossible coherently to make any sort of meaningful case for the necessity of the liberal arts.

The liberal arts must be recovered, not simply attended to or refurbished. And central to the recovery of the liberal arts is the recovery of a certain understanding of what it means to be human and the place of mankind in history.

The liberal arts flourished in a cultural and theological framework where education was seen first and foremost as the formation of a certain type of person. More important than this or that detail on exactly how one construes the nature of the liberal arts is the larger cultural and theological backdrop against which the liberal arts make sense. This would include such basic affirmations as: the created order is real, good, and able to be explored; man is a being able to grasp the “nature of things”; there are such things as truth, goodness, and beauty — and that it a right, proper, and worthy goal to want to form persons in accord with such transcendentals.

As Christians — and perhaps Evangelicals in particular — we have more that we bring to this discussion. Given that it has often proven difficult to hold together essential Christian convictions and the nature, purpose, and practice of education, Evangelicals should be particularly intentional about exploring and retrieving what there is in our own tradition which can help us articulate a fully Christian understanding of the educational endeavor, and to practice truly Christian education. If we are Evangelicals, what would be better than to ask what the *evangel* — the gospel itself — has to do with the construal and practice of Christian education which takes seriously the recovery and practice of the liberal arts?

The liberal arts developed and blossomed over time as part of an educational goal of forming a certain kind of person. In short, the liberal arts really only make sense against such a goal. And as that goal — the goal of forming a certain kind of person — began to lose hold or prominence in Western culture, the necessity or coherence or legitimacy of the liberal arts began to be hard to affirm. But as Christians hammered out their understanding of the liberal arts, the goal was not simply “Theology” (or in Thomas’ word “Divine Science”) in the sense of grasping

basic theological axioms (although such “grasping” would be important). Rather, in the best Christian construals of the liberal arts, the goal was the face-to-face vision of God. Augustine and the medieval tradition could speak of the “beatific vision,” and Paul could write: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then



face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

The liberal arts — at their best — were part of an educational program and vision whereby persons were being formed into the persons they ought to be, and this forming was often articulated in terms like wisdom, virtue, and eloquence. But while persons were being formed so that they might live wise and virtuous lives in the present, the ultimate goal of education was the formation of persons for their ultimate destiny — to one day see God face-to-face. Thus, the liberal arts were part of an educational program whereby persons were being formed for both wise and virtuous and eloquent lives in the present, and for their future face-to-face vision of God.

Yet as Augustine properly asked, how can it be that we poor sinners can expect one day to see God face-to-face (*coram deo*)? Is it not the height of hubris to think that we could attain to such a grand vision? Augustine’s conclusion, worked out in some detail in *De Trinitate*, is that a person will see God face-to-face if they have been properly “fitted” and prepared for such a vision. But the only way that one can be properly fitted and prepared is for one to be changed (and indeed, cleansed) by the blood of Christ. The key to human transformation — being changed, cleansed, shaped, and formed into the persons we ought to become — is the gospel itself. Indeed, the only way we can become the persons we are called to become, to become “true men” (in C.S. Lewis’ terms), is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

So if the liberal arts are about the forming of a certain kind of person, on a Christian understanding of things, the gospel is a necessary and essential part of reaching such a goal — *i.e.*, of becoming the kind of person we are called to become. Paul could write in his letter to the church at Ephesus (Ephesians 5:25-27) that Christ had died for sinners, and that this death led to the ultimate trans-

(See *Liberal Arts*, page 4)

Common Core Standards *(Continued from page 1)*

General Fund revenues for 2011-12 are lower than expected, triggering a \$2 billion cut to state programs beginning in January. “Adding up to a billion-and-a-half-dollar expenditure to implement national standards under these circumstances is fiscal madness,” said Lance Izumi, senior director of education studies at the Pacific Research Institute.

Liv Finne, director of the Washington Policy Center’s education center, estimates the total nationwide cost of Common Core implementation at \$30 billion, and the American Enterprise Institute has pointed out that education spending made up a very large portion of the nation’s \$103 billion in state budget deficits in the 2011-12 fiscal year.

None of these estimates take into account the hidden costs of federal encroachment on state authority. Texas and South Carolina legislators have refused to adopt Common Core for that reason. Lance Izumi believes that the federal involvement invited by Common Core implementation

... eviscerates what remains of state and local authority over education policymaking . . . National tests will be aligned to the national standards. A national curriculum will be aligned to the national tests and the national standards. Instead of locally elected school board members and state legislators making decisions, power will be transferred to faceless, unelected federal education bureaucrats.

Matthew Piccolo, a policy analyst at the Sutherland Institute, agrees:

Utah has already spent millions of dollars on training teachers and updating assessments and curriculum to align with the Common Core. Worse, though, it is getting on a bandwagon that could lead to a federal mandated national curriculum . . . Students need an individualized education, not one dictated by educrats 2,000 miles away in Washington. When it comes to education, state and local autonomy are vital for student success.

In addition to the high costs and the risks brought on by increased federal involvement, some experts argue that the standards are simply too low to justify implementation. Liv Finne wrote in a December 3 posting at washingtonpolicy.org,

Experts on standards are warning that the quality of these standards is mediocre and not internationally benchmarked, as advertised. Nor will they prepare Washington students for college or the workplace, as advertised. They mandate a teaching of geometry that has never been used. They will not purge from Washington classrooms the failing Discovery Math series responsible for confusing and discouraging math study in an entire generation of students. They will require that half the reading texts assigned by English teachers must be non-fiction. In Massachusetts, this means that teachers have been forced

to drop literary masterpieces of the American tradition, including *Moby Dick*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and *Huckleberry Finn*.

Sandra Stotsky of the University of Arkansas’ Department of Education Reform sat on a Common Core review panel. The Common Core Language Arts standards, she said, “will lead to a lower level of literacy for all high school students . . . [the Common Core’s] grade-level standards are mostly language skill sets, with little substantive content.”

As states look for ways to relieve the pressure brought on by ever-shrinking education budgets, it is to be hoped that they will reconsider the monumental financial cost of their hasty commitment to Common Core standards.

On December 1, the Education Task Force of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) took the first step toward passing model legislation to provide states with a Common Core exit strategy. A number of states may soon introduce the legislation, which relies on *Closing the Door on Innovation*, a document endorsed by 350 prominent teachers, parents, education policymakers, and researchers. *Closing the Door on Innovation* argues that

1. There is no constitutional or statutory basis for national standards, national assessments, or national curricula.

2. There is no consistent evidence that a national curriculum leads to high academic achievement.

3. The national standards on which the administration is planning to base a national curriculum are inadequate.

4. There is no body of evidence for a “best” design for curriculum sequences in any subject.

5. There is no evidence to justify a single high school curriculum for all students.

The Heritage Foundation’s Lindsay Burke has also suggested an exit strategy: first, states ought to find out which body agreed to adopt the Common Core standards. Usually the state board of education is at fault — a fact that

ought to concern citizens, since Common Core represents an abdication of the school board’s constitutionally-mandated responsibilities. Next, states

ought to outlaw new spending for standards implementation until independent cost analyses are performed and taxpayers notified about the new expenditures. Third, state leaders ought to work to determine how each individual state can best restore standards and curriculum control to its own local governing bodies. Many current state officials were elected after the standards were adopted in 2010. These newly elected leaders need to be aware of the changes the Common Core standards would entail, and they need to strengthen existing state standards and tests.



Racial Discrimination *(Continued from page 1)*

CNSnews.com writes,

Some of the examples included in the document make it clear that the goal of achieving diversity is more important than allowing schools to select the brightest students.

Under the guidelines on admitting students to competitive schools or programs, the administration offers the following example: “A school district could identify race-neutral criteria for admission to a school (e.g., minimum academic qualifications and talent in art) and then conduct a lottery for all qualified applicants rather than selecting only those students with the highest scores under the admission criteria, if doing so would help to achieve racial diversity or avoid racial isolation.”

Another example says: “If it would help achieve racial diversity or avoid

racial isolation, a school district could decide to admit all applicants with grades that put them within the top quartile of their class at the schools from which the competitive program draws.”

The new guidelines are just part of an ongoing effort to expand the reach of affirmative-action like policies into the classroom. The education department’s office for civil rights (OCR) has teamed up with the civil rights division in the Justice Department to launch dozens of new “compliance reviews” in the past months meant to root out civil rights issues that have never been addressed before. These include the use of discipline against minority students, possible disparities in students’ access to charter schools, and increased scrutiny into potential discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students.

Taxpayer Expense *(Continued from page 2)*

president of the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility, said the program is unfair to the taxpayers who must pay teacher salaries:

All it is, is a budget accounting trick that takes from systems that taxpayers are going to be on the hook for either way . . . No one in their right mind would encourage an employee to retire early, work less and make more money. It doesn’t make sense.

Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, agrees:

It’s examples like this that make taxpayers unhappy about the pension system in California. When someone

retires one week and shows up for work on Monday — even if it is part-time work — it is a reflection of a system with a low retirement age.

CORRECTION

The October *Education Reporter* included a review of the book *How to Raise an American Patriot*.

The book and its advertising contained two errors. George Washington’s miraculous survival of enemy attacks was in the French and Indian War, not the American Revolution. The 14-year-old who went to Russia as an interpreter was John Quincy Adams, not James Madison. We regret that the author’s errors were repeated in the book review.

Liberal Arts *(Continued from page 3)*

formation of God’s people — into a bride that is “holy and without blemish,” a transformation rooted in a past event which is the key to our transformation in the present and future.

The liberal arts are good and proper tools which, when understood in relationship to our ultimate spiritual destiny, can well serve such a grand aim and goal. If philosophy has been at times called the *ancilla theologiae* (“the handmaiden of theology”), the liberal arts might be seen as the proper “handmaiden” of human transformation. The kind of human transformation God desires — by which persons are transformed and prepared to one day meet him face-to-face, to know and adore Him throughout all eternity — is a transformation in which the liberal arts can serve a good and right and meaningful part.

The power needed for this transformation is one which is rooted in and dependent upon the gospel itself. For Christians, education at its best prepares persons for wise and virtuous lives in the present. Yet it is through the death, burial, and resurrection that persons are “fitted” and prepared for such a vision — and the liberal arts can function as an important gospel-fueled means to prepare persons for their ultimate destiny of seeing God face-to-face.

To the extent that Christians have forgotten, lost, or abandoned this larger theological backdrop and grounding of the liberal arts, the liberal arts have been lost. Ironically, while Christians have in the modern age been accused (rightly, at times) of anti-intellectualism, it may be the case that the only real and meaningfully hope of

the recovery of the liberal arts lies in the recovery of the gospel itself, and in the recovery of a Christian understanding of God, man, and the world — and with it, a restoration of true education.

The Christian invention of the university in the Middle Ages was not a historical accident, but a flowering of the manifold insights of a Christian understanding of things. While many institutions cannot at present coherently account for traditional liberal arts learning, the Christian is particularly well-positioned to do so. Whenever the gospel has taken hold of a culture, it has been the impetus for learning and the development of educational institutions. As the gospel changed the face of Western culture this included a type of transformation and development of the liberal arts, such that the liberal arts were pressed into the service of ultimate Christian purposes — namely, the preparation of persons for both wise and virtuous lives in the present, and for one’s ultimate encounter with God. While other handmaidens may emerge, we would do wise to rescue the one handmaiden — the liberal arts — which has proved so useful and enduring. It is always unwise to spurn good gifts, and when a good gift-giver bestows good gifts, we are wise to attend to them.

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