

## Catholics Join Common Core Protest

About 100 American Catholic dioceses, over half of the total, have adapted their school curricula to Common Core English and math standards. Parents, educators, and principals at some of these schools are voicing concern. As Common Core in public schools has increasingly attracted criticism, parochial schools are also calling the decision to switch to Common Core (CC) into question. Catholic parent groups are organizing to fight against CC implementation.

Why would a system whose 8<sup>th</sup>-graders have led public-school 8<sup>th</sup>-graders by double-digit margins for 20 years on NAEP (the Nation's Report Card) reading and math tests, and whose high school students graduate at a rate of 99%, with 84% going on to four-year colleges consider switching to Common Core? The National Catholic Education Association received a \$100,000 grant from the Gates Foundation in September, proving that no one is immune from Gates's influence. (CatholicEducationToday.org, 11-5-13)

Some Catholic schools receive some government funding; the Cincinnati Catholic school superintendent said, "We moved into [CC] willingly, but there was an implication that we could lose [financial backing from the state] if we didn't." (National Catholic Register, 9-12-13)

Like the public schools, parents were not involved in the decision to change their children's Catholic schools to Common Core standards, or even informed before CC implementation was already in progress. A Pennsylvania parent stated, "Catholic parents are so angry . . . we are the primary educators of our children, and we are being told not to worry, that they know better." (National Catholic Register, 9-12-13)

The Cardinal Newman Society suggests that parochial schools "take [their] time and demand results from the never-tested, never-assessed Common Core," and instead rely on their "decades of real world data and test scores" and continue to provide the quality education for which they are known.

### Worried Profs Complain to Bishops

Catholic professors from colleges across the nation signed a letter complaining about Common Core and sent it to every Catholic bishop in the nation. These 132 professors are "Catholic scholars who have taught for years in America's colleges and universities" and are "personally and professionally devoted to Catholic education in America."

The professors' worries about Common Core and Catholic education include the following, excerpted from their letter:

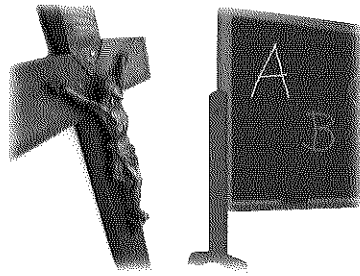
- We are convinced that Common Core is so deeply flawed that it should not be adopted by Catholic schools which have yet to approve it, and that those schools which have already endorsed it should seek an orderly withdrawal now.

- Promoters of Common Core say that it is designed to make America's children 'college and career ready.' We instead judge Common Core to be a recipe for standardized workforce preparation.

We instead judge Common Core to be a recipe for standardized workforce preparation.

- Proponents of Common Core do not disguise their intention to transform 'literacy' into a 'critical' skill set, at the expense of sustained and heartfelt encounters with great works of literature.

- Every student deserves to be prepared for a life of the imagination, of the spirit, and of a deep appreciation for beauty, goodness, truth, and faith.



- Rather than explore the creativity of man, the great lessons of life, tragedy, love, good and evil, the rich textures of history that underlie great works of fiction, and the tales of self-sacrifice and mercy in the works of the great writers that have shaped our cultural literacy over the centuries, Common Core reduces reading to a servile activity.

- The Common Core standards lack an empirical evidentiary basis and have not been field-tested anywhere.

The letter is signed by professors with fields of study that include biology, political science, philosophy, nursing, theology, English, history, business, law,

psychology, physics, economics, and neurosurgery. The signers are professors at state, private, and Catholic institutions from U.C Berkeley to Princeton University, from Notre Dame to Baylor, from Northeastern to NYU; the list includes professors from the universities of North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Missouri, Delaware, and Mississippi.

### Catholic Principals Concerned about Common Core

The Cardinal Newman Society (CNS) annually recognizes top Catholic secondary schools for their academic excellence and strong Catholic identity. CNS recently surveyed principals of the top 50 Catholic high schools and an additional 23 schools that received honorable mention to determine those principals' support of Common Core. "72% of [surveyed] principals prefer that dioceses-

(See Common Core Protest, page 4)

## ADHD: Classroom Crutch?

Increased demand has caused national shortages of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) drugs. According to MedMD.com, "One reason for the shortage is extremely high demand for the drugs. While people with ADHD make up nearly all of the legitimate market, there's a huge demand for off-label and illicit use of stimulant drugs. Many companies say they simply can't keep up with this demand."

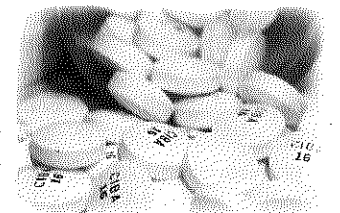
A recent *New York Times* article addressed the increasing rate of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder diagnoses among American children. The author doubts biological or environmental causes account for the increase and instead focuses on sociological factors, including "changes in the way we school our children, in the way we interact with doctors, and in what we expect from our kids." The unintended consequences of federal laws passed to help individuals may also bear partial responsibility for

increased diagnoses. (10-15-13)

According to surveys of parents, 11% of U.S. school-aged children (about 6.4 million children) had been diagnosed with ADHD by a health care provider by 2011. The average age of ADHD diagnosis is seven years old and 6.1% of American children across all age groups were taking ADHD medication in 2011. (CDC.gov)

While the *Times* author does not doubt that ADHD is an actual disorder, she states that the "epidemic" began once diagnosis was "incentivized." In 1991, the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act* included ADHD, giving students with an ADHD diagnosis not just medication, but "access to tutors and extra time on standardized tests." In 1997, the Food and Drug Administration began allowing pharmaceuticals to be directly marketed to the public. For the first time parents were hearing directly from drug companies offering to help their children.

The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB)



may have also contributed to increased diagnoses. Psychology professor Stephen Hinshaw at the University of California, Berkeley found that in 2007 15.6% of children in North Carolina had ADHD diagnoses, while California's rate was only 6.2%. He found no differences in the two states "between diagnostic tools, types of health insurance, cultural values, and public perceptions of mental illness." He did find that North Carolina was among the first states to "punish or reward" schools for standardized-test results under NCLB, while California was one of the last. Dr. Hinshaw found a correlative link that held nationwide: "ADHD diagnosis increased by 22% in the first four years after NCLB was implemented."

(See ADHD, page 4)

## ADHD Drugs of Choice at Colleges

College students who want to pull an all-nighter to write a paper or study for an exam sometimes use drugs commonly used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as a stimulant to remain awake and on task. That is not a safe or good plan, but estimates are that one out of five college students use Adderall, Ritalin, or other amphetamine-based prescription medications.

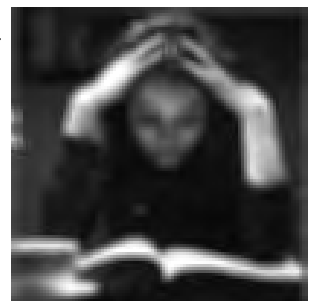
College students sometimes get a prescription from a physician, but sometimes obtain the drug illegally from another student. Dr. Mark Edmundson, the author of *Why Teach?*, claims that on college campuses, "The AD[H]D drugs seem to be omnipresent; they're on sale in every dorm at prices that rise expo-

nentially as the week of final exams approaches." Students who sell the drugs risk a felony arrest whether they are selling their own prescription medication or have obtained the drug from another source.

A *New York Times* op-ed claims that the drugs, which cost from \$2 to \$5 a pill, "lead down a dark road of dependency, ever higher doses, fight-or-flight anxiety levels, sleeplessness, and depression." (3-4-13) Other possible side effects of ADHD drugs include stroke, heart attack, and high blood pressure. ADHD medications should be used only under medical supervision. The *New England Journal of Medicine* states that, "About 5% of persons without ADHD who use

stimulants for nonmedical purposes are expected to increase their use, leading to abuse and dependence." (11-14-13)

According to TheCollegeFix.com, a researcher and professor of health science at Brigham Young University states, "Adderall is the most commonly abused prescription stimulant among college students." He continues, "Our concern is that the more it becomes a social norm in online conversation, the higher risk there is of more people abusing it." (11-5-13)



# EDUCATION BRIEFS

**Tenured Michigan State University professor William Penn verbally attacked Republicans and hurled personal insults toward the Romney family in his class, but will be back teaching students next semester.** In an eight-minute video filmed by a student and posted online, he claimed Republicans “don’t want to pay taxes because they have already raped this country and gotten everything out of it they possibly could.” The university continued to pay Penn his \$146,510 salary and “reassigned” him for fall semester. The school is reviewing “in-class social media policies,” which could make it more difficult for students to expose ranting professors. (Campus-Reform.org, 11-18-13)

**A University of Michigan economics professor and fellow at the American Enterprise Institute reports an 812% increase in the cost of college textbooks since 1978; college students today spend an average of \$1,200 a year on books.** Students find buying alternatives such as renting books, online sources, and library copies difficult, so sometimes simply do without books. Buy-outs of small publishers by publishing giants have stifled competition and led to higher prices. (NBC News, 9-15-13)

**Research by a University of Texas professor, published in the *Journal of Criminology*, shows that school bullying-prevention programs do not work and may actually increase children’s inclination to bully.** Prof. S. Jeong studied 7,000 students from 195 schools in 50 states and found that bullying-prevention programs expose students “to what a bully is” and that students may actually be learning bullying skills from prevention programs.

**Condoms have long been available at 19 Boston public high schools that have health centers, but in June the governing body of Boston Public Schools voted to make them available to students in all 32 of the city’s public high schools.** “Sexual health education” is offered along with the prophylactics. Parents can choose for their children not to participate in the giveaway.

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## Duncan Bus Tour and Promise Grants

2013 was the fourth year that Secretary of Education Arne Duncan headed up a back-to-school bus tour. The theme this year was “Strong Start, Bright Future.” Over five days this fall, Duncan and other Dept. of Education employees traveled 1,100 miles on the bus. Rallies were held at stops in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and California.

The Dept. of Education website announced, “Each stop will highlight the importance of ensuring that all students benefit from high-quality educational opportunities, including Preschool for All, college affordability, ConnectED, first-term efforts, and comprehensive immigration reform’s impact on education.” (8-19-13)

After the final school visit in Chula Vista, California, Duncan joined local school officials, education stakeholders, and community leaders to talk about the Promise Neighborhoods program, which “focuses on cradle-to-career initiatives that call on the entire community to provide comprehensive place-based supports such as high quality early learning, rich after-school activities, and crime prevention.” (ED.gov website, 9-17-13)

According to Arne Duncan, a neighborhood near Castle Park Middle School in Chula Vista “received a five-year, \$28 million Promise Neighborhood grant from the U.S. Department of Education . . . [and] the school and community are undergoing a remarkable turnaround.” Duncan stated, “The area’s nonprofit South Bay Community Services, along with 28 local partners, is providing early learning, after-school support, increased access to health and wellness services, counseling and social supports, and workforce development ser-

vices for children and families in the surrounding neighborhood.” (*Christian Science Monitor*, 9-30-13)

Promise Grants are awarded to areas described as the “most distressed communities.” Promise Neighborhoods are “now in 20 states and the District of Columbia,” according to the Dept. of Education website. They are awarded using “grant competitions.” In 2011 there was just under \$30 million available, but in 2012 the Dept. of Education handed out almost \$60 million in Promise Neighborhood dollars.

Arne Duncan summed up his analysis of U.S. education in the *Christian Science Monitor*: “So, from cradle to career, from countryside to city-side, Americans are working hard to receive the world-class education they need to succeed in today’s knowledge-based, globally competitive economy.”

On the tour, Duncan also touted Common Core as “rigorous, state-crafted,” and “rais[ing] standards and expectations for children, instead of lowering them,” although many cite contradictory evidence. It is noteworthy that the tour bus made no stops in states in an uproar over Common Core implementation. The cradle-to-career, universal preschool, health care, counseling, and immigration focus of the bus tour also reinforces the belief by Common Core opponents that the Dept. of Education is delving deep into areas that go far beyond educating students.

It is fortunate that Duncan, *et al.* completed their tour before the federal shutdown, a fight brought on by unnecessary and runaway spending by a government that has run out of money.

### MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



## Administrators Force Teachers to Change Grades

The Loudoun County Public School District has hired an outside attorney to investigate allegations that administrators at one district high school force teachers to change students’ grades. Teachers at Loudoun Valley High School in northern Virginia say that when they give low grades they are harassed and it “results in negative consequences” for teachers. Formal complaints have been filed with the Loudoun County Public Schools Personnel Department against the principal, Sue Ross, an assistant principal, and the Special Education supervisor.

Loudoun Valley High School (LVHS) has an excellent academic reputation in the Virginia suburb of Washington, D.C., where better-than-average public schools are the norm. 98% of the LVHS class of 2013 graduated on time. The grading controversy calls the school’s ranking into question. The prin-

icipal has been in charge at LVHS for eight years.

LVHS math teacher John Petrosky told *Leesburg Today*, “The C is the new F at our school.” Petrosky said he refused to go along with grade changes and will not pass students who have not done the work. He said, “I’m one of the few people at [LVHS] who are willing to stand up and give students the grades they deserve.” But the pressure gets to him and he contemplates transferring to another school. Petrosky, who has taught for 30 years, admitted, “I’ll drive an hour and a half [to another school] just to get out of this situation.” Some LVHS teachers have already transferred to different schools.

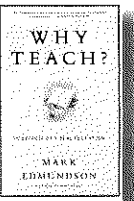
Teachers claim that when students’ low grades were recorded in grade books, teachers “were either called to Ross’s of-

(See *Changing Grades*, page 4)

## Book of the Month



**Why Teach?: In Defense of Real Education**, Mark Edmundson, Bloomsbury USA, 2013, \$24.00



When Mark Edmundson was in high school, a transformative teacher happened into his life. “He mocked us, and not always so genially, for never doing the reading, never knowing the answer, never having a thought in our heads, . . . for ignoring this chance to learn a little something. . . .” That teacher only taught at the high school for one year, but he inspired his students and Edmundson claims to have “never met his equal.”

Dr. Edmundson is a prizewinning scholar, author, and professor at the University of Virginia. In *Why Teach?* he shares his perspective on students, parents, fellow professors, and institutions; he says most lack courage. He calls on professors to be “uncool”: to grade hard, and to challenge students, even though they may face fallout for it in today’s atmosphere of “serving” students. He encourages parents to allow children to experience the “hard knocks of everyday life.” He emphasizes the necessary role of failure, which encourages people to continually “try things that don’t work.”

Edmundson says, “Real reading is reincarnation . . . a higher form of consciousness.” He claims good literature allows one to experience “the joy of seeing the world through the eyes of people who . . . are more sensitive, more articulate, shrewder, more alive than they themselves are.” He says the “magic of words” unleashes the “power of imagination.” This is what Common Core opponents fear K-12 students will miss while reading informational texts.

The author criticizes group projects and classes that rely on the exchange of “student ideas” because students don’t acquire information from this. He says students usually “lack the confidence to acknowledge their most precious asset for learning: their ignorance.”

He also exhorts educators to stop “readings,” which is deconstructing literary works from the perspectives of gender, race, Marxist, Freudian, and other artificial constructs that venture far from the author’s intent and show no respect for the work on its own merit.

Dr. Edmundson urges parents and students to be aware of two types of colleges: the “Corporate City” where “everyone is on the make . . . trying to succeed” and the “Scholarly Enclave.” Students at the scholarly enclave are “seeking knowledge so as to make the lives of other human beings better.” He claims, “It is only through unselfish effort on behalf of something larger than yourself that anything like happiness arises.”

*Why Teach?* suggests direct and simple ways to improve the way colleges educate students.

# FOCUS: Escaping 'Government' Schools

by John Stossel

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People say public schools are “one of the best parts of America.” I believed that. Then I started reporting on them.

Now I know that public school — *government school* is a better name — is one of the *worst* parts of America. It's a stultified government monopoly. It never improves.

Most services improve. They get faster, better, cheaper. But not government monopolies. Government schools are rigid, boring, expensive, and more segregated than private schools.

I call them “government” instead of “public” schools because not much is “public” about them. Members of the public don't get to pick their kids' schools, teachers, curriculum, or cost.

By contrast, supermarkets are “private” yet open to everyone. You can stroll in 24 hours a day. Just try that with your kid's public school. You might be arrested.

Now a school choice movement has given government schools a sliver of competition. Private schools, charter schools, vouchers, education tax credits, and the Web offer competition. Not all the alternatives work, but with competition, bad alternatives die and good ones grow.

This will help *all* kids.

But so far, the alternatives reach only a small number of kids. Unions and bureaucrats don't want competition, and they use their political clout to stifle it. But gradually, they're losing.

After fighting homeschooling for years, they've stopped trying to ban it, and today homeschoolers fare better on tests and college admission. So, some in the government monopoly claim that if your kids are homeschooled, they will not be properly *socialized* (in the sense of interacting with peers, that is, not in the sense of belonging to government).

But homeschooled kids participate in all sorts of social events with other homeschooling families — plus theater, ballet, karate, and other classes that most kids get and that some only wish they did.

Homeschoolers do just fine. Somehow, without government control, they prosper.

Defenders of government schools often claim their schools are what create the American “melting pot.” Different races, ethnic groups, and income levels mix together in government-funded schools.

Bunk. If it was ever true, it isn't now.

University of Arkansas education professor Jay Greene examined school classrooms and found that public schools were more likely to be almost entirely white or entirely minority.

He also looked at who sat with whom in school lunchrooms. At private schools, students of different races were more likely to sit together.

We don't do poor kids any favors by keeping them trapped in the poorly run government system. If you really care about “the public,” you should let people go where they get the best service.

When government gets bad results — high dropout rates, poor test scores — its defenders say schools need more money. But spending per student has tripled. There are more computers, teachers, social workers, reading specialists, principals, assistant principals, etc. But test scores haven't improved.

Unpredictable things happen when

you leave people free to experiment, and competition produces better results than one tired monopoly.

A bizarre column in Slate recently, arguing that school choice might drain resources away from government schools, was titled, “If You Send Your Kid to Private School, You Are a Bad Person.”

The columnist wrote, “If every single parent sent every single child to public school, public schools would improve. . . . It could take generations. Your children and grandchildren might get mediocre educations in the meantime, but it will be worth it, for the eventual common good.”

This is how leftists think. Everyone must jump into the government

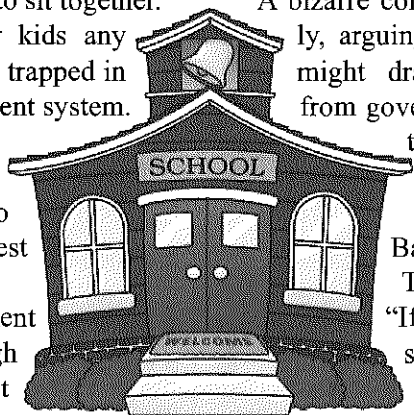
pot. Even if it is mediocre (or worse), we're all in this together. Otherwise, the rich will get all the goods, and the poor will suffer.

Don't they notice that cellphones, cars, and air conditioning keep improving yet poor people are able to buy them? No.

They don't understand that market competition helps everyone, especially the poor.

I think those who want to force a single-government solution on everyone are just confused — but if I were as judgmental as that Slate columnist, I'd be tempted to conclude that they're bad people.

*John Stossel, a Princeton graduate with a B.A. in psychology, is a Fox Business News host and a former anchor of ABC's "20/20." He has received 19 Emmy Awards. His "Stossel in the Classroom" economic programs are seen by more than 12 million high school students a year.*



## inBloom Data Collection Support Wilting

Schools have long collected student data, including grades, test scores, and family contact information. With funding from the Gates Foundation, the Council of Chief State School Officers developed “Common Education Data Standards,” in conjunction with Common Core, which

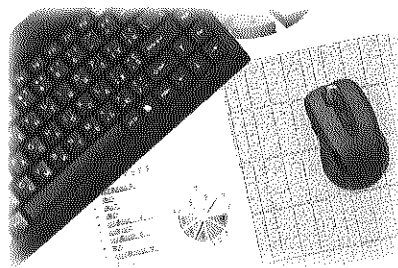
demand large amounts of certain data to be collected. Before Common Core standards increased data demands, information about students was managed by states and by school districts that determined what information to collect about students and how to store it. With new regulations, schools are looking for ways to manage the increased data requirements.

### Massive Amounts of Student Data

As part of the Common Education Data Standards, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed guidelines for a longitudinal data system, which is a fancy term for the student's permanent record that tracks students over multiple years even when they change schools. The CCSSO model of the permanent record is called P-20 because it tracks students from preschool through postsecondary or entry into the “workforce” (cradle to career). The CCSSO website states that P-20 “will do for State Longitudinal Data Systems what the Common Core is doing for curriculum.”

According to the CCSSO, a private lobbying organization based in Washington, D.C. and not answerable to any public or government oversight, the data collection and the national Common Core tests will “focus on student outcomes,” “target lowest performing schools,” “report timely actionable and accessible data,” and “align performance goals to college-and-career-ready standards.” The CCSSO P-20 has a goal of

“Continued Commitment to Disaggregation,” which means they want personally identifiable information about individual students, rather than the grouped, anonymous information that has previously been requested from school districts. Parents and privacy advocates are concerned about this development and wonder why schools now need a record that begins when a student enters pre-school and records everything about that individual stu-



dent through age twenty. It can potentially become a lifelong record.

### What's a School To Do?

One option for schools to manage this increased student tracking is a database framework funded and developed by the Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and Rupert Murdoch of News Corporation. \$100 million in funding came from the Gates Foundation alone, according to the *New York Times*. (10-5-13) They then turned the database framework over to a nonprofit corporation called inBloom. inBloom offers a way for school districts to store the massive amounts of data that will be collected about students, as called for by Common Core. Personally identifiable information includes student health records, disciplinary records, class participation patterns, as well as home life particulars such as religious affiliation, family structure details, and parental political party affiliation.

Parents no longer need to give permission for their children's private information to be shared. In order to collect the large amount of data about students the federal government now demands, the Obama administration unilaterally made significant changes to the *Fam-*

*ily Education Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA), including removing the rule that parents must give schools permission to share data. Consumer data is a multi-billion dollar industry. According to the Software and Information Industry Association, education technology for pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade is an \$8 billion market. Parents and privacy experts are increasingly concerned about the privacy rights of schoolchildren.

### inBloom Slowdown

Of the nine states that originally signed up for inBloom, only Colorado, New York, and Illinois are still onboard. Other Colorado school districts are delaying implementation as they watch the debacle in Jefferson County, Colorado, where privacy concerns flared. Louisiana withdrew once parents discovered that children's Social Security numbers had been uploaded to inBloom. In New York, public and charter schools have uploaded data on 90% of 2.7 million students without personally-identifying information, but state officials will soon add names, according to the *New York Times*. (10-5-13)

In Jefferson County, Colorado, a parent familiar with data collection and privacy issues because of her job worried that the school district may not adequately protect the data collected about children and then shared with inBloom. Once she met with the school superintendent she realized that her fears were justified. She said of the Jefferson County school district, which received a \$5.2 million grant from the Gates Foundation, “I think they were star-struck and didn't do their due diligence.”

Jefferson School Superintendent Cynthia Stevenson was a superstar of the Common Core/inBloom crowd, and was even written up by the *New York Times* as an early, enthusiastic

(See inBloom, page 4)

# Colorado Amendment 66 Deep-Sixed

Even \$10 million in campaign spending could not convince Coloradans to raise taxes by almost \$1 billion. In November two-thirds of voters said no to the Colorado Tax Increase for Education, Amendment 66. The National Education Association union and its affiliate, the Colorado Education Association, spent at least \$4 million promoting the tax hike, while an additional \$1 million each from former New York City Mayor Bloomberg and Bill and Melinda Gates was funneled into the campaign. (Education Intelligence Agency, 11-6-13)

Although deluged by pro-66 TV ads, Colorado voters weren't buying what the outsiders were selling. The Colorado director of Americans for Prosperity said, "We congratulate Coloradans for having the common sense to reject this un-

necessary and unjustified tax grab." He claimed that, "Passing Amendment 66 would have gravely wounded the state's economy and business climate, while rewarding a reform-resistant education system with an unearned windfall." (Denver Post, 11-5-13)

Voters were unconvinced that \$1 billion was needed to achieve smaller class sizes, full-day kindergarten, and other reforms. One opponent said, "Just taking money and throwing it at a broken system is not what's going to make the education system better." (New York Times, 11-5-13)

In 1992, Coloradans passed a Taxpayer Bill of Rights that prohibits state and local governments from raising income tax rates without voter approval. Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) and other tax-hike proponents vowed to keep on fight-

ing. A *National Review* columnist, noting that even Arne Duncan voiced support for Amendment 66, commented, "It's a gratifying demonstration that the political class, for all its wealth and influence, can still be defeated by ordinary citizens exercising the vote." But the article also cautioned that Colorado voters may not have the final say, stating, "A favorite tactic of the more-ed-spending coalition is to bypass the democratic process via lawsuits." Judges overturn what voters have decided at the polls and "seize control of education policy." Courts have used this method in Kansas, New Jersey, and most

**AMENDMENT 66  
INCREASES  
TAXES**

infamously, in Kansas City, Missouri. (*National Review*, 11-7-13)

Coloradans did pass a marijuana tax that will help fund school construction, as well as a system to control the legal use of the drug for recreational use, which voters approved a year ago. In an article titled "Rocky Mountain High Taxes," *Wall Street Journal* editors wrote, in reference to Amendment 66, "If it does pass, we'll also know that millions of Coloradans have taken to smoking that marijuana they legalized last year." (10-23-13)

## Common Core Protest (Continued from page 1)

es and Catholic schools either reject or at least delay consideration of the Common Core standards until more is known about the potential impact on Catholic education," CNS found. Almost half of the principals believe CC would harm Catholic education and one-third of principals prefer an outright refusal to participate in Common Core. Eight percent of principals are satisfied with Common Core standards.

Why have Catholic schools failed to stand behind the curricula and practices that have made them superior to public schools? According to a blogger published

at *First Things*, "SAT, ACT, and GED are all strutting around bragging that they're all going to be super-duper 'aligned' to Common Core, even though nobody really knows what that means at this point because the federally-funded assessment consortia haven't yet released their plans for what national Common Core testing will consist of." (10-21-13)

As stated in the letter to Bishops, "Sadly, over one hundred Catholic dioceses have set aside [Catholic] teaching tradition in favor of these secular standards." Many hope the decision will be reversed.

## ADHD (Continued from page 1)

The *New York Times* author says, "From parents' and teachers' perspectives, the diagnosis is considered a success if the medication improves kids' ability to perform on tests and calms them down enough so that they're not a distraction to others." She adds that test scores of children with ADHD are even removed from testing results in some school districts. (10-15-13)

So, parents ask doctors for the amazing medicine they have seen advertised, doctors take an attitude of "let's see if it helps," teachers get quieter classrooms, school districts receive more funding, and it's a win all around. Except for the child who is drugged into submission. Many more males than females are said to suffer from ADHD. According to the Centers for Disease Control, "boys (13.2%) were more likely than girls (5.6%) to ever be diagnosed with ADHD." (CDC.gov, 5-16-13) Some say that parents and teachers are unable to deal with the natural activity level of young boys and wish they would act more compliant, or more like girls.

More evidence of American over-diagnosis comes from abroad. According to the *New York Times* article, "In 2003, when nearly 8% of American kids had been given a diagnosis of ADHD, only about 2% of children in

Britain had."

More surprising still is the low rate of ADHD diagnosis in France. According to an article in *Psychology Today*, which also links French parenting to lower levels of ADHD amongst French children, less than 0.5% of French children were diagnosed and medicated for ADHD in 2012. French families and physicians are more likely to ascribe behavioral symptoms to social problems and to avoid potential nutritional causes like food dyes, and are generally much less likely to prescribe medication to treat behavioral issues. American parents, physicians, and schools are more likely to attribute rowdy or unacceptable behavior to a biological-neurological disorder, and to attempt to treat the behavior with medicines like Ritalin and Adderall. (*Psychology Today*, 3-8-12)

For every 2,000 children, France reports just one case of ADHD, while America reports a minimum of 100 children, using the American Psychiatric Association rate of 5%, which is the lowest estimate available from the Centers for Disease Control. (CDC.gov, 11-13-13)

Classroom management, ADHD diagnoses, the mishandling of the exuberance of boys, and misuse of ADHD medications are complex issues that deserve further study and attention from parents and the education community.

## Changing Grades (Continued from page 2)

office or they were called out during staff meetings to have their grades compared with those of other teachers in the same department." Teachers also claim that administrators changed grades in grade books unbeknownst to teachers.

The teacher complaints include a letter from the school's math department "detailing a meeting in which the teachers claim Ross requested perfect scores, and stated anything less would be reflected in their teacher evaluations." One former teacher claims, "You had to get rid of your Ds and Fs, regardless of if the kids learned."

A former LVHS social studies teacher said, "You're forced to water down the content of the class and lower the accountability and the students learn real quickly that there aren't going to be any consequences." Teachers say they give students extra credit, allow them to retake exams, delay assignment deadlines, and spend hours calling parents of students who are not performing well. Students know the teachers are under pressure to grade leniently and have come to expect the exceptions made. If all else fails, students can attend what's called "Recovery School": there students supposedly make up what they missed during the semester, but one student claims "they are practically guaranteed a C" just for showing up.

## inBloom (Continued from page 3)

supporter. But when parents discovered the truth about the stealth and unwarranted collection of private student information, unsafe storage of that data, and the Gates Foundation's huge donations to her district, Stevenson was put on the hot seat. She has now resigned. The school board also voted to sever ties with inBloom. (MichelleMalkin.com, 11-7-13)

Michelle Malkin commented about the Jefferson County turnaround, "The Davids are exercising their freedom of speech and association to beat back the deep-pocketed Goliaths at their schoolhouse doors. Parents across the country: This battle can be won."

## Cloudy skies for the Cloud

Schoolchildren's data will be stored in what is referred to as a "cloud system." Privacy and technology experts worry about the safety of cloud storage (and all data storage). Today's industry standard becomes a hacker's next code to crack. Well-publicized recent leaks of so-called

private information in other sectors call into question the security of all information storage. The privacy of millions of children is at risk.

Whether or not a school district chooses inBloom or another data storage method, the longitudinal data collection needs to be done for the district and state to remain Common Core compliant. Student information will be gathered, disaggregated, stored, and sold to third parties. (Yes, that's a part of Common Core, too.) The federal government under NCLB and now Common Core is demanding more and more personal student data.

An inBloom official stated, "All of the decisions about what data is stored and what applications are approved and what users can see that data in those applications are all a local customer decision." Even if that were true, it only holds until the federal government threatens to cut off education funding until the required data is received. What choice will local school districts have then?

Although LVHS has the highest scores in the county on the Virginia Alternate Assessment, the state's standardized test for special education students, it is alleged that teachers help students get those results. "An interpreter for the deaf and hard of hearing filed a formal complaint of test fraud with the Virginia Department of Education that claims she saw teachers repeatedly giving special education students answers." The VDOE did nothing about her allegations except "request that the Loudoun school division draft a corrective action plan."

Diane Warr, the parent of a LVHS special education student, was "outraged" when she saw that her son had scored 100% on all but 14 of the 93 tests he took in 2012. She said, "There's no way he can do this work. So much of it is over his head." Warr claims that when she asked her son questions from the tests, he could not answer them correctly.

At an October School Board Meeting, the assistant superintendent of Instruction and Curriculum for Loudoun County seemed to blame the federal No Child Left Behind program for some of the cheating that goes on. She said, "Your whole school is labeled in a way that one test on one day and one student can make a difference as to whether you make Annual Measurable Objectives or not." (*Leesburg Today*, 10-30-13)