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Common Core Developers Fail To Warranty Product

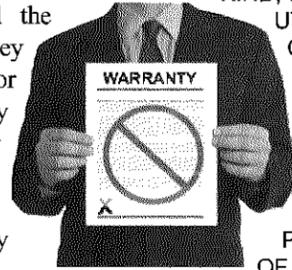
Although many would like Americans to believe that the Common Core standards were developed by states, were state led, and belong to the states, that is simply false. The standards belong solely to the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The NGA and CCSSO license of the standards only “grants” a limited license of the Common Core Standards to the states that supposedly developed them. The NGA and CCSSO Common Core Public License can be seen in its entirety here: <http://www.corestandards.org/public-license>

The license agreement states that: “NGA/CCSSO shall be acknowledged as the sole owners and developers of the Common Core State Standards, and no claims to the contrary shall be made.”

So does Oregon own the standards? No. Does Wisconsin own the standards? No. Does Massachusetts own the standards? No. No state owns the standards.

The license agreement makes it clear that although the NGA and the CCSSO own the standards, they do not stand behind them or make any claim to their efficacy or effectiveness. In fact, they want nothing to do with accountability, outcomes, or any damage the standards may cause.

Reading the policy, one is reminded of the “Sold As-Is” sticker on the window of a used car. This part of the license is written by the NGA and CCSSO lawyers in all capital letters, presumably so states don’t miss it and fail to understand the implications:



THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ARE PROVIDED AS-IS AND WITH ALL FAULTS, AND NGA CENTER/CCSSO MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, STATUTORY OR OTHERWISE, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, WARRANTIES OF TITLE, MERCHANTABILITY [sic], FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, NONINFRINGEMENT, ACCURACY, OR THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF ERRORS, WHETHER OR NOT DISCOVERABLE.

The standards have no guarantee of “fitness for a particular purpose.” The purpose of the standards is college- and career-readiness for K-12 students in all states where they were adopted. But the NGA and the CCSSO clearly do not war-

ranty or guarantee their fitness, accuracy, or absence of errors.

If anything is found lacking in the standards, or if in fact our education system circles the drain in the coming years, the NGA and the CCSSO want nothing to do with any liability for the standards. Children, parents, teachers, school districts, and states are on their own. This section is presented in all capital letters, as well, lest anyone become confused and believe the developers can be held responsible in any way for what was developed:

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL NGA CENTER OR CCSSO, INDIVIDUALLY OR JOINTLY, BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, EXEMPLARY, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR PUNITIVE DAMAGES HOWEVER CAUSED AND ON ANY LEGAL THEORY OF LIABILITY, WHETHER FOR CONTRACT, TORT, STRICT LIABILITY, OR A COMBINATION THEREOF (INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE OR OTHERWISE) ARISING IN ANY WAY OUT OF THE USE OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS, EVEN IF ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH RISK AND POTENTIAL DAMAGE. WITHOUT LIMITING THE FOREGOING, LICENSEE WAIVES THE RIGHT TO SEEK LEGAL REDRESS AGAINST, AND RELEASES FROM ALL LIABILITY AND COVENANTS NOT TO SUE, NGA CENTER AND CCSSO.

Some are left wondering why there is such emphasis on *not* being held responsible for the results of something that is supposedly well-researched, benchmarked, and developed by experts. In fact, Common Core is not benchmarked or based on any scientific or education studies. It’s simply based on what the NGA, CCSSO, and their agent, Achieve, Inc., wanted to produce. And they are not education “experts.”

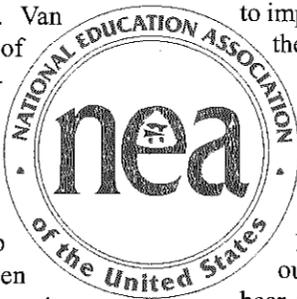
It seems that if the giant, national experiment that is Common Core fails, those opponents who are sending up warnings that this is a bad idea will have to be satisfied with saying, “We told you so.”

It will come as no surprise to those who have studied Common Core to learn that should some entity be foolish enough to be undeterred by all the legal protections with which the developers have shielded themselves, a lawsuit could not be filed in any state where the “state-led” standards were supposedly developed. The NGA and the CCSSO are private lobbying organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C., and as such: “A court of competent jurisdiction in Washington, D.C. shall be the exclusive forum for the resolution of any disputes regarding this License, and consent to the personal and subject matter jurisdiction, and venue, of such court is irrevocably given.”

The Common Core license agreement demonstrates a lack of confidence in the product. If it were a used car, no one would buy it.

NEA Says Common Core Was ‘Botched’

Dennis Van Roekel has finally been forced to call into question the Obama administration’s “gift” to American education, Common Core. Van Roekel, the President of the nation’s largest teachers union, the National Education Association (NEA), held out while his constituents, American teachers, jumped ship all around him. But even he must finally admit there is something seriously wrong with Common Core.



At the 2013 NEA convention in Atlanta, union leadership promoted Common Core standards. Delegates introduced from the floor — but failed to pass — two measures that condemned Obama’s education policies outright and were critical of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan; both measures called on Obama to fire Duncan. Teachers’ representatives expressed dissatisfaction with Common Core (CC) at the 2013 convention and they have continued to do so, despite CC proponents’ constant claim that teachers are in favor of the top-down education program forced upon them.

On February 19, 2014, Dennis Van Roekel posted a letter to union members at NEAToday.org. Van Roekel writes that he has “been listening closely” (and many bet he has indeed been getting an earful for him to be forced to break with his administration pals). Van Roekel admits that Common Core implementation has been “botched.” He writes:

Seven of ten teachers believe that implementation of the standards is going poorly in their schools. Worse yet, teachers report that there has been little to no attempt to allow educators to share what’s needed to get

[CC] implementation right. In fact, two-thirds of all teachers report that they have not even been asked how to implement these new standards in their classrooms.

Van Roekel seems surprised by what those closest to Common Core have been saying all along. Teachers and parents knew several years ago that CC was seriously flawed. No one wanted to hear those complaints. Many were labeled as extremists, malcontents, and

nut-jobs. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan even said he found it “fascinating” that Common Core opponents were “white suburban moms who — all of a sudden — their child isn’t as brilliant as they thought they were. . . .” Some wonder if Duncan is equally fascinated now that the one finding fault with Common Core is his union ally.

Union president Van Roekel maintains that “scuttling these standards” is a bad idea. That’s no surprise. He says

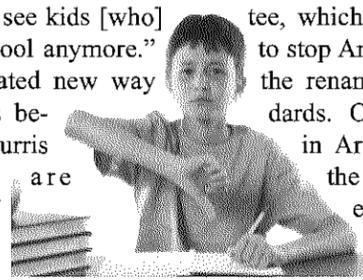
(See ‘Botched,’ page 4)

A Rose By Any Other Name Is Still ‘Common Core’

Parents and teachers across the nation report that children are suffering the consequences of Common Core standards at their schools. Carol Burris, New York state’s 2013 high school principal of the year, reports that as a result of Common Core, “We see kids [who] don’t want to go to school anymore.” Regarding the complicated new way Common Core math is being taught Principal Burris says, “I fear that they are creating a generation of young students who are learning to hate mathematics.” (*New York Times*, 2-17-14)

In the midst of the turmoil, some are offering silly solutions. At a recent CCSSO meeting, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, a Common Core proponent, said the words “Common Core” are “toxic” and suggested that states: “Re-brand it, refocus it, but don’t retreat.”

Common Core in Iowa is now called “Iowa Core.” Florida replaced the words with “Next Generation Sunshine State Standards,” but it’s still Common Core.



In 2013 Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed an executive order changing the name of Common Core in that state to “Arizona’s College and Career Ready Standards.” Brewer’s move didn’t fool the Arizona Senate Education Committee, which in February 2014 voted to stop Arizona from implementing the renamed Common Core standards. Other pending legislation in Arizona “would take away the power of the state to set educational standards and instead leave that role to local school boards.”

(*Arizona Daily Star*, 2-21-14)

Parents, teachers, principals, citizens, or legislators never attended public hearings before Common Core was chosen by states because there were none. Common Core is a top-down scheme hatched by two Washington, D.C. lobbying organizations, promoted by wealthy philanthropists and utopian dreamers, and pushed by the federal government. It is doubtful that the public will be fooled by name changes.

EDUCATION BRIEFS

About a dozen Marinette Middle School parents complained to Wisconsin school officials when students were asked to give very personal information as part of an anti-bullying exercise. Students were asked to step forward to indicate a positive response to questions about suicidal thoughts, their parents drinking habits, and whether anyone in their family had ever been in jail. School officials claim, "The intent of the activity was to build stronger, more respectful relationships among students." Parents fear that children could later be teased and bullied as a result of their responses.

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is adding African-American studies as part of their core curriculum, with the stated goal that students are "taught this history over the course of the entire year and across disciplines — not just during Black History Month or in a social science course." 21% of CPS 8th-graders scored proficient in 2013 NAEP reading assessments; 20% scored proficient in mathematics.

In February, two South Carolinians, Sen. Lindsey Graham and Rep. Jeff Duncan, introduced in the Senate and the House, respectively, Resolutions that proclaim education is a state, local, and parental issue. Their resolutions, sponsored by nine additional Senators, with 52 co-sponsors in the House, denounces Sec. of Education Arne Duncan and Pres. Barack Obama for using \$4.3 billion in Stimulus-funded Race to the Top grants and No Child Left Behind waivers as bribes to coerce states into adopting Common Core standards.

More than 40 states have reading programs that bring certified reading therapy dogs into classrooms to provide comfort to students when they read aloud. Some children, like many adults, fear being in the spotlight. "Qualitative research" indicates that a friendly canine friend gives readers confidence in front of classmates. (*Chicago Tribune*, 1-6-14)

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AP Classes Gain Popularity

In February of 2014 the College Board released its 44-page "10th Annual Advanced Placement Report to the Nation." Students across America take Advanced Placement (AP) classes in order to experience college-level work and then take exams that may give them college credit and allow them to skip introductory-level college courses. Students can receive a maximum grade of five on AP exams; most colleges only accept a four or five from a student in order to test out of introductory classes or receive unit credit.

According to the College Board: "In AP classrooms, students examine texts, data, and evidence with great care, learning to analyze source material, develop and test hypotheses, and craft effective arguments. They engage in intense discussions, solve problems collaboratively, and learn to write and speak clearly and persuasively."

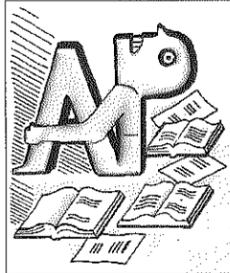
AP coursework and testing has doubled in the ten years since 2003, with over a million students taking AP classes and exams in 2013. Some students take more than one AP class and exam, resulting in students having taken a total of three million AP exams in 2013. Although the College Board has the "conviction that all students who are academically prepared — no matter their location, background, or socioeconomic status — deserve the opportunity to access the rigor and benefits of AP," only

60% of American high schools offer any AP classes. (CBSNews.com, 2-14-14) The College Board report claims that there were nearly 300,000 students in the class of 2013 who had the "potential to succeed in AP" classes but never took an AP course. More students than ever before are scoring less than a three on the exam, which usually means they cannot receive any college credit.

The report claims that those students who take AP courses earn higher GPAs in college and are more likely to graduate college within five years. They often go on to take more classes in the area of their AP study and when they do, they do as well or better than students who took the introductory class at the college rather than in high school. The College Board offers AP courses in a range of disciplines including English, Calculus, Physics, History, Government, Studio Art, and eight foreign languages.

Some colleges are backing away from accepting students' high school AP work and tests, although according to the National Center for Education Statistics in 2012-13, about 78% of degree-granting four-year institutions accepted AP credits. Dartmouth students no longer receive credit toward graduation for AP scores. "There's a strong feeling that the high school courses, while valuable — and there was no sense that these were

(See AP Classes, page 4)



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Just The Ticket for Students

January 26 to February 1, 2014, was National School Choice Week, an event celebrating educational opportunity. Schools, organizations, and individuals offered 5,500 events independently planned as nonpartisan and nonpolitical public-awareness efforts to "spotlight the need for effective education options for all children."

As part of the 2014 School Choice Week celebration, Choice Media released a 40-minute documentary, *The Ticket: Stories of School Choices & Quality Education*. The movie addresses the various ways American parents are taking control of their children's education. It is presented in a whistle-stop tour format, crossing the nation to report ways education reform is helping students learn. (SchoolChoiceWeek.com)

The first stop, in Los Angeles, California, examines the "parent trigger." Parents have the legal right to "fire" the

school district if 51% of parents whose children are in a failing school sign a petition to start over. Despite opposition from sources including the teachers union, parents at Desert Trails Elementary School in the Mojave Desert "triggered" a new school for their children after more than six years of failing student test scores.

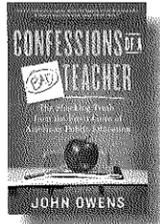
In Topeka, Kansas, *The Ticket* interviews homeschooling families whose children are successfully negotiating academic, social, sports, and enrichment programs, including city sports teams, learning co-ops, orchestra, strings, band, and debate clubs. These students and parents are happy with how education is happening in their families. One young woman will graduate from high school with an Associate of Arts degree and a young man interviewed has enough free time after completing his academic day to work as a waiter, earning

(See *The Ticket*, page 4)

Book of the Month



Confessions of a Bad Teacher: The Shocking Truth from the Front Lines of American Public Education, John Owens, Source Books, 2013, \$13.99



John Owens worked from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. and made more than 2,000 data entries per week, "barely [finding] time to accurately gather so much data, let alone manually input all of it." Was this during his years as a high-powered executive in the publishing industry? No, it was after he completed a year of graduate school in order to pursue his passion; he was now a high-school English teacher.

Owens taught in a school run by an administration with big ideas (the principal had an 800-word Vision Statement) but an overarching philosophy that he describes as "never let any situation get to the point where it required the administration's time." The reader soon finds that teachers had "virtually no leverage over the kids" because the administration was unwilling to participate in student discipline; the principal insisted that all behavior problems resulted from the teachers' poor "classroom management."

The high school students knew the password for the school computers, teachers had to give out "pre-torn pieces of tape" so kids didn't tape up a weaker fellow student, and students would steal anything except books, paper, pens, and pencils. (A music teacher quit the first week of school when her cell phone and car keys were stolen.)

While admitting that "A teacher can spend so much time, energy, and emotion on the outrageous kids at the expense of the students who are making some academic effort," Owens suggests some students' acting out is a result of "gaps in their knowledge" and embarrassment over what they do not know.

Although the author successfully interested his students in English, the lead teacher complained that he was "too enthusiastic." Owens found that, "My mission of helping kids had been transplanted in a crazy and corrupt system bent on achieving statistical results, rather than helping students." The principal and vice-principal were eventually "yanked from the school" because they manipulated data. "Everyone cheats" is one of the ten things Owens writes that he learned about teaching.

Confessions of a Bad Teacher suggests that education is about passion, leadership, and commitment. The book's final words are: "Don't let your schools squander precious time and money on empty promises and quick fixes disguised by fancy words and lofty ideals. Our children and the future of our country don't need this theater. They need education."

FOCUS: The State of the Dis-Union: *Preparing World Citizens*

by Mary Grabar

First published at *FrontPageMag.com* on January 30, 2014 and reprinted with permission.

There were many who had reason to be outraged by President Obama's State of the Union address: the military whose funding has been cut, and who have been besmirched as emotionally unstable while they are forced to be sitting ducks in battle and then face the potentiality that the administration will abandon what others had died for, like Fallujah; the millions in the middle class whose health insurance has been dropped or whose premiums have doubled and who are losing jobs to illegal aliens and are insulted by the idea that a job that pays \$10.10 is something to aspire to.

But I want to focus on Obama's continued efforts to re-educate America, to re-educate her people so that they become shriveling dependents that long for a leader who will unilaterally make decisions for the masses.

Only such a people could believe Obama's claim of having "a set of concrete, practical proposals to speed up growth, strengthen the middle class, and build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class."

Only a well-educated, independent-thinking populace could feel the chill of words regarding "congressional action." Conflating America with himself, Obama said, "America does not stand still, and neither will I. So wherever and whenever I can take steps without legislation to expand opportunity for more American families, that's what I'm going to do."

Once again, there was discussion of government job-training programs. (Has anyone actually gotten a job as a result?) To prepare "tomorrow's workforce" (and that's all it is: a workforce, not an educated citizenry), we must guarantee "every child access to a world-class education."

Translation: indoctrination into world citizenship.

Obama referred to one "Estiven Rodriguez," who "couldn't speak a word of English when he moved to New York City at age nine." Apparently, Rodriguez "led a march of his classmates — through a crowd of cheering parents and neighbors — from their high school to the post office, where they mailed off their college applications. And this son of a factory worker just found out he's going to college this fall." Obama referred to the army of tutors and teachers that helped him, but other immigrants have done far more with only night classes while often working two or three jobs.

Then, said Obama, "Five years ago, we set out to change the odds for all our

kids. We worked with lenders to reform student loans, and today, more young people are earning college degrees than ever before."

There is a reason why this government wants to monopolize student loans to produce more "peace and environ-

mental justice studies" graduates: Democrat voters.

Obama invoked the misleadingly named "Race to the Top" contest (really a race for Stimulus funds attached to federal education standards called Common Core). He claimed, it "has helped states raise expectations and performance." He continued:

Teachers and principals in schools from Tennessee to Washington, D.C. are making big strides in preparing students with skills for the new economy — problem solving, critical thinking, science, technology, engineering, and math. Some of this change is hard. It requires everything from more challenging curriculums and more demanding parents to better support for teachers and new ways to measure how well our kids think, not how well they can fill in a bubble on a test. But it's worth it — and it's working.

Notice how he didn't reference Common Core, now dubbed Obamacore. After test scores plunged and mass confusion ensued, even the New York National Education Association teachers union affiliate came around to opposing Common Core. "Problem solving" and "critical thinking" are hallmarks of progressive educators, like Linda Darling-Hammond, close pal of [terrorist] Bill Ayers, who has been in charge of designing one of the two Common Core national tests. And what, exactly, is wrong with filling in a bubble? It means the test-taker has to know something and the grader can't give extra points for correct attitudes.

What, also, is the "new economy"? Did we not need science, technology, engineering, and math in the old, twentieth-century economy?

By stating, "It requires more challenging curriculums," Obama admitted what Common Core proponents deny: it does change the curriculum. These are curriculums that eliminate most history, except that which advances the U.S. as racist, sexist, homophobic, imperialistic, etc.

The reference to "New ways to measure how well our kids think" is not reassuring when the Department of Education promotes the idea that

"educational strengths" include "social competence" and "ethnic awareness."

The new standards do not involve knowing about the country's founding or the Constitution. Such students might understand this pre-speech message from Jon Carson of Organizing for Action:

Friend — Tonight, President Obama made sure everyone knows: He's not waiting for Congress. He's taking action now, and he's going to explore every method in his power to restore real opportunity for all Americans.

Then Carson asks for a \$5 donation. But kindergarten is not early enough. Said Obama, "The problem is we're still not reaching enough kids, and we're not reaching them in time. That has to change."

He cited "research" to justify making "high-quality pre-K available to every four year-old": "Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education." Funny, how they always say "research," but not *which* research or what the research actually says about government-funded preschool.

Nonetheless, "As a parent, as well as a President, I repeat that request tonight."

What if Congress doesn't snap to and fulfill his "request"? Well, Obama has friends: "And as Congress decides what it's going to do, I'm going to pull together a coalition of elected officials, business leaders, and philanthropists willing to help more kids access the high-quality pre-K they need."

Such "coalitions" must ensure that Obama fulfills his promises: "Last year, I also pledged to connect 99% of our students to high-speed broadband over the next four years. Tonight, I can announce that with the support of the FCC and companies like Apple, Microsoft, Sprint, and Verizon, we've got a down payment to start connecting more than 15,000 schools and twenty million students over the next two years, without adding a dime to the deficit."

Of course, Microsoft is in the "coalition" of "business leaders and philanthropists." The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is the biggest funder of Common Core; all tests must be taken online. The other companies surely appreciate the business, too.

Obama's Department of Education is redesigning high schools: "We're working to redesign high schools and partner them with colleges and employers that offer the real-world education and hands-on training that can lead directly to a job and career." It seems all bases

for government control are being covered. Oh, and "real-world education"? It means being trained for a job — only.

The feds have not only taken over financing, but they now want to *rate* colleges. But this is how Obama put it: "We're shaking up our system of higher education to give parents more information, and colleges more incentives to offer better value, so that no middle-class kid is priced out of a college education."

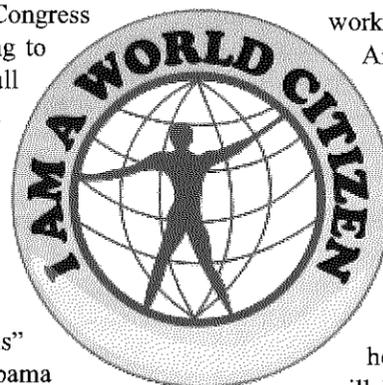
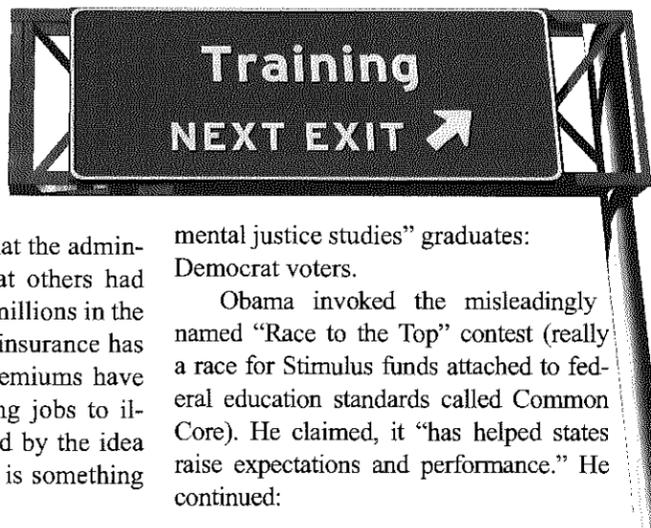
The Education Department is appealing to the youth vote by holding "summits," inviting college "student experts" to weigh in on college "accessibility" and "affordability." The youth experts have spoken and Obama heard: "We're offering millions the opportunity to cap their monthly student loan payments to ten percent of their income, and I want to work with Congress to see how we can help even more Americans who feel trapped by student loan debt."

The scary part came when he used himself and Michelle as examples: "The bottom line is, Michelle and I want every child to have the same chance this country gave us. But we know our opportunity agenda won't be complete — and too many young people entering the workforce today will see the American Dream as an empty promise — unless we do more to make sure our economy honors the dignity of work, and hard work pays off for every single American."

Oh, you mean college students should write theses like Michelle Obama's? Can we all write "Princeton Educated Blacks and the Black Community" and investigate how "attending Princeton will likely lead to my further integration and/or assimilation into a White cultural and social structure that will only allow me to remain on the periphery of society"?

Education was bad enough back then. As a result, we have her in the White House with her Columbia and Harvard educated husband. It can only get worse when he invokes "widely shared" prosperity, calling on Americans to "toil" together, and summoning "what is best in us, with our feet planted firmly in today but our eyes cast towards tomorrow. . . ."

Mary Grabar is a former professor of English at several institutions of higher learning. She is the author of Bill Ayers: Teaching Revolution and Exiled: Stories from Conservative and Moderate Professors Who Have Been Ridiculed, Ostracized, Marginalized, Demonized, and Frozen Out. She is a frequent contributor to leading conservative publications.



Federal Race-based Disciplinary Quotas

The Departments of Justice and Education issued a 23-page joint memorandum to states, districts, and schools warning them that they must “meet their obligations under federal law to administer student discipline without discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin.” The memorandum was released by the Civil Rights division of each department on January 8, 2014, and signed by Eric Holder and Arne Duncan. The memorandum explains the nondiscrimination requirements of Titles IV and VI and “provides a set of recommendations to assist schools in developing and implementing policies and practices in a manner consistent with their legal obligations.” (www.ED.gov)

Members of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce are concerned that the federal government is attempting to interfere in local and state K-12 school discipline in a manner that could make schools unsafe for students. Legislators fear that the Departments of Justice and Education are imposing racial quotas on the number of students of certain races that schools can suspend or expel. The editors of the *National Review* suggest that the Obama administration’s use of “the Civil Rights Act to direct schools’ disciplinary practices might be its most foolhardy idea yet.” (1-16-14)

Legislators on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce sent a letter to Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Attorney General Eric Holder requesting a prompt meeting to discuss their fears that policies advocated by the administration “could limit educators’ ability to enforce appropriate

discipline policies needed to promote a safe learning environment for students.” The Congressmen state that the federal guidelines give:

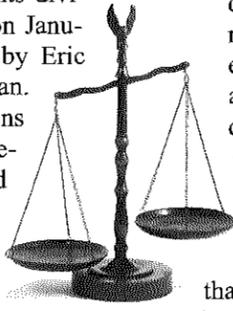
“... examples of what each [federal] department might find discriminatory, even when policies have been applied fairly and equally to all students. We are concerned that this may have a chilling effect on teachers and school leaders working to address discipline issues with students, possibly leading to unruly and unsafe classrooms that could adversely affect student learning.” (EdWorkforce.House.gov)

The Congressmen also suggest that “such policies are better handled by the teachers, state officials, and local school leaders who are best equipped to assess the needs of individual students and the school community as a whole.”

Editors of the *National Review* predict that “schools will feel even more pressure than they already do to adopt a simple solution: try to discipline all races, regardless of behavior, at the same rate. This might mean arbitrarily increasing rates of punishment for whites or, much more likely, reducing them for blacks and Hispanics, disadvantaging their classmates of all races who’d like peaceful classrooms.”

The *National Review* editors conclude:

“No one should be surprised by the Obama administration’s zeal for alleging racial discrimination when it isn’t there and asserting central control where it is known to fail. But it is still shocking that the federal government is effectively encouraging schools to judge students on the color of their skin rather than the content of their character.” (*National Review*, 1-16-14)



‘Botched’ (Continued from page 1)

the union wants “states to make a strong course correction and move forward.” Tying teacher evaluations to student test results remains a sore spot that has never been popular with teachers unions.

In his letter, Van Roekel suggests allowing teachers “time to field-test the standards in classrooms to determine what works and what needs adjustment.” The standards have started to be implemented in 46 states and the District of Columbia, so it seems a little late to begin field-testing.

Although some media outlets, political pundits, and CC supporters say that teachers and their unions are only unhappy with the implementation of CC standards, not the standards themselves, Van Roekel clearly calls for an examination of the entire Common Core experiment. His letter states that he wants the NGA and the CCSSO to “set up a process to work with NEA and our state education associations to review the appropriateness of the

standards and recommend any improvements that might be needed.” But the NGA (National Governors Association), the CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers), and their agent, Achieve, Inc., claim that input was received, reviewed, and incorporated from all “stakeholders” to develop the best standards possible; surely teachers’ input was already included. Sadly, it was not, and the entities that developed Common Core have deceived the public.

Van Roekel writes: “The very people expected to deliver universal access to high quality standards with high quality instruction have not had the opportunity to share their expertise and advice on how to make [CC] implementation work for all students, educators, and parents.”

The letter ends with Van Roekel’s proclamation: “There’s too much at stake for our children and our country to risk getting this wrong.” That is exactly what Common Core opponents have been saying for years.



AP Classes (Continued from page 2)

not good courses — but they were not the same as a Dartmouth credit,” explained the Dartmouth registrar. (*Inside-HigherEd.com*, 1-18-13)

Students entering the College of William & Mary in 2015 will no longer be able to use AP classes taken in high school to fulfill core, general-education requirements. But William & Mary students may still use AP classes as electives or to fulfill certain departmental re-

quirements and to use them as unit credit toward graduation, if they scored high on the exam when in high school. (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2-12-14)

For some students, high school AP classes and exams are a means of saving money during the college years. They are able to take higher-level college courses rather than spending tuition on classes they can take in high school and for which they pay only the fee to take the AP exam.

The Ticket (Continued from page 2)

money he can use for college.

In Kansas City, Missouri, a city long fraught with education turmoil, better education for public school students is still a future hope, according to *The Ticket*. Surrounding school districts are willing to accept students who wish to transfer from failing schools using the Inter-District Choice Program that was upheld in 2013 by the state Supreme Court. But Kansas City schools are only willing to give accepting districts \$3,000 per student, far below what is needed to adequately educate. Across the state in St. Louis, Missouri, 25% of students have fled the city district and 2,600 students are attending better schools in the surrounding counties.

The documentary claims that enrollment at charter schools has doubled over the past five years in Chicago, Illinois. On recent NAEP tests — the U.S. Dept. of Education’s “nation’s report card” — 8th-graders in Chicago’s traditional public schools score 20% proficient in math, 21% proficient in reading, and only 7% proficient in science. Of the 400,000 Chicago public school students, 52,000 students have chosen the option to attend a charter school. Parents and students choosing charter schools in Chicago use

a lottery and there is open enrollment, so criticism that the success of charters is due to “cherry-picking” students seems founded.

Money follows the student in Cleveland, Ohio, so students can use vouchers to enroll in private schools when the family could not otherwise afford the option. *The Ticket* stopped at Saint Martin de Porres High School where students attend class four days a week and work a real job on the fifth day. In this “corporate work study program,” students are grouped in teams, and “each team fills one full-time equivalent job in a standard Monday-Friday business week schedule.” This gives students real-world job experience along with their academic endeavors. Public schools often complain that vouchers are not fair to public schools. But vouchers don’t take money away from anyone; the school doesn’t get the money but they also don’t get the student to educate.

In Erie, Pennsylvania, *The Ticket* reports on cyber-charter schools, the fastest growing form of education. Students and their parents choose this option for a variety of reasons: an accelerated student who was slowed down by regular public school; a slower learner needing more

time to master subjects; or possibly a student who has been bullied. The school presented in Erie is the 21st Century Charter Cyber School, which is a “school of mastery”; students must understand concepts before moving ahead in any subject. They are encouraged to resubmit work to improve their understanding. Teachers interviewed feel they can offer more individual attention than at a traditional public school. One student reported that at her old school she would raise her hand with a question but the teacher often didn’t call on her before the class was over. Online she gets a fast and sure response from her teacher. Sometimes there are clubs and field trips offered in this new model of learning in order to give students a more full school experience.

The Ticket visits Hope Hall, a private school in Rochester, New York, that accepts students with learning disabilities but without behavioral issues. At public school these students would have too much learning ability for special education classes, but would not perform well in a regular classroom. Hope Hall attempts to break down “I can’t” barriers, find the talents of students, and help them plan for their futures. One girl said that at Hope Hall she no longer feels “pushed

along.” The school gets no public funding and survives by tuition and donations from supporters.

The Goldwater Institute reports that, “Two lawmakers in Washington recognized School Choice Week by making better options for students a priority for the federal government. Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC) introduced the *Scholarships for Kids Act*, which would give some 11 million students access to better schools.” (1-30-14)

Although parents frequently face formidable hurdles when they want to make decisions about their children’s education, school choice is most advantageous for students because they and their parents will choose the option that will best help them learn and flourish. School choice adheres to the principle that parents will make the right decisions for their children. As an additional advantage, the Goldwater Institute reports that: “Nearly all of these school choice options come at a lower cost than traditional public school.” With education costs skyrocketing, the cost-effectiveness of school choice may be the tipping point that will someday give all parents the option to decide their children’s educational future.