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Illegal Immigrants Strain Many School Districts

While New York launches a review of procedures used to enroll illegal immigrant students, Washington, D.C. is straining under the tremendous burden of educating such students. The influx of over 50,000 children and young adults across the nation's southern border is taxing school budgets across the nation. These students were unexpected and not included in schools' fiscal plans. Most need specialized English Language Learner programs and are usually on free or reduced lunch programs, furthering schools' financial challenges.



vide the required documents that prove student residency or to show that they have the guardianship necessary to enroll students. (Proof of guardianship is a safety measure to protect children from being enrolled by those who do not have legal custody.) There are more than 3,000 unaccompanied minors who came to the four counties in 2014, either because they had relatives there or because agencies found sponsors for them. (*New York Times*, 10-22-14)

D.C. Faces Faces \$ Burden

Watchdog.org used 2012 data based on 4,065 illegal immigrants in Washington, D.C. to estimate that it would cost \$86 million to educate illegal immigrants that year. Their data was provided by the Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project and was determined using the per student annual cost of \$21,347.

But due to the recent influx of children, it will now cost closer to \$186 million each year to educate illegal immigrants in D.C., according to the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). There are now many more undocumented students in the dis-

trict and using the simple multiplication method doesn't account for the additional expense incurred through English Language Learner programs and the use of programs that feed impoverished students at school.

Who is Crossing?

As of the end of June, Customs and Border Patrol had already apprehended 57,525 unaccompanied children in the first nine months of the fiscal year. "That includes 49,933 from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador." (FactCheck.org,

7-18-14) Some children from Mexico may be immediately deported but those from Central America are often offered permanent refuge.

Those who would illegally cross borders have been encouraged to attempt it because talk of amnesty measures has increased at a time when economic conditions have worsened and crime has increased in Central America and Mexico.

In June, CNS News reported, "Instead of discouraging the wave of illegal

(See *Illegal Immigrants*, page 4)

N.Y. Enrollment Policy Investigated

The 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* Supreme Court decision guaranteed a public education for undocumented children. The New York Dept. of Education and attorney general's office have launched an investigation "to determine whether districts violated federal law when delaying enrollment of students." But Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk, and Westchester County schools say some illegal alien children haven't been admitted to schools because the adults attempting to enroll them have been unable to pro-

The Common Core Pipeline

A June 7, 2014 *Washington Post* article is titled: "How Bill Gates Pulled Off the Swift Common Core Revolution." It states: "The Gates Foundation spread money across the political spectrum, to entities including the big teachers unions, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, and business organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce — groups that have clashed in the past but became vocal backers of the standards."

The article continues:

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation didn't just bankroll the development of what became known as the Common Core State Standards. With more than \$200 million, the foundation also built political support across the country, persuading state governments to make systemic and costly changes.

The *Post* reports: "Gates money went to state and local groups, as well, to help influence policymakers and civic leaders. And the idea found a major booster in President Obama, whose new administration was populated by former Gates Foundation staffers and associates."

It is well-documented that many entities have fed off the Common Core teat. Some states won Race to the Top grants from the federal government. Publishing companies continue to roll out Common Core-aligned materials that schools must purchase in order to align with the new, untested national standards. The PARCC and SBAC testing consortiums were federally bankrolled in order to develop and administer Common Core tests. Since each student needs a computer to take the aligned tests, computer sales to schools have skyrocketed.

A Close Look at Idaho

Some individuals in state bureaucracies who invited Common Core (CC)

standards into states and enthusiastically approved of them have gained financially and their careers have advanced. Using Idaho as an example, it can be noted that there is a pipeline between those in the state bureaucracy who supported Common Core and the non-governmental entities that promoted it. Employees in the Idaho Department of Education have gone on to lucrative jobs in the private sector after they supported CC implementation in that state.

Idaho Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna decided not to run for reelection to that office. Luna instead accepted a job at a nonprofit that sells STEM-based curriculum, which "is aligned to all of the Common Core Standards, including the Next Generation Science Standards." Luna will oversee four regional directors and

a team of policy analysts and researchers. He'll work for Project Lead The Way, which reported \$12.3 million in revenues on its 2012 federal tax disclosure form. Luna declined to disclose his salary. (*Idaho Statesman*, 8-19-14; PLTW.org)

Carissa Miller who was the Deputy Superintendent of the Idaho Dept. of Education 21st Century Classrooms Division is now the Deputy Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), one of the two unelected, private Washington, D.C. organizations that promoted CC in states and owns the copyright on the standards. (The other is the National Governors Association.)

The current CCSSO Communications Director is Melissa McGrath, who formerly held that position at the Idaho Dept. of Education and was a Luna administration senior staff member.

The Idaho education department's former assessment and accountability director, T.J. Bliss, now works for the Common Core-promoting William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

In December, Luci Willits who was formerly the Chief of Staff for Superin-

(See *Common Core Pipeline*, page 4)

Common Core Test Found Unconstitutional in Missouri

Although a judge has issued a temporary restraining order to stop the state from paying for Common Core tests, Missouri students will likely still take the tests. A judge temporarily blocked payment to the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, saying payment represents an interstate compact to which Congress did not consent and is therefore unconstitutional.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is one of the two testing entities that in 2010 received \$330 million in stimulus funds from Obama's American Reinvestment and Recovery

Act. SBAC and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) were federally supported until September of 2014. At that time states began paying for the Dept. of Education-mandated tests to be administered in participating states.

Judge Daniel R. Green wrote that "the payment of membership fees to an unconstitutional entity would impose

irreparable harm on the Plaintiff taxpayers, who have an interest in ensuring that all payments from the Missouri Treasury are made in accordance with the law." But the judge said that Missouri can still administer Common Core tests, even without being a dues-paying member of SBAC.

In July, legislators passed and Gov.

Jay Nixon signed a bill that created a panel to review Common Core standards to determine if Missouri will keep them or not. But that recommendation is not due until October of 2015 and would not take effect until the 2016-17 school year. Meanwhile students are being taught using Common Core standards and will likely take the tests aligned to them.

Many Missourians worry that Common Core is contrary to local control and creates a de-facto federal school board. They are concerned about the delay in the working committee recommendations and that the state Board of Education doesn't have to abide by the recommendations of the committee.

EVERY CHILD IS UNIQUE.
COMMON CORE EDUCATION STANDARDS
PUT EACH CHILD INTO ONE MOLD.



EDUCATION BRIEFS

According to a Gallup poll, 35% of public school parents view Common Core standards negatively and 33% view them positively, while 27% report being unfamiliar with CC and 5% have no opinion. In April, the number regarding CC negatively was 28% using the same question.

A Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll conducted last summer that asked public school parents if they were in favor of “having teachers in your community use the Common Core State Standards to guide what they teach” elicited a 57% negative response. An *Education Next* poll done in summer found that 60% of respondents agree that “local school boards should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in public schools, as opposed to the federal or state governments.” (Gallup.com, 10-28-14; *Education Week*, 8-27-14)

The New York City Dept. of Education will train 1,500 staff members in “therapeutic crisis intervention techniques” as part of the settlement of a year-old lawsuit by 11 students who claimed their rights were violated when they were sent to hospital emergency departments after engaging in disruptive behavior. The specially trained staff will be focused on “schools with high rates of calling 911 for children having emotional or psychiatric outbursts.” New guidelines for when to call 911 for help will be developed and all schools must “provide quiet rooms . . . where students in crisis can calm down.” (*Wall Street Journal*, 12-15-14)

“College enrollment declined this fall for the sixth semester in a row,” according to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. The decrease of 1.3% indicates about 250,000 fewer students enrolled in higher education programs. The biggest drop was among those over age 24. Growth in enrollment was concentrated at the largest, four-year, not-for-profit, private campuses. (HechingerReport.org, 12-11-14)

(See Briefs, page 4)

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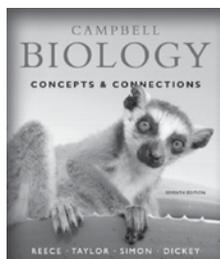
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Back Door Sex Education

Most would agree that information about eggs, sperm and fertilization is basic to the understanding of biology. But when did contraception and abortion become part of the biology curriculum for high school students?

In October, the Gilbert, Arizona school board voted 3-2 that a textbook used for honors and Advanced Placement biology is at odds with a state law that mandates schools to teach “preference, encouragement, and support to child-birth and adoption” over abortion. The law, SB 1009, was enacted in 2012 to ensure that sex education classes favored adoption rather than abortion.

The efficacy of various methods of contraception, the topics of sexually transmitted disease and condom use, and “morning after” abortion pills are covered on page 545 of the textbook *Campbell Biology: Concepts and Connections*. The book specifically mentions the drug mifepristone and states that it “can induce an abortion during the first seven weeks of pregnancy.”



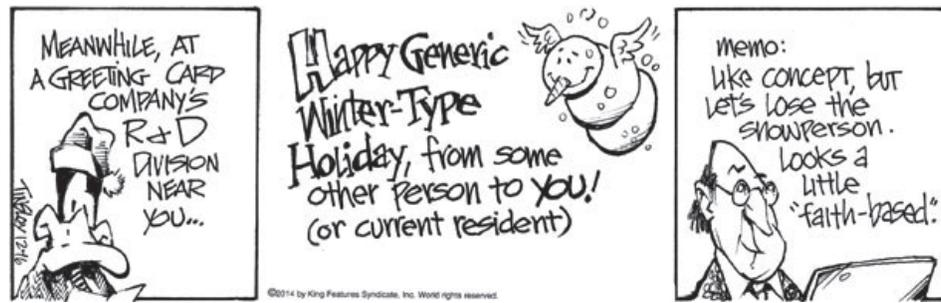
State Senator Nancy Barto, the sponsor of SB 1009, says there is no doubt this textbook is in violation of the law. She says, “Sex education by any other name is sex education, and all the rules apply.” Barto also notes that it is not “value neutral” when a textbook discusses an abortion pill.

The Arizona Dept. of Education approved *Campbell Biology* for use in the state. But the locally elected school board believes the book breaks Arizona law.

The Alliance Defending Freedom sent a letter to the Gilbert school officials, which prompted lawyers for the Arizona Education Department to review the book. The lawyers found no violation of the law, saying teachers could fill “necessary context.” Apologists for the Pearson textbook say that it is up to teachers to provide “ethical” context for the book’s mention of abortion-inducing “morning after pills.” But no one can say what that context will be because teachers can just as easily be pro-abortion as pro-life.

(See *Sex Education*, page 4)

MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Permission to Carry Knives at School

“Zero tolerance” school weapons policies have resulted in the suspensions of an elementary school student for biting a Pop-Tart into the shape of a gun and a kindergartner who threatened to shoot kids at a bus stop with her Hello Kitty bubble maker. Students have faced serious consequences for leaving fishing or hunting knives in their cars when parked on campus. Yet, due to political correctness, some students are allowed to carry a knife at school.

A Sikh student in Auburn, Washington is allowed to wear a dagger that is significant to his religion under his clothing at Gildo Ray Elementary School. The dagger, worn by observant Sikhs and kept in a sheath, is called a kirpan. Kirpans can range from two to seven inches in length. It is “considered an instrument of social justice in the Sikh religion and is one of five articles of faith worn by observant Sikhs.” (*The Seattle Times*, 11-23-14)

A school district spokesman said it is a “long-standing district policy” that students and staff of the Sikh religion are allowed to wear kirpans at school.

A spokesman for the Sikh Coalition, based in New York, said, “It would be helpful to remind parents that this is not a weapon.” But a Google search of images of kirpans might convince observers that it surely seems to be a weapon.

Some Sikhs wear a kirpan shaped pendant instead of the weapon.

In 2012, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a California elemen-

tary school must make “all reasonable efforts” to accommodate Sikh students who wish to wear kirpans to school. The California court suggested that kirpans be blunted or somehow locked into the sheath, but this is not done in most cases.

A spokeswoman for the California Department of Education said in 2012 that it’s a delicate balance between school safety and freedom-of-religion concerns. She continued, “But student safety is always paramount.” (*Associated Press*, 11-6-12)

Many worry that even if a Sikh student wearing a kirpan follows the rules and keeps it under his clothing, other students will know he has it and could forcefully take it away and use it as a weapon.

In 2011, a Sikh student in Michigan was originally not allowed to carry a kirpan to school but, as reported in the *Detroit Free Press*, school weapons guidelines were adjusted and he was allowed to carry the knife. (2-1-11)

The Sikh coalition claims that “the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Protective Service allows kirpan-carrying Sikhs into federal buildings.” But, Sikhs must put their kirpan in checked luggage when they fly on U.S. airlines.

A volunteer at one Washington school said, “There’s no way I’d go back until the knife was gone.” She asked: “They can’t take that thing into the airport. TSA would be all over it. Why is a school any different?”

Book of the Month



The Great American College Tuition Rip-Off, Paul Streitz, Oxford Institute Press, 2005, \$12.99

“Despite the liberalism of academia, when it comes to taking money from middle-class families, academia is as rapacious as the greediest of Wall Street,” according to author Paul Streitz.

College tuition has grown at astronomical rates, far outpacing inflation and in no way related to the actual cost of education. Grand edifices are built and unnecessary perks are provided on campuses but they have nothing to do with educating students. Professors teach fewer and fewer classes and focus on publishing in order to achieve tenure.

According to Streitz, the *U.S. News and World Report* annual college rankings have contributed to increased tuition costs. He says the magazine should change the flawed financial portion of the rankings. It currently results in a lower ranking when a college does what’s best by cutting costs and instituting economies.

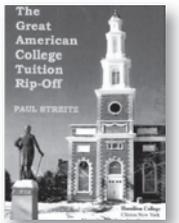
The *U.S. News* rankings may also contribute to lowered academic standards as administrators try to increase the number of enrolled freshmen who end up graduating by decreasing requirements and expectations.

Streitz suggests that professors are there to teach and not to do research. He says that 99% of the research that takes professors away from interaction with students “has no merit and no redeeming social value” and professors should be compensated and evaluated based on how well they teach students.

The author uses his own alma mater, Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, as an example of runaway tuition costs. He says, “the proliferation of departments and courses” has driven up the cost of an education and as Hamilton College’s enrollment doubled, “the administration has increased five times.” New areas of study revolve around the “reigning ideology” of multiculturalism. The result is that students can expect to spend four years being indoctrinated to believe that “all ideas and cultures are equal.” But heaven help the student who dares speak out in favor of Western Civilization, Christianity, or Biblical morality.

Streitz laments that trustees tasked with overseeing the college become “insiders more concerned with the institution than [with] the students.” They should demonstrate stewardship of college finances by hiring outside auditors to examine the way the institution manages its money.

Parent-Student associations that would demand lower tuition, full financial disclosure, tuition freezes for four years of study, and encourage schools to eliminate “objectionable academic or social policies” are another option for improving the value of college.



FOCUS: Boards of Education: The Last Line of Defense

by Christopher Tienken, Ed.D

Dr. Tienken's comments are adapted from his October 26, 2014 remarks at the Montclair (New Jersey) Cares About Schools panel discussion on the responsibilities of school boards. This article first appeared at ChrisTienken.com and is reprinted with permission.

As I look out over the current school reform landscape I see it is categorized by policies that seek to standardize, homogenize, and corporatize public education through the use of one-size-fits-all curriculum standards, high stakes testing, micro-management of school operations from distal bureaucrats, teacher evaluation policies based on mis-interpretations of current research, and heavy reliance on corporate education providers camouflaged as non-profits operating via charter schools.

Bureaucrats across the country have put their faith in standardized programs. A command and control monitoring structure pervades many of these initiatives. The vendors and proponents of these types of policies do not seem to understand the complex nature of child development, classroom instruction, or learning.

The solutions to every perceived or claimed public education problem seem to revolve around standardizing teachers and children, closing public schools, giving away taxpayer resources like school buildings to charter schools, and stripping local control from community stakeholders. These solutions lack all semblance of empirical support.

Of course the genesis for all these solutions is the argument that the U.S. public school system, the entire system of over 13,000 school districts and approximately 50 million students, is failing and causing students to become less globally competitive. Proponents of the current school reform agenda claim that because the U.S. ranks at the middle of the pack on international tests, that somehow proves that U.S. students are not prepared for the world or that they will be less economically competitive and cause economic doom for the country. Even the New Jersey Dept. of Education uses the argument as one reason for their teacher evaluation system, the need for Common Core, and their support of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test.

The only problem with that argument is that it does not hold up to empirical review. Rankings on international tests do not correlate to any important macro-economic indicators in the G20 countries, the largest economies on the planet. The G20 is the economic shark tank that we swim in. Perhaps more importantly, none of the rankings on international tests for the G20 group of nations relate to international indices of creativity, innovation, or entrepreneurship. For example, the U.S. ranks 1st in the world in Nobel Prizes in the sciences and medicine. 60% of all Nobel Laureates come from U.S. public schools.

The U.S. ranks 1st in the world in the number of utility patents and the number of scientific papers produced. The U.S. ranks 2nd in the world on the Global Creativity Index, 3rd on the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Index, and 5th on the Global Innovation Index. We rank in the top 10 in the industrialized world for the percentage of high school graduates and the percentage of our population with B.A. degrees. We produce the highest percentage of engineers who are qualified to work in multi-national corporations, we produce the greatest number of engineering doctorates, over 90% of which go to U.S. born students, and the list of the accomplishments goes on. In short, the arguments that all these standardizing reforms are both necessary and will increase competitiveness and secure a vibrant macro-economic future rest on pillars of sand.

However, some boards of education are pushing back on the over-generalized claims and mythical stories put forth by education reformers regarding the efficacy of standardization and testing systems. The Bridgeport, CT board of education pushed back against superintendent Paul Valles and his program of closing schools and increasing charters. Twenty-six school boards in Wisconsin banded together to send resolutions to their representatives about draconian cuts to public school budgets and the re-direction of funds to charter schools.

The Lakeland School Board and Williamson County School Board in Tennessee both passed resolutions that called for ending use of the Common Core and petitioning the state for local control of curriculum standards. Similarly, the Gilbert School Board in Arizona passed a resolution calling for the Governor to end the state's participation in the Common Core and stop the regressive effects of standardized testing.

The Portland School Board in Oregon recently voted not to set state-mandated achievement compacts in three subject areas linked to the state's new Common Core-aligned tests known as the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). They recognized the narrow effects on learning that the Common Core and national testing schemes are having on their children. So too did the Palm Beach County School board in its resolution calling for a testing overhaul and less reliance on standardized tests.

Perhaps one of most widely publicized examples of school boards acting courageously to push back on some of these regressive policies comes from Texas where 520 boards of education and their superintendents fought the implementation of 15 end-of-course high school standardized tests that were part of a state education reform package. They got the number reduced to five.

And of course we have examples here in New Jersey of boards who have shown courageous leadership or who are trying to battle these corporate reforms, like places in Highland Park, Newark,

Bloomfield, and others around the state.

But what are just a few of the things school boards in New Jersey should be concerned about? I've seen the control and decision making ability of local boards become increasingly muted and in some areas completely neutered since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and now with the Race to the Top, NCLB waivers, Common Core, and PARCC testing. For example, try going to your local school board to get wholesale changes to your mathematics program, both the scope of what is taught and the sequence of when topics are taught. Try to get things removed and or moved to other grade levels. You will be told that it is not possible due to state regulations, Common Core requirements, and/or PARCC testing. In many respects local school boards have been reduced to adopting state mandated policies and many of those policies are not good for children.

For example, education bureaucrats at the highest levels of the New Jersey Department of Education have said publicly that the PARCC test is a test worth teaching to and that teachers should spend 180 days teaching the skills on the PARCC, as if there is nothing else to attend to. Testing is not learning, and test preparation is not teaching. Not one four-year college in New Jersey is willing to accept the results from the PARCC tests as an admissions indicator.

To proclaim that one test and one set of curriculum standards, the Common Core, can provide meaningful data about whether a child is college-and-career ready, that is, ready to attend one of the over 4,400 colleges and universities in the U.S. or pursue one of the tens of thousands of careers that exist or those that don't but will by the time this year's preschool class, the class of 2029 or 2030 graduates high school, is educationally bankrupt. No test, not the ACT nor SAT, or any other test can tell you that. In fact, high school GPA is a better predictor of first year college success and college completion than either the SAT or ACT. Maybe that is why there are now almost 1,000 colleges and universities that don't require either test or make it optional. Yet, NJ bureaucrats, some leaders of NJ professional education organizations, and some boards of education pursue PARCC testing and Common Core implementation with zeal.

You cannot standardize creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. What is being cut from schools now, because of this misguided adherence to standardization, are the subjects and experiences that children will really need to acquire the skills necessary to compete in a global economy in 2030.

Skills like collaboration, communication, strategizing, cooperation, empathy, compassion, leadership, cultural literacy, creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, critical consumption of information, socially conscious decision-making, critical thinking, adaptability, flexibility, networking, resilience, per-



sistence, and the list goes on. None of those skills are included in the Common Core or PARCC testing. Sure, the Common Core and PARCC use impressive prompts that require students to “analyze” and “infer” but when one examines those standards and questions in depth, one finds that students are analyzing and inferring for one right answer. This is convergent thinking, not the divergent, open-ended thinking children need to be cognitively nimble.

Standardization also affects our teachers via the various evaluation and salary schemes currently in use. John Dewey warned us almost 100 years ago that it is a fool's errand to expect creative, independent, and innovative work from students when their teachers are unemancipated and shackled by too many rules and prescriptions and too much of a desire for uniformity of method and subject matter.

Of course some education bureaucrats and leaders of some of the professional organizations argue that the Common Core is not a curriculum, but that is simply not true. New Jersey explained in its round three Race to the Top application that all curricular programs in state schools will be aligned to the Common Core by this school year and that the 70 priority schools and many of the over 150 focus schools will use the NJ Model Curriculum and assessments, which in fact are just the Common Core repackaged. Furthermore, many districts are going to be very reluctant to make large additions to their curriculum for fear of the students doing poorly on the PARCC test. Some district boards of education have even taken the action of approving pullout PARCC preparation programs for their students during the school day. What opportunities are those students missing?

So there is much for boards to educate themselves about and push back on in New Jersey. That is why I think the most important function of a school board now is to act in the best interest of children and to challenge bad policy making in their states. Not only challenge bad policy, but recognize it and help lead their schools and states away from it as opposed to not asking questions or simply “following orders” from the state department of education.

Another function of the board, as I see it, is as a formal decision-making body that can give community members their democratic voice in the education of their children: Give them a voice from which to push back on bad policy. This voice has been a staple of American culture and the public school structure in this country. However, increasingly we see policy makers, departments of education, and pundits challenge the notion that local school boards are important

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Illegal Immigrants (Continued from page 1)

child immigrants headed toward the U.S. border, major media outlets in Central America are encouraging the phenomenon in recent news coverage.” CNS listed specific news outlets in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras that promoted crossing the border illegally.

Although the American media has indicated it is young children coming across the border, among the initial 1,000 Central American minors housed at Lackland Air Force base in Texas, “about 80% of the minors housed at the base are male and 83% are over age 14.” (CSNnews.com, 6-18-14) There are also reports that some crossers have a gang affiliation and have committed crimes.

Mainstream media outlets say that mostly “children” are crossing the border. But a review of actual figures show that the greatest number of crossers, by far, are teens, although the percentage of younger children crossing has increased at a higher rate in the past year. According to figures obtained using a Freedom of Information Act request:

In fiscal year 2013, nine-in-ten minors apprehended at the border were teens.

This share has dropped as the number of younger children making the dangerous trip has risen dramatically: [Yet] in the first eight months of fiscal year 2014, 84% were teens. (PewResearch.org, 7-22-14)

National Implications

It has been determined that the Obama administration expected the influx and government officials have admitted this. In January of 2014, Homeland Security and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office issued a solicitation at FedBizOpps.gov, a website that advertises government contract openings, for private contractors to provide transportation and escorts for an estimated 65,000 immigrant children from the U.S.-Mexico border to relocation facilities throughout the United States. Part of the advertisement read:

Escort services include, but are not limited to, assisting with: transfer-

ring physical custody of UAC [Unaccompanied Alien Children] from Dept. of Homeland Security to Health and Human Services (HHS) care via ground or air methods of transportation (charter or commercial carrier), property inventory, providing juveniles with meals, drafting reports, generating transport documents, maintaining/stocking daily supplies, providing and issuing clothing as needed, coordinating with DHS and HHS staff. . . .

(TheBlaze.com, 6-20-14; FactCheck.org, 7-18-14)

There has been an unprecedented attempt to spread the illegal immigrants throughout the U.S. Even small, rural towns have received UACs. The influx of school-aged teens and children impacts schools in unexpected places. “Nationally, FAIR estimates that it costs about \$52 billion to educate children who are in the U.S. illegally.” (HumanEvents.com, 12-3-14)

The expense of this influx is not limited to schools. Additional costs include transporting the UACs from the border to communities and social services provided to those who eventually sponsor them.

Why Not a Fence Instead?

In July, President Obama requested that Congress provide an emergency fund of \$3.7 billion dollars to resettle the newest illegal aliens in the U.S. Dividing \$3.7 billion by the estimated 50,000 border crossers who will be allowed to stay equals almost \$74,000 per individual illegal alien. None of this money is destined for schools.

Progressives consider \$74,000 per crosser in one year a reasonable expenditure but balk at increased border control and building a fence that would permanently take care of the problem. Illegal border crossings cost American taxpayers by lowering the quality of the education children receive; by taking American jobs; and by diminishing the security of the nation. Yet, Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), Rep. Steve King (R-IA), and others who support building a fence are maligned by those who fail to understand the cost of illegal immigration and the potential for terrorists to infiltrate along with unaccompanied juveniles.

Common Core Pipeline (Continued from page 1)

tendent Luna left that job to become the executive director of the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC), one of the two federally-funded CC testing organizations.

In June, Roger Quarles left his Idaho Dept. of Education post as Supt. Luna’s chief deputy to work for a prominent CC proponent in Idaho, the Albertson Foundation.

These job changes were reported at the website IdahoansForLocalEducation.com on November 14, 2014.

By any standard, Idaho has seen an unusual number of state Department of Education employees moving to jobs with Common Core entities and proponents. Idahoans for Local Education asks: “As you look at what has taken place in Idaho you have to wonder, were

these individuals working for what was best for Idaho’s children or what was best for furthering their careers?”

Briefs (Continued from page 2)

Embattled New York State Education Commissioner John B. King Jr., known for his unwavering support of Common Core and increased testing of students despite parental protests and student opt-outs, is moving to Washington, D.C. He has accepted a new position as a senior advisor to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who enticed states to accept Common Core with Race to the Top grants. His “term as commissioner was one of the most tumultuous in recent history.” (Newsday, 12-10-14)

Sex Education (Continued from page 2)

The Alliance Defending Freedom is also involved in a Tempe, Arizona school district challenge to Planned Parenthood material being used in schools’ sex-education curriculum.

While mainstream media outlets attempt to turn the Arizona situation into one of censorship, it is actually about local control of education and the rule of law. In order to follow the law, the Gilbert School District has moved to redact or otherwise remove the offending page from the book.

A member of the school board who voted that the textbook violates state law says:

If people don’t like the law, they need to take it up with their state legislator. I don’t write the law. It’s my job to uphold it.

The school district is also reviewing three other biology books and two anatomy books, according to the *New York Times* (11-27-14). Pearson, the publisher of the books, refused to comment in the *Times*.

In what can only be described as a lack of understanding of the Tenth Amendment, federalism, and the freedom allowed by local control, the University of Pittsburgh student newspaper editors wrote:

Thus, school boards across the country should stop meddling with textbooks for the sake of their or their state’s agenda. A free nation is one in which its citizens are freely educated, and this can only happen without overt interference from biased policymakers. (*Pitt News*, 12-3-14)

The student editors apparently are unable to see that state legislators and citizens are concerned about students for whom they are responsible and instead choose to bash them and label them as “biased policymakers.”

The executive director of the A.C.L.U. of Arizona addressed the issue by saying, “More information is always going to be better.” It is precisely this mindset that results in schools teaching kindergartners about sex.

Last Line of Defense (Continued from page 3)

and decry that boards should not have the final say in some of the meaningful aspects of education, like curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

But as I stated earlier, there are boards of education that choose to act courageously and support their community members, parents, students, teachers, staff, and other stakeholders in challenging the standardizing and privatizing of public education. In cases in which boards of education are less sensitive to the needs of stakeholders, stakeholders are pushing back through local elections. Although most school boards in New Jersey use a democratic system of elections, some still operate under a system of mayoral appointments. There are various reasons for this and those depend on the town.

For example, in Montclair, NJ the history of the appointed board comes from the need to insulate previous school boards and school budgets from the politics surrounding the desegregation orders placed upon the district several decades ago. The relatively new budget cap law has also changed the budget process and affected local dynamics, so school budgets under the 2% cap no longer have to be submitted for public vote. This further insulates boards from political pressures. So it may no longer be necessary to have an appointed board to avoid an annual budget referendum as it was in the past.

But regardless of whether the board of education is appointed or locally elected, local governments are the closest form of government to the people. Local government can be the most responsive to the needs and concerns of its citizens and local control is part of our cultural heritage.

Democracy deserves the chance to run its course and the decision-making authority of boards should not be muted by state mandates and anti-local control legislation. Local decision making allows for the unique local conditions and

concerns and values about public education to be expressed. For example, magnet schools and integration are valued locally in Montclair and boards of education there made specific local decisions, years ago to support those values whereas neighborhood schools are preferred in other towns and are supported by their boards.

Likewise, stakeholders in some towns might decide that their local school administrators and teachers could create better curriculum standards than those aligned to the Common Core. Perhaps some boards of education might decide that their educators could design much more rigorous and authentic assessments like those designed by the New York Performance Standards Consortium. Curriculum, assessment, instruction, and overall accountability should ultimately be a local function and school boards should be advocating for such. They should stand up to bad policy and be open to evidence that runs counter to the current neo-liberal, privatizing and standardizing narrative.

Children do not have a seat at the policy making table and therefore their voice is limited. Boards of education must recognize bad policy and advocate on behalf of students. Boards must join parents, students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and all those involved in public education to enlarge the voice of children in the policy arena.

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