



The Phyllis Schlafly Report



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What Parents Don't Like About Common Core

Common Core is replacing the teaching of traditional American history with a new left-leaning curriculum. Those who say that Common Core doesn't prescribe curriculum but only spells out standards are playing with words. According to scholar Stanley Kurtz, the traditional emphasis on America's founders and the principles of constitutional government are being pitched and replaced with what fits the leftwing narrative of emphasis on race, gender, class, and ethnicity.

The tests, of course, are the key to the content of what will be taught, since the schools must prepare students to score well on the tests, which are written by the College Board. David Coleman, the president of the College Board, just happens to be the architect of Common Core. The plan is to federalize K-12 education while shifting the course content to the left. Sample exams will be released only to certified history teachers who are sworn to secrecy about what's in the tests under penalty of losing their teaching privileges.

Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and the other Founders are mostly omitted from the new History text unless they can be scripted to fit in with the leftwing narrative of race, class, gender, or ethnicity. The U.S. Constitution is studied as an example of the founders' belief in the superiority of their own culture. Students are programmed to believe that America is not exceptional.

A teacher who doesn't teach history under these blame-America-first guidelines would be disadvantaging his students. (This excellent analysis was explained by Professor Stanley Kurtz, and published at National Review Online, 9-9-14.)

Leftwing writers of today want our history to be taught so students will believe that the United States is like all other countries, obsessed with the pursuit of empire and the conquest of other people. The authors stress that the key factor in America's early days was mistreatment of the Indians.

The Common Core American history course gives short shrift to the American Revolution and George Washington's extraordinary personal leadership, and only one sentence to the Declaration of Independence. "Analysis of

the College Board AP U.S. History Framework" by Larry Krieger (The Heartland Institute, 3-25-14) gives an excellent description of the distortions taught by Common Core.

Among the facts about American history that are omitted or sidestepped in Common Core are discussion of our entire military history and heroes, U.S. involvement in World War II, and our victory over Communist expansionism in the Cold War.

Students in Bryant School District in Arkansas were told in a sixth grade history class that the U.S. Bill of Rights is "outdated." The lesson plan calls on students to strike out two of the Bill of Rights Amendments, replace them with two new Amendments, and then continue with the class assignment of "revising and editing the Bill of Rights." (NationalReview.com, 10-9-13)

"What's your religion? Your sexual orientation? Your parents' political affiliation? Should 'assault rifles' be banned? Who's to blame for the government shutdown?" Do these sound like questions that high school sophomores should have to answer in school? A Maryland high school that is "Common Core compliant" administered a survey to sophomores that asked those questions and many others just as intrusive. The survey was removed after parents complained to the school. (*The Blaze*, 10-16-13; see also, *Washington Post*, 10-15-13)

The mother of an 8-year-old third-grade student in Louisiana said her daughter came home with assigned homework about adultery. The teacher said she got this assignment from Common Core materials for third graders. (*Scripps Media*, 10-20-13)

Stanford mathematician and former member of the Common Core Validation Committee, Dr. James Milgram, stated that if the controversial standards are not repealed, America's place as a competitor in the technology industry will be severely undermined. "In the future, if we want to work with the top level people, we're going to have to go to China or Japan or Korea, and that's the future we're looking at." (Reported by Dr. Susan Berry, *Breitbart*, 8-1-14)

Former New York State elected Lieutenant Governor

Betsy McCaughey published a good summary of why parents object to Common Core: (*The Sun*, 6-10-14)

Common Core is not about standards. It's about content — what pupils are taught. . . .

American history is presented as four centuries of racism, economic oppression, and gender discrimination. Teachers are encouraged to help students identify their differences instead of their common American identity. Gone are heroes, ideals, and American exceptionalism. . . .

Religion is expunged from New York State's account of how this nation began. . . .

The indoctrination begins early. In grade three, "students are introduced to the concepts of prejudice, discrimination and human rights, as well as social action." Grade four suggested reading includes "The Kid's Guide to Social Action." . . .

Common Core eliminates handwriting, the basis of communication for over two thousand years. Students learn to print in kindergarten and first grade, but then instruction shifts to keyboards. The next generation will not be able to read an historical document in its original, or even a letter from Grandma.

Another helpful summary of parents' objections to Common Core was written by Joy Pullmann of the Heartland Institute: (*The Federalist*, 9-25-14)

1. **The senseless, infuriating math.** Common Core now takes dots, dashes, boxes, hashmarks, and foam cubes, plus an inordinate amount of time, to get a math answer, which may not be correct anyway.
2. **The lies.** The American Enterprise Institute recently wrote about Common Core's "half-truths," which should be called "lies." Samples: Common Core is "internationally benchmarked," "evidence based," makes students "college- and career-ready" (but only for community colleges).
3. **Obliterating parents' rights.** Parents who complained about Common Core to teachers or at school board meetings have been rudely treated and some even arrested.
4. **Dirty reading assignments.** Morally objectionable books on the Common Core-recommended list include *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison, *Make Lemonade* by Virginia Euwer Wolff, and *Dreaming in Cuban* by Cristina Garcia. Why does Common Core recommend trash instead of classic works of literature?
5. **Data collection.** Common Core collects all sorts of personal information about students, most of which is none of the business of other schools and businesses with which the data are shared.

Follow the Money To Common Core

Common Core was launched and popularized by grants of \$150 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. A *Washington Post* report by Valerie Strauss lists the dozens of recipients of this money. (May 12, 2013) By the next year, the *Washington Post* was talking about \$200 million from Gates.

The Gates Foundation spread money all over the political spectrum: to the big teachers unions, the American Federation of Teachers Association, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Gates money went to state and local groups to help influence policymakers and civic leaders to buy Common Core products.

Publishers rolled out Common Core-aligned materials that schools had to buy in order for their students to pass the new tests. Sales of computers and tablets to schools skyrocketed because every student needs a computer to take the Common Core tests.

Many found it personally profitable to be a Common Core booster. The PARCC and SBAC testing consortiums were federally bankrolled to develop and administer Common Core tests. Employees in state Departments of Education went onto lucrative jobs in the private sector after they supported Common Core implementation in their own states.

The Common Core team that has been foisting it on all American public and private schools, primarily by the use of mandatory tests, has take a devious and circuitous route to avoid conflict with our laws that forbid the federalization of our school system.

Education was clearly designed to be under the control of parents and the individual states, not the federal government. But the states' acceptance of so much federal money has brought with this an acceptance of illegal federal control and mandates. The major laws that should prevent enforcing national standards or curriculum on schoolchildren, but which Common Core bypassed in devious ways, are set forth on page 4 of this *Phyllis Schlafly Report*.

Parents Fight Back Against Common Core

Common Core is such a stupid name. It inspired both black and white moms to join public protests wearing signs reading "My Child Is Not Common."

More than 20,000 students were pulled out of Common Core's standardized testing in New York by their parents. A growing number of parents and teachers are concerned about the inadequacies of Common Core, and in particular by the infringement of students' privacy rights.

When launched, 45 states and the District of Columbia immediately signed on to use Common Core, even

though nobody had read any Common Core materials at that time. The only states that refused from the beginning to accept Common Core were Alaska, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia.

Among those original 45 states, four states, Indiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Louisiana, have since withdrawn from the national standards and tests. More than a dozen other states have either partially exited or downgraded their involvement with the assessment component. (*National Review*, 11-5-14)

Indiana became the first state to pull out of Common Core. In March 2014, Indiana Governor Mike Pence signed legislation withdrawing Indiana from the use of Common Core, calling this “an important step forward in developing academic standards that are written by Hoosiers, for Hoosiers, and are uncommonly high.” (*National Review*, 3-28-14)

Louisiana was one of the original states that signed on to Common Core. But after Governor Bobby Jindal’s son came home from school with ridiculous arithmetic homework, Jindal changed course and has now taken legal action against Common Core. He joined Louisiana legislators in a lawsuit alleging that the state’s education officials did not comply with state law in implementing Common Core. “After listening to literally thousands of parents, teachers, and others,” Jindal said, “I don’t believe we can achieve Louisiana control and success if we stay in Common Core.”

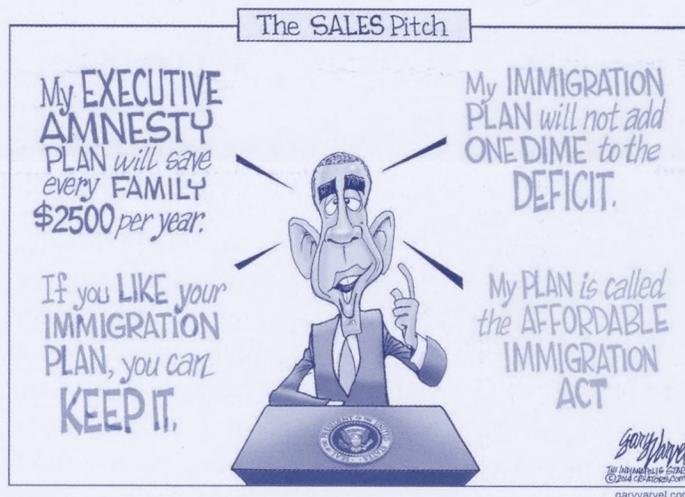
U.S. Senator David Vitter of Louisiana, who was a Common Core supporter, abruptly changed his position because he said he wants to ensure local control over curriculum and instruction materials.

The Massachusetts Teachers Association elected a new president in May 2014 who is opposed to Common Core testing. The new MTA president, Barbara Madeloni, wants a three-year moratorium on testing, and called for a vigorous campaign against the “corporate forces” behind Common Core. (*National Review*, 5-15-14)

The Oklahoma State Supreme Court in an 8-to-1 decision threw out Common Core in Oklahoma by upholding a law passed by the Oklahoma Legislature that ruled against the use of Common Core standards. The State Board of Education had sued the state, saying that legislators had overstepped their authority when they voted to pass legislation throwing out Common Core and giving Oklahoma the power to write new standards. The Oklaho-

ma Supreme Court held that the Legislature does have the constitutional authority to repeal Common Core standards in the state’s public schools. Eagle Forum filed an important amicus brief in this case, defending the constitutional authority of the Legislature to repeal Common Core.

North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory signed a law on July 22, 2014 rewriting the state’s education standards and leading to replacement of the federally inspired Common Core standards. The new law sets up an 11-member advisory academic standards commission to recommend rigorous and age-appropriate standards for North Carolina schools.



A panel of experts on Common Core has traveled all over California to speak at six events organized by various groups of concerned parents and educators who share the concern that we are not being told the truth about Common Core. The panelists included Dr. Sandra Stotsky, who was on the Common Core Validation Committee and refused to sign off on the standards, and attorney Brad

Dacus of the Pacific Justice Institute, who helped create the opt-out form for parents to opt their children out of the assessment tests.

Common Core lost big at the ballot box on November 4, 2014. Voters resoundingly sided with candidates who rejected Common Core’s national standards and tests and who promised to restore state and local control of education.

In Arizona, Diane Douglas won for the state’s top education post on an anti-Common Core platform, which she said was the “key issue” in her campaign. Richard Woods campaigned on an anti-Common Core platform in winning his election as Georgia’s state Superintendent of Education. Molly Spearman won her bid for State Superintendent in South Carolina, which withdrew from Common Core earlier last year. In Wyoming, Jillian Balow won the race for superintendent after promising to review that state’s involvement in Common Core.

Opposition to Common Core has spurred a jump in homeschooling. North Carolina has had a 14% increase in the number of students educated at home. Similar increases have been reported in Virginia, California and New York.

A good handbook helpful to fight Common Core is the new paperback called *Common Core: A Trojan Horse for Education Reform* by Orlean Koehle, Small Helm Press, available at www.TurnTheHelm.org.

There is no lawful role for the federal government in education

The **Tenth Amendment** to the U.S. Constitution states:

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

In addition, federal authority over education is prohibited by the following federal laws passed by Congress:

The **General Education Provisions Act** of 1965:

- No provision of any applicable program shall be construed to authorize any department, agency, officer, or employee of the United States to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system, or over the selection of library resources, textbooks, or other printed or published instructional materials by any educational institution or school system.

Source: 20 U.S.C. § 1232a

- The term "applicable program" means any program for which the Secretary or the Department has administrative responsibility as provided by law or by delegation of authority pursuant to law. The term includes each program for which the Secretary or the Department has administrative responsibility under the Department of Education Organization Act or under Federal law effective after the effective date of that Act.

Source: 20 U.S.C. § 1221(c)(1)

The **Department of Education Organization Act** of 1979:

- It is the intention of the Congress in the establishment of the Department to protect the rights of State and local governments and public and private educational institutions in the areas of educational policies and administration of programs and to strengthen and improve the control of such governments and institutions over their own educational programs and policies. The establishment of the Department of Education shall not increase the authority of the Federal Government over education or diminish the responsibility for education which is reserved to the States and the local school systems and other instrumentalities of the States.

Source: 20 U.S.C. § 3403(a)

- No provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution, school, or school system, over any accrediting agency or association, or over the selection or content of library resources, textbooks, or other instructional materials by any educational institution or school system, except to the extent authorized by law.

Source: 20 U.S.C. § 3403(b)

The **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** of 1965, as amended by the **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001:

- Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize an officer or employee of the Federal Government to mandate, direct, or control a State, local educational agency, or school's curriculum, program of instruction, or allocation of State or local resources, or mandate a State or any subdivision thereof to spend any funds or incur any costs not paid for under this Act.
- Source: 20 U.S.C. § 7907(a)
- Notwithstanding any other prohibition of Federal law, no funds provided to the Department under this Act may be used by the Department to endorse, approve, or sanction any curriculum designed to be used in an elementary school or secondary school.
- Source: 20 U.S.C. § 7907(b)
- Notwithstanding any other provision of Federal law, no State shall be required to have academic content or student academic achievement standards approved or certified by the Federal Government, in order to receive assistance under this Act.

Source: 20 U.S.C. § 7907(c)(1)

These restrictions are applicable to all programs administered by the federal Department of Education.

Source: 20 U.S.C. § 1221(c)(1)

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