

COMMON CORE
Talking Points

Common Core infringes on state, local, and parental control, violates data privacy, increases costs to states, provides low quality standards and increased assessments, and presents a potential threat to private schools and homeschoolers.

Loss of State, Local, and Parental Control

Common Core is a federal takeover of education. The ultimate goal of Common Core is to have every school district follow the same national standards, a one-size-fits-all education policy that assumes every student learns exactly the same way.

Parents do not have a say in their child's education under Common Core. They are not able to suggest changes to their local school's standards, and teachers have little control over their classrooms. They are forced to comply with standards decided upon by federal bureaucrats.

Common Core is a failed education approach. Washington has tried one-size-fits-all education approaches time and again. Centralized education programs have not worked and will never work. The quality of education has only declined over the past few decades.

The solution is to get the federal government out of the education business.

Data-Mining and Privacy Violations

The federal government again bribed states by offering them separate grants to create Longitudinal Data Systems (LDS) to track and store student and family data, allowing collection of 400+ data points of personally-identifiable data, and set up a "de facto" national database.

"Longitudinal" means the data covers a long period of time, literally from birth (or from first entrance into the school system) for the rest of the student's life. The government will always have whatever information is collected.

The "de facto national database" was created because although the federal government has not set up its own federal database, it has access to the statewide database of all 50 states (which means it has access to data nationwide).

The 400+ data points being collected include medical information, behavioral and psychological information, attitudes toward race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, family information like family make-up, socio-economic status, religious and political affiliations, etc.

This data collection is especially significant because of how the federal government can use it. For example: with gun control laws that involve mental health, incidents that flagged a student as a risk at eight years old could be used against him or her later owning a firearm as an adult.

Increased Cost for States

The increase in cost for states to implement the Common Core State Standards varies among states, but it is a substantial increase in most cases. In addition to the costs associated with development of new assessments, the technology of the schools must be upgraded significantly in order to teach the curriculum and administer the new assessments. The cost has been estimated to be in the billions of dollars in some states.

Some states received a one-time Race to the Top (RTTT) grant awarded after the competitive grant application process, but most states that accepted the Common Core standards did not receive federal funding. This means that for those states the entire cost of implementing the standards has fallen to the state and local school systems.

Even for those states that did receive a one-time RTTT grant, federal funding has not been ongoing while the cost associated with implementation of Common Core has obviously continued.

Low Quality Standards and Curriculum

The quality of the standards themselves is poor.

There was only one English Language Arts expert and one mathematics expert included in the respective committees that worked on the development of the

standards. Both refused to sign off on the Common Core standards as acceptable academic standards.

Educrats will often say that the Common Core State Standards are "standards, not curriculum." But the standards determine the curriculum and we are seeing increasingly poor curriculum as a result.

Parents have been outraged by biased textbooks and counterintuitive homework assignments from the beginning of Common Core's implementation.

Because the Common Core State Standards were written and copyrighted by Achieve, Inc., nothing is allowed to be removed or changed by the state school boards, local school boards, or individual teachers.

The standards allow for up to 15% of content to be added, but the standards are so onerous and assessment-focused already that most teachers are forced by time constraints to stick with the standards as written and teach to the test.

Increased Focus on Standardized Testing

The Common Core State Standards, like all federal education initiatives, have increased the required amount of assessment students must undergo. Now all students must be tested multiple times per year for comparative purposes. As a result, teachers are now spending more time than ever teaching to the test. Standardized testing is widely acknowledged to be a poor indicator of intellectual capability, and activists and groups from all political perspectives have united against Common Core's burdensome assessment requirements.

When states initially decided to implement the Common Core standards, they had to choose to participate in one of two testing consortia that were developing assessments aligned with Common Core: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced).

Many states have since pulled out of the testing consortia to create their own system of assessments instead, due to projected cost of the assessments being developed by the consortia.

Crony Capitalism: Big Government Educrats and Big Business

Several large, supposedly non-profit groups like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Pearson Charitable Foundation (the non-profit arm of educational publishing company Pearson) have pushed hard to develop the Common Core State Standards by funding Achieve, Inc. to write the standards and by working with the US Department of Education to push state school boards into accepting the standards.

Pearson Charitable Foundation was recently ordered to pay a settlement of \$7.7 million dollars after using charitable contributions to develop Common Core aligned products that led to tens of millions of dollars in profit for the Pearson publishing company.

When local school systems upgrade their technology to teach Common Core aligned curriculum and administer Common Core required assessments, Microsoft (owned by Bill Gates) turns a huge profit.

The Longitudinal Data Systems developed and implemented by most state school systems are being managed by inBloom, Inc., which is a non-profit organization primarily funded by the Gates Foundation. The data collected about students and their families is allowed to be released to "related contractors" of the school systems. In other words, inBloom, Inc., an organization funded by the Gates' non-profit arm, can release the data it holds to companies like Microsoft, the Gates' for-profit arm.

The federal government is promoting the implementation of nationalized education standards that then require huge government spending on textbooks and technology, which is paid directly to the government-approved companies whose charitable "sister" Foundations made the initial investment to develop and promote those standards. This is crony capitalism at its worst.