



# Common Questions Answered

Topic papers 1–12  
and action steps



# 1. What is the Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards (“Common Core”) are two sets of K–12 academic standards that outline what students are expected to learn in English language arts and mathematics each year from kindergarten through high school. The goal of this academic checklist is not the acquisition of child-oriented skills such as literacy, proficiency, or increased graduation rates, nor does it embrace the more lofty goal of pursuing truth, knowledge, and wisdom. Rather the Common Core seeks to achieve the utilitarian purpose of making students “college- and career-ready.”<sup>1</sup> “College and career readiness” has never been defined by the authors of the standards, notes Dr. Sandra Stotsky, a member of the Common Core Validation Committee who refused to sign off on the standards.<sup>2</sup>

The motivating force behind the Common Core is not the standards themselves, but the belief that a nationalized, uniform system is the best method of education. The Common Core was written by the National Governors Association (NGA)—an organization of governors, their head staff members, and policy makers—and the Council of Chief State School Officials (CCSSO).

Within two months of their release on June 2, 2010, the Common Core State Standards had been adopted by 28 states that promised to implement the standards by fall 2013 and replace their current state assessments with tests aligned to the Common Core by the 2014–15 school year.<sup>3</sup> The states also agreed to begin collecting student data from preschool through workforce, an element NGA considered essential.<sup>4</sup> By the end of 2010, a total of 41 states and the District of Columbia had agreed to implement the Common Core. Five more states, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity adopted the Common Core in 2011.<sup>5</sup>

Proponents praised this rapid adoption, asserting that Common Core will bolster state standards that plummeted as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). However, some education experts were shocked. “Deciding so quickly, to me, is irresponsible,” Rutgers professor Joseph Rosenstein commented. “It was like it was a done deal, a foregone conclusion.”<sup>6</sup>

There is no academic evidence that would suggest the superiority of the Common Core to current state standards; thus, academic research did not drive its adoption. Moreover, independent

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<sup>1</sup> “Mission Statement,” Common Core Standards State Initiative, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> Sandra Stotsky, “Testimony for a Hearing on House Bill No. 2923” (Texas Legislature), accessed June 8, 2013, <http://coehp.uark.edu/colleague/9863.php>.

<sup>3</sup> See “In the States,” Common Core Standards State Initiative, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>.

<sup>4</sup> Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 10, accessed June 8, 2013,

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Gewertz, “State Adoptions of Common Standards Steam Ahead,” *Education Week* (July 14, 2010).

evaluations of the standards have strongly questioned the academic stature of the package of goals.<sup>7</sup> Rather, enticed by the millions of federal dollars promised to states that would quickly adopt all of its provisions, cash-strapped states rashly committed to the Common Core. Though the federal government is prohibited by law from mandating the content of curriculum or assessments, the Department of Education successfully used dollars taken from American taxpayers to drive the implementation of common standards and assessments across the United States.<sup>8</sup>

The Common Core should be understood as the culmination of a movement that has simmered in America for the past decade to adopt consistent national academic standards and assessments and build bigger student databases. Two trails can be traced to the origin of the Common Core: the trail left by private organizations and the trail left by the federal government.

Long known for an aggressive education reform agenda focused on collection of detailed student data, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation poured millions of dollars into the creation of the Common Core, beginning in 2007 when the foundation gave \$27 million to NGA, CCSSO, and Achieve to help develop and advance common state standards and student data systems.<sup>9</sup> (Achieve is an organization founded in 1996 by a group of governors and corporate leaders to work for standards-based education reform across the states.) The result of this funding was a study called *Benchmarking for Success*. The Gates Foundation continued its involvement in education policy by giving over \$12 million to CCSSO in 2009 and \$2.1 million to NGA from 2009 to 2011.<sup>10</sup> NGA and CCSSO partnered in June 2009 to begin writing the Common Core, and Achieve evaluated and promoted the standards.<sup>11</sup>

These organizations also spurred the involvement of the federal government in pushing Common Core. In December 2008, as Barack Obama was preparing to take office as president, he received a copy of *Benchmarking for Success*, which emphasizes the federal government's role in helping promote "a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for

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<sup>7</sup> Robert S. Eitel and Kent D. Talbert, "The Road to a National Curriculum: The Legal Aspects of the Common Core Standards, Race to the Top, and Conditional Waivers," *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 81 (February 2012): 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Emmett McGroarty and Jane Robbins, "Controlling Education from the Top: Why Common Core Is Bad for America," *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 87 (May 2012): 4.

<sup>10</sup> See Council of Chief State School Officers, *Financial Statements: Years Ended June 30, 2010 and 2009* (McLean: Goodman and Company, 2010), 11, accessed June 8, 2013, [http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2010/financials/CCSSO\\_financial\\_statements\\_FY2010.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2010/financials/CCSSO_financial_statements_FY2010.pdf); "Awarded Grants," Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database#q/k=national%20governors%20association>.

<sup>11</sup> "Achieve," Achieve, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.achieve.org/files/About%20AchieveADP-Apr2012.pdf>. The College Board and ACT were also key advisors in the development of the Common Core; see "Frequently Asked Questions," Common Core Standards State Initiative, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions> and ACT, *The Alignment of Common Core and ACT's College and Career Readiness System* (ACT, June 2010).

grade K–12” and in streamlining state assessments.<sup>12</sup> In March 2009, President Obama’s secretary of education, Arne Duncan, expressed the administration’s commitment to helping “states develop and implement rigorous, college-ready academic achievement standards along with improved assessments.”<sup>13</sup> And the Obama administration would make good on this promise by funding and overseeing the development of the assessment tests that states have promised to implement by 2014–15.

Today, 45 states are committed to the Common Core: two sets of mediocre academic standards intended to stretch across the nation; two standardized assessments funded and reviewed by the federal government; and detailed data systems that will trace students from preschool to the workforce.

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<sup>12</sup> Craig D. Jerald, *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education* (NGA, CCSSO, and Achieve, 2008), 24, 31, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.achieve.org/files/BenchmarkingforSuccess.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Arne Duncan, “Secretary Arne Duncan Testifies before the House Budget Committee on the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request,” accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/secretary-arne-duncan-testifies-house-budget-committee-fiscal-year-2010-budget-request>.

## 2. Is the Common Core already being implemented?

All 50 states except Alaska and Texas initially committed to the development of common state standards when the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officials launched their efforts to write the Common Core on June 1, 2009.<sup>14</sup> At that time, individual states reserved the right to determine whether to formally adopt the finalized standards.

Forty-five states, four territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the Common Core State Standards since their release on June 2, 2010. Minnesota adopted only the English language arts standards.<sup>15</sup> All 45 states adopting both sets of standards became members of one or both of the consortia developing standardized assessments. These states thus committed to fully implement the standards and replace their state assessments with whatever tests the consortia produce.<sup>16</sup> Alaska, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia have refused to adopt the Common Core. The Texas legislature confirmed its unequivocal opposition by rejecting the standards on a 140–2 vote.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the states' rapid adoption of the Common Core, implementing the standards in public schools has been gradual. A study conducted by two education policy firms found that in 2011, just seven of the 45 states that had adopted the Common Core had fully developed plans for implementing the standards. In 2012, only 14 more states had produced complete plans.<sup>18</sup>

Even though some states have not adopted the Common Core and many have been slow to implement its provisions, the Common Core is already impacting students across the country. The Common Core was consulted as a curriculum authority in the formulation of the National Sexuality Education Standards.<sup>19</sup> In the name of the Common Core's sophisticated writing

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<sup>14</sup> "NGA and CCSSO Comment on CCSSI Governance Suggestions," Common Core State Standards Initiative, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/articles/9-nga-and-ccsso-comment-on-ccssi-governance-suggestions>.

<sup>15</sup> See "In the States," Common Core Standards State Initiative, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>.

<sup>16</sup> Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 10, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>17</sup> Shane Vander Hart, "Texas House Makes It Clear: No Common Core Here!" *Truth in American Education* (May 7, 2013), accessed June 8, 2013, <http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-state-standards/texas-house-makes-it-clear-no-common-core-here/>.

<sup>18</sup> Education First and Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, *A National Perspective on States' Progress in Common Core State Standards Implementation Planning* (2013), 6, [http://www.edweek.org/media/movingforward\\_ef\\_epe\\_020413.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/movingforward_ef_epe_020413.pdf). Three key areas of implementation were considered in this study: teacher professional development, curriculum guides or instructional material, and teacher-evaluation system.

<sup>19</sup> Future of Sex Education Initiative, *National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K–12* (Future of Sex Education Initiative, 2012), 6, accessed August 16, 2013, <http://www.ashaweb.org/files/public/sexuality%20education/josh-fose-standards.pdf>.

expectations, a high school teacher in New York tasked her students with persuading her in five paragraphs or less that Jews are evil and that she should be loyal to the Third Reich.<sup>20</sup>

As the possibility of widespread impact becomes increasingly apparent and the pedagogical weakness of the standards is exposed, states that originally adopted the standards are scrambling to delay or defund implementation. It is also becoming clear that the predicted cost of implementing the Common Core is much higher than the amount of money the Department of Education used to persuade states to accept *de facto* national standards and assessments.<sup>21</sup>

The Michigan legislature passed a budget bill cutting off funding for implementation of the Common Core on June 4, 2013.<sup>22</sup> Legislators in New York and Pennsylvania are also pushing such bills, although similar legislation failed to pass in Alabama and Georgia.<sup>23</sup> Governor Mike Pence of Indiana signed a bill on May 8, 2013, that delays implementation until public hearings on the Common Core can be held.<sup>24</sup> A similar bill in Missouri failed to pass, but a similar bill was introduced in the Florida House of Representatives on August 28, 2013.<sup>25</sup> Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett has ordered schools to discontinue plans to implement the Common Core until he can consult with lawmakers.<sup>26</sup> Legislation was introduced in the Kansas legislature on February 11, 2013, to prevent the use of Common Core–related materials and assessments created in 2013 until the legislature can evaluate and approve them in 2014, but this bill failed to

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<sup>20</sup> Scott Waldman, “School Apologizes for ‘Nazi’ Writing Assignment,” *Times Union*, April 12, 2013, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/School-apology-Think-like-a-Nazi-task-vs-Jews-4428669.php#photo-4458888>.

<sup>21</sup> In Texas, Race to the Top funding would have amounted to about \$75 per student. The cost of implementing the Common Core in Texas would be approximately \$635 per student. See Rick Perry, Letter to the Honorable Arne Duncan, Office of the Governor, January 13, 2010, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://governor.state.tx.us/files/press-office/O-DuncanArne201001130344.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Brian Smith, “Common Core Standards Funding Officially Blocked in New Michigan Budget after Senate Vote,” *All Michigan*, June 4, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, [http://www.mlive.com/education/index.ssf/2013/06/common\\_core\\_standards\\_funding.html](http://www.mlive.com/education/index.ssf/2013/06/common_core_standards_funding.html).

<sup>23</sup> “Bill No. 7994,” State of New York Assembly, 2013–14, accessed July 10, 2013, [http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default\\_fld&bn=A07994&term=2013&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Text=Y&Votes=Y#jump\\_to\\_Votes](http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld&bn=A07994&term=2013&Summary=Y&Actions=Y&Text=Y&Votes=Y#jump_to_Votes); “Exit Strategy: State Lawmakers Consider Dropping Common Core,” *Education Week*, last modified July 2, 2013, accessed July 10, 2013, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/anti-cc-bill.html>; Joy Pullman, “Bill Would Withdraw Georgia from Common Core,” Heartland Institute, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/02/15/bill-would-withdraw-georgia-common-core>.

<sup>24</sup> Valerie Strauss, “Indiana Halts Common Core Implementation,” *Washington Post*, May 13, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/05/13/indiana-halts-common-core-implementation/>.

<sup>25</sup> “Current Bill Summary: SB 210,” Missouri Senate, accessed October 4, 2013, [http://www.senate.mo.gov/13info/BTS\\_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=17430596](http://www.senate.mo.gov/13info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=17430596); “HB 25,” Florida House of Representatives, 2013–14, accessed August 29, 2013, [http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=\\_h0025\\_.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=0025&Session=2014](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?FileName=_h0025_.docx&DocumentType=Bill&BillNumber=0025&Session=2014).

<sup>26</sup> Jan Murphy, “Corbett Orders Delay in Common Core Academic Standards’ Implementation,” *Penn Live*, May 20, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, [http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/05/corbett\\_orders\\_delay\\_in\\_common.html](http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/05/corbett_orders_delay_in_common.html).

pass.<sup>27</sup> Bills in Oklahoma and North Carolina would stall implementation until the cost of implementing the standards and their academic quality have been more thoroughly explored.<sup>28</sup> A bill introduced in the Ohio General Assembly would prevent the state board of education from adopting the Common Core and the state department of education from implementing the standards.<sup>29</sup> A bill presented to the New Jersey Senate would create a task force to evaluate the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career assessments and prohibit use of the tests until the task force’s final report is submitted.<sup>30</sup> Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Utah have withdrawn from the state consortia developing assessments aligned to the Common Core standards.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> “HB 2289,” Kansas Legislature, July 11, 2013, accessed July 11, 2013, [http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2013\\_14/measures/hb2289/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2013_14/measures/hb2289/).

<sup>28</sup> “OK HB1907 | 2013 | Regular Session,” LegiScan, June 8, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://legiscan.com/OK/bill/HB1907/2013>; Rachel Sheffield, “North Carolina Questions Common Core,” Heartland Institute, April 26, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/04/26/north-carolina-questions-common-core>.

<sup>29</sup> Ohio General Assembly, H.B. No. 237, 130th General Assembly, Regular Session, 2013–14, accessed August 20, 2013, [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130\\_HB237](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=130_HB237).

<sup>30</sup> S2973, New Jersey 215th Legislature, Regular Session, 2013–14, accessed October 4, 2013, [http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/S3000/2973\\_I1.HTM](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2012/Bills/S3000/2973_I1.HTM).

<sup>31</sup> Evelyn B. Stacey, “Alabama Exits National Common Core Tests,” Heartland Institute, February 13, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/02/13/alabama-exits-national-common-core-tests>; “Governor Rick Scott Announces Path Forward for High Education Standards,” Rick Scott 45th Governor of Florida, September 23, 2013, accessed October 4, 2013, <http://www.flgov.com/2013/09/23/governor-rick-scott-announces-path-forward-for-high-education-standards-decision-to-withdraw-from-parcc/>; “Georgia Withdrawing from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium,” July 22, 2013, accessed August 1, 2013, <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Pages/PressReleaseDetails.aspx?PressView=default&pid=123>; Indiana Governor Mike Pence, “Governor Pence Announces Intent to Withdraw Indiana as a Member from the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Governing Board,” news release, July 29, 2013, accessed August 16, 2013, [http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?fromdate=7/29/2013&todate=7/29/2013&display=Day&type=public&eventidn=115942&view=EventDetails&information\\_id=185774](http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?fromdate=7/29/2013&todate=7/29/2013&display=Day&type=public&eventidn=115942&view=EventDetails&information_id=185774); Andrea Eger, “Oklahoma to Drop Testing Consortium, Develop Own Tests, Barresi Says,” *Tulsa World*, July 2, 2013, accessed July 10, 2013, [http://www.tulsaworld.com/article.aspx/Oklahoma\\_to\\_drop\\_testing\\_consortium\\_develop\\_own\\_tests/20130702\\_11\\_A1\\_CUTLIN399354](http://www.tulsaworld.com/article.aspx/Oklahoma_to_drop_testing_consortium_develop_own_tests/20130702_11_A1_CUTLIN399354); “Utah Withdraws from Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Developing Common Core Tests,” *Huffington Post*, August 7, 2012, accessed June 8, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/07/utah-withdraws-from-smart\\_n\\_1752261.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/07/utah-withdraws-from-smart_n_1752261.html).

### 3. How is the federal government involved in the Common Core?

Three sets of laws prohibit the federal government from prescribing the content of state curricula and assessments, yet the Department of Education has done more than any other organization to propel the Common Core and is currently funding the creation of standardized assessments that are fully aligned with the Common Core.<sup>32</sup>

#### Triggering the Adoption

In March 2009, the Department of Education revealed its backdoor method of gaining federal control of state educational policy when Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the Race to the Top (RTTT) program—an opportunity for states to compete for a share of \$4.35 billion reserved for state education incentives by the American Recovery and Restoration Act. To even be eligible for funding, states had to promise that they would fully adopt a set of common college- and career-ready standards supplemented with only 15% of their own standards.<sup>33</sup> Applicants also had to demonstrate that they would expand their state’s longitudinal data system to be in the same format as other states and to contain new data including student health, demographics, and success in postsecondary education.<sup>34</sup>

Some states realized that RTTT was a dangerous expansion of federal control over education and declined to apply. On a 9–0 vote, the Kansas Board of Education decided not to apply for RTTT funding, saying, “The federal criteria required more centralized control of public school education . . .”<sup>35</sup> Texas Governor Rick Perry explained to Secretary Duncan, “In order to submit an application that is preferred . . . for Race to the Top, Texas would have to commit . . . to the adoption of national curriculum standards and tests.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The General Education Provisions Act, the Department of Education Organization Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001—specifically bar federal involvement in the details of education. See Robert S. Eitel and Kent D. Talbert, “The Road to a National Curriculum: The Legal Aspects of the Common Core Standards, Race to the Top, and Conditional Waivers,” *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 81 (February 2012): 1.

<sup>33</sup> *Race to the Top Program Executive Summary* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, November 2009), 4, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>; *Federal Register* 74 no. 221 (November 18, 2009): 59836, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-11-18/pdf/E9-27427.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> *Federal Register* 74 no. 221 (November 18, 2009): 59836, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-11-18/pdf/E9-27427.pdf>; *A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (U.S. Department of Education, March 2010), accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Scott Rothschild, “Kansas Drops Out of ‘Race to the Top’ Education Competition,” *The Lawrence Journal–World*, April 13, 2010, accessed June 10, 2013, [http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2010/apr/13/kansas-drops-out-race-to-education-competition/?kansas\\_legislature](http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2010/apr/13/kansas-drops-out-race-to-education-competition/?kansas_legislature).

<sup>36</sup> Rick Perry, *Letter to the Honorable Arne Duncan*, Office of the Governor, January 13, 2010, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://governor.state.tx.us/files/press-office/O-DuncanArne201001130344.pdf>.



Not only did RTTT application criteria advance the Common Core, but application deadlines forced states to rashly commit to the standards. The first two states that received RTTT grants had to promise to adhere to the Common Core by January 19, 2010, without ever seeing the standards. The second wave of states saw the finalized standards, but these states were given a mere two months to evaluate the Common Core against their own state standards and outline a detailed plan for implementation. Nineteen states ultimately received RTTT grants.<sup>37</sup> The Department of Education also used waivers for the most burdensome obligations under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to entice 38 states to implement college- and career-ready standards by the 2013–14 school year and use corresponding assessments by 2014–15.<sup>38</sup>

Supporters of the Common Core have emphasized that the Department of Education never specified that the Common Core was the “college- and career-ready standards that states needed to adopt.” But the connection with RTTT and the NCLB waivers is evident. Every state that has received an RTTT grant or NCLB waiver has adopted the Common Core and is a member of one of the two state consortia writing standardized assessments.<sup>39</sup> The only exception is Virginia, which received an NCLB waiver after proving to the Department of Education that it had adopted “revised content standards that . . . are fully aligned with Common Core State Standards.”<sup>40</sup>

Though the last RTTT grants were awarded to states in late 2011, on August 6, 2013, the Department of Education announced the Race to the Top—District (RTTT-D) competition. The purpose of this program “is to build on the momentum of other Race to the Top programs by encouraging bold, innovative reform at the local level.”<sup>41</sup> Grants ranging from \$4 million to \$30 million are being offered to local education agencies (LEAs) in states that have adopted the Common Core. Applying LEAs must detail their efforts to institute rigorous teacher and principal evaluation systems, data systems that specifically connect individual teachers with individual students, and data systems that compile student-level data from preschool through higher education. Winners of RTTT-D will be announced in December 2013.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “Race to the Top Fund—Awards,” U.S. Department of Education, June 10, 2013, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/awards.html>.

<sup>38</sup> *ESEA Waiver Flexibility Request*, U.S. Department of Education, revised February 10, 2012, accessed June 10, 2013, [www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/esea-flexibility-request.doc](http://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/esea-flexibility-request.doc).

<sup>39</sup> See “Race to the Top Fund—Awards,” <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/awards.html>; “ESEA Flexibility,” U.S. Department of Education, June 10, 2013, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/esea-flexibility/index.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Virginia Department of Education, *ESEA Flexibility Request* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, July 2012), 15, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/approved-requests/va.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *FY 2013 Race to the Top—District Executive Summary* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2013), accessed August 20, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/2013-executive-summary.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> “Race to the Top District (RTT-D),” U.S. Department of Education, last modified August 19, 2013, accessed August 22, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>.

## Federally Funded Assessments

Since the early months of the Obama administration, Secretary Duncan has stressed the need for new assessments and student data systems to provide consistent accountability across the states. In April 2010, he announced another set of Race to the Top challenges: consortia of states boasting at least 15 members could receive part of \$362 million to craft the assessments based on the Common Core.<sup>43</sup> Applying consortia had to submit evidence from each member state that it would adopt standards “substantially identical across all States in [the] consortium,” fully implement whatever assessments were produced by 2014–15, and expand its collection systems.<sup>44</sup> In late 2010, two consortia were granted \$170 million and \$160 million to develop assessments for use in their 45 member states (combined total at the time).

Critics of the Common Core quickly noted that it was unclear who would evaluate the assessments and determine whether they actually aligned with the Common Core. The federal government answered this question by establishing a program officer in the Department of Education who has the power to redirect consortia activity if the “outcomes are inconsistent with the intended project outcomes.”<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, in March 2013 the Department of Education created a technical review board to evaluate the assessments produced by the two consortia and “[identify] how we can better partner with the consortia during this critical development phase.”<sup>46</sup>

By dangling federal funds in front of the states in the midst of a trying recession, the federal government has circumvented the law and bound over 90% of the nation to following the same academic standards, using standardized assessments funded and reviewed by the Department of Education, and building the most expansive data systems in American history.

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<sup>43</sup> *Federal Register* 75 no. 68 (April 9, 2010): 18171, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-04-09/pdf/2010-8176.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> “Notice Inviting Applications,” *Federal Register* 75 no. 68 (April 9, 2010): 18171, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-04-09/pdf/2010-8176.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> *Cooperative Agreement between the U.S. Department of Education and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the State of Washington (Fiscal Agent)* (January 7, 2011): 4, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/sbac-cooperative-agreement.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup> “Performance—Race to the Top Technical Review,” U.S. Department of Education, March 2013, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/performance.html>; for further information on the duties of the Technical Review Board, see *Race to the Top Assessment Program: Technical Review Process* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, April 2013), accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/technical-review-process.pdf>.

## 4. Does the Common Core have a philosophical bias?

The philosophy of any educational program can manifest itself in either its overall construct or the details of the curriculum—sometimes both. The most important features of the philosophy of the Common Core are revealed by observing its fundamental orientation rather than parsing the details of mathematics and language learning objectives.

Professor Charles Glenn of Boston University writes with keen insight into the goals of centralized education schemes:

How can the pluralism that we claim to value, the liberty that we prize, be reconciled with a “state pedagogy” designed to serve state purposes? Is there not wisdom in John Stuart Mill’s remark that “all that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity of opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance diversity of education. A general state education is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another . . . in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism over the mind.”<sup>47</sup>

Three threads of philosophy weave through the Common Core—statism, moral relativism, and progressivism, which are revealed both by what is proclaimed and what is omitted. The statist goals of the Common Core are implicit in the lockstep uniformity that is the central thesis of the program. All children in all states will learn the same content in the same manner so that the children may become useful workers. Traditionally, education has been premised on the notion that all education of value is designed to know truth that only can be fully known in God. The omission of the pursuit of truth as a core goal of the Common Core demonstrates its alliance with the dominant philosophy of modern education that there are neither absolute truths nor absolute values. Finally, we see progressivism in the view that all that is new is inherently superior to that which comes from prior generations of human knowledge.

The obvious influence of progressivism and relativism in the structure and goals of the Common Core reveals a view of education that is contrary to the desires of parents and educators who have chosen to pursue homeschooling, private schooling, and other forms of educational choice.

The story of progressivism in education begins with John Dewey. His influence over American educators surged in the 1960s and 1970s, and similarities between Dewey’s progressivism and the Common Core prove that Dewey’s thought still penetrates American educational philosophy. For example, Dewey advocated “schoolhouse experimentation,” meaning that educators should

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<sup>47</sup> Charles Leslie Glenn, Jr., *The Myth of the Common School* (Oakland: ICS Press, 2002), 12.

continually reject old methods in favor of new ones.<sup>48</sup> The Common Core is this kind of schoolhouse experimentation.

“[The standards] are being imposed on the children of this nation despite the fact that no one has any idea how they will affect students, teachers, or schools,” liberal historian Diane Ravitch warns. “We are a nation of guinea pigs.”<sup>49</sup>

Dewey also argued for standardized curriculum to prevent one student from becoming superior to others and to train all students “for leadership as well as obedience.”<sup>50</sup> Dewey envisioned a workforce filled with people of “politically and socially correct attitudes” who would respond to orders without question.<sup>51</sup> Workforce readiness is the goal of the Common Core, and Dewey would have applauded the replacement of man “with something more convenient to social planners, more manageable,” as Dr. Anthony Esolen of Providence College described it.<sup>52</sup>

Relativism’s influence is evident in the Common Core’s open-ended, research-based assessment questions and expansive new data systems. In the late 1900s, Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences injected relativism into the philosophy of education.<sup>53</sup> Contending that children have different cognitive strengths and styles, Gardner echoed Dewey’s assertions that children’s differing experiences eliminate objectively right answers.<sup>54</sup> Gardner further argued that it is “unfair” to expect all children to answer the same question in the same way. He called on educators to reject standardized tests designed to measure proficiency according to “logic and mathematics” and substitute assessments that elicit the differences between children’s intelligences.<sup>55</sup>

Since the Common Core was first announced, the government’s rhetoric has been dominated by the jargon of “assessments” instead of “standardized tests.” The new requirement of using open-ended questions on standardized assessments is a direct result of Gardner’s relativism.<sup>56</sup> Gardner also argued for comprehensively tracking student performance so that methods of instruction can be adjusted and students can be matched with jobs suited to their intellectual tendencies.<sup>57</sup> The

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<sup>48</sup> Henry T. Edmonson, III, *John Dewey and the Decline of American Education* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2006), 28–29.

<sup>49</sup> Diane Ravitch, “Why I Oppose the Common Core Standards,” *Washington Post*, February 26, 2013, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/02/26/why-i-oppose-common-core-standards-ravitch/>.

<sup>50</sup> Edmonson, *John Dewey*, 67.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony Esolen, *Ten Ways to the Destroy the Imagination of Your Child* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2010), 237.

<sup>53</sup> See Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory in Practice* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

<sup>54</sup> Edmondson, 39.

<sup>55</sup> See Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences*, 72, 169–170.

<sup>56</sup> Arne Duncan, “Beyond the Bubble Tests: The Next Generation of Assessments,” Department of Education, September 2, 2010, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/beyond-bubble-tests-next-generation-assessments-secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-state-1>.

<sup>57</sup> Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences*, 10, 72.

Department of Education's emphasis on enlarging data systems and replacing teacher-student interaction with advanced computer-assisted learning stems from Gardner's philosophy.

The progressive and relativistic idea that the purpose of education is merely for all students to study a specific set of material, show growth by typing narrative answers on assessments, and grow up to be productive members of the workforce must be refuted. Progressivism and relativism serve as the means of achieving the goal of a citizenry with a statist orientation.

America rose to greatness when education was utterly decentralized and widely considered to be beyond the competence of government. One might reasonably wonder why educational planners do not consider a return to that which has proven successful in the past rather than pursue a trend of their own making. This is especially inexplicable in light of the contemporary success of the homeschooling movement, which is both entirely individualistic and dominated by more traditional approaches to educational goals and content.

The philosophy of the Common Core is not revealed in the individual standards. Many forms of education would result in the acquisition of similar individual items of knowledge and skill. The philosophy that is antithetical to many is revealed in the broad purposes and the coercive uniformity of the Common Core.

## 5. Does the Common Core provide for individualized education?

The Department of Education has praised the Common Core for its focus on “computer adaptive testing” to supply teachers with data so that they can adjust their teaching styles and provide their students with individualized instruction.<sup>58</sup> Individualized instruction is widely regarded as an ideal way to teach. But in practice, the Common Core’s rigid and technology-laden approach to learning makes individualized education almost impossible.

The Common Core standards require students to master a checklist of skills every year. While state education departments may add a limited number of learning objectives, classroom teachers are required to teach to these composite standards as the prime goal of their instruction.<sup>59</sup> Teachers must teach from the prescribed list and at the prescribed pace. This one-size-fits-all approach will supposedly makes children “college- and career-ready,” but it will undoubtedly produce a generation that has been trained to think about the same things in the same way as all of their peers. Moreover, it is reasonable to question whether a regimented approach to learning will produce young men and women capable of careers that call for genuinely independent analysis and creative problem solving. In May 2013, a 15-year teaching veteran from Chicago expressed her frustration in a YouTube video, lamenting that “raising students’ test scores on standardized tests is now the only goal, and in order to achieve it, the creativity, flexibility, and spontaneity . . . have been eliminated.”<sup>60</sup>

Proponents of the Common Core respond that the combination of the new assessment techniques and the growing stockpile of educational data will enable computers and teachers to tailor lessons and tests to suit the learning needs of individual students. The use of computers, however, does not mitigate the rigid standards that refuse to bend to the needs of individual students.

The development of standardized curricula further destroys the chance for individualization. Supporters *say* that the Common Core individualizes education, but they *seek* to have every child in American read the same books, learn at the same rate, and be ready to assimilate into similar colleges and careers. The Common Core is the antithesis of an individualized approach; it is a uniform education for the 59 million schoolchildren in the United States.

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<sup>58</sup> Arne Duncan, “Beyond the Bubble Tests: The Next Generation of Assessments,” Department of Education, September 2, 2010, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/beyond-bubble-tests-next-generation-assessments-secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-state-l>.

<sup>59</sup> States may supplement the entirety of the Common Core with 15 percent of their own standards. See *Federal Register* 74 no. 221(November 18, 2009): 59836, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-11-18/pdf/E9-27427.pdf>.

<sup>60</sup> “Teacher Resigns in Video, Targets Standardized Education: ‘Everything I Love about Teaching Extinct’” (video), May 26, 2013, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66K4e8qjRmY>.

The imposition of fixed standards and curricula are only the first blows to individualized education. Increasing emphasis on computer-assisted learning further eliminates the possibility for individualization. The Common Core's required expansion of statewide longitudinal data systems to include assessment and homework scores necessitates that students spend more time using computer-assisted learning programs and less time interacting with their teachers. The diminution of human interaction is accelerated by teachers using printed-off data analyses to make pedagogical decisions.

Individualized education comes from a teacher identifying a child's strengths and weaknesses and helping him learn in light of these. It does not come from computers that are programmed to change questions based on certain inputs, because the computer will never know that a child may have decided to simply click "C" no matter how many ways the test question is asked. Individualized education is not fostered when a teacher receives a dismal report about her students' progress, but she is given no time to help struggling students. Instead, she must rush to the next concept in order to cover this year's prescribed standards.

The rigid, dehumanized method necessitated by the Common Core's requirements also threatens quality of education. Whether incidentally or by design, the Common Core endangers the idea of a liberal education and jeopardizes the goal of preparing children to be good citizens by sacrificing the pursuits of literacy, future curiosity, and loving what is objectively true on the altar of "college- and career-readiness." Aiming to teach "what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college and careers" mass-produces humans who will obediently serve in the workforce.<sup>61</sup>

The beauty of a decentralized approach to education is that if teachers have the opportunity to teach small-enough classes, they are able to know when they should introduce particular concepts and where they should focus based on the interests of their students. Then students can be taught as individual human beings—not machines that can be analyzed and responded to by a computer program. But tragically, there is no room for this kind individualized education in the unbending, computerized Common Core.

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<sup>61</sup> "Frequently Asked Questions," Common Core State Standards Initiative, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>.

## 6. Is there any evidence that centralized education works better than decentralized education?

In the 1980s, Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander instituted Basic Skills First. This program micromanaged public school curricula and required that Tennessee homeschoolers take the same annual assessment as public school students. After two years, homeschoolers had outperformed public students so dramatically that the state stopped administering the same standardized test to the homeschooled students. The triumph of homeschooling over Tennessee's centralized educational system is but one proof of an increasingly evident principle: decentralizing education is the surest way to improve American schools.<sup>62</sup>

In the United States, experimenting with centralized reform has done almost nothing to improve the performance of students. From 1971 to 2008, American students' scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) mathematics assessments have improved only 3.4%, despite the billions of dollars the federal government has poured into education. The data on reading is even more disconcerting: NAEP reading scores have not changed since 1992 and have improved just 1% since 1971.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, it appears that the more money the federal government invests in education, the smaller the return. In 2011, Andrew J. Coulson, director of the Education Center for Freedom at the CATO Institute, found that the achievement gap between students of different socioeconomic backgrounds has not improved since the beginning of federal education spending in 1958.<sup>64</sup>

Noting that several countries which consistently outperform America on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests have nationalized education systems, U.S. reformers continue to argue for centralizing the American education system. However, PISA results are inconclusive as to whether a centralized system is more effective. In 2006, 27 countries ranked higher than the U.S. on the PISA science exam, and 17 of these countries had nationalized systems. But 12 nations that ranked *below* the U.S. also had centralized systems.<sup>65</sup> Regardless, centralizing education has been ineffective in the United States. Professor Jay P. Greene offers a possible explanation saying, "We are a large and diverse country. Teaching everyone the same material at the same time and in the same way may work in small

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<sup>62</sup> Read more about the failed Basic Skills First program at <http://www.hslda.org/courtreport/V7N6/V7N602.asp>.

<sup>63</sup> See the Long-Term Trend analysis tool at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/litdata/>, accessed June 13, 2013. This analysis reflects the test scores of 13-year-old students.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew J. Coulson, "The Impact of Federal Involvement in America's Classrooms," CATO Institute, February 10, 2011, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://www.cato.org/publications/congressional-testimony/impact-federal-involvement-americas-classrooms>.

<sup>65</sup> *The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2006), 20, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisaproducts/pisa2006/39725224.pdf> and Neal McCluskey, "Behind the Curtain: Assessing the Case for National Curriculum Standards," *CATO Policy Analysis* no. 661 (February 17, 2010): 9, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa661.pdf>.



homogenous countries . . . but it cannot work in the United States. There is no single best way that would be appropriate for all students in all circumstances.”<sup>66</sup>

Though evidence on the efficacy of centralized education systems is inconclusive, the benefits of a decentralized approach are documented both internationally and domestically. Finland’s students topped the PISA charts in 2000 and 2006, and ranked in the top echelon in 2003 and 2009.<sup>67</sup> Finland has rejected heavy standardized testing since the national assessment movement swept through the world in the 1990s. It refuses to rank its teachers according to the test results of their students; its National Board of Education even closed its inspectorate in 1991. Finnish teachers design their own courses and spend about 80% more time teaching classes than American teachers.<sup>68</sup> Deliberate decentralization of education in Finland has produced one of the foremost systems in the world.

The benefits of a decentralized approach to education have also been proven in America. Since 2004, the Department of Education has provided \$7,500 scholarships to low-income residents of the District of Columbia allowing children to attend private schools.<sup>69</sup> In 2008–09, students attending private schools as a result of this program performed equal to or better than children in public schools on standardized tests, and the graduation rate of the private school students was significantly higher than that of the public school students. This decentralized approach yielded better results at a fourth of the cost of the average public school education in D.C. in 2008–09.<sup>70</sup>

The success of homeschooling in America offers further domestic proof of the benefits of decentralized education. In 2013, Robert Kunzman of Indiana University and Milton Gaither of Messiah College evaluated multiple studies and showed that homeschool students score above average in reading and English arts. They noted that homeschool students transition into postsecondary life much more successfully than public school students.<sup>71</sup> Kunzman and Gaither cited 10 independent studies indicating that homeschoolers outrank their traditionally schooled counterparts in collegiate grade point average, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and strength of

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<sup>66</sup> Jay P. Greene, “Testimony before the United States House of Representatives Education and Workforce Committee,” U.S. House of Representatives, September 21, 2011, accessed June 13, 2013, [http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/09.21.11\\_greene.pdf](http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/09.21.11_greene.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> See Samuel E. Abrams, “The Children Must Play,” *New Republic*, January 28, 2011, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/politics/82329/education-reform-Finland-US#>, *The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2000), 69, and *The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2009), 14.

<sup>68</sup> Abrams, “The Children Must Play.”

<sup>69</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program* (National Association for Educational Evaluation and Research Assistance, 2010), accessed June 18, 2013, <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104018/pdf/20104018.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Coulson, “Impact of Federal Involvement.”

<sup>71</sup> See Robert Kunzman and Milton Gaither, “Homeschooling: A Comprehensive Survey of the Research,” *The Journal of Educational Alternatives* 2, no. 1 (2013): 17.

religious and political views. They also observed that homeschoolers soar far above their peers in leadership ability.<sup>72</sup>

The evidence indicates that if the designers of the Common Core are truly seeking to make students “college- and career-ready,” they have chosen the worst possible approach. A one-size-fits-all, centralized system directed by bureaucrats is not the antidote for American education. Only the individuality and innovation found in a decentralized approach can revive our failing system.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 29–30.

## 7. Will the Common Core impact homeschools and private schools?

For now, the Common Core applies only to public schools in the 45 states that have adopted it. Federal law, under 20 U.S.C. § 7886, prohibits any federal education mandates from applying to private schools that do not receive federal funds or homeschools.

However, there is no such protection for families who have enrolled their children in programs that receive federal funds, especially those who are using virtual charter schools that are run through the local public school for their home education.

Though the specific provisions of the Common Core only directly bind public schools, it is reasonably predictable that private schools that accept federal funding (through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, for example) may face a decision between foregoing federal funding and accepting the Common Core standards in the near future. Moreover, President Obama intends to condition funding from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act on states' agreement to follow common standards "developed by a state-led consortium."<sup>73</sup> There is no reason to expect that private schools who receive Title I funding would not have to agree to this mandate.

The current impact of the Common Core on home and private education is revealed in the expanding state longitudinal databases, shifting college admissions expectations, newly updated curricula, and revised standardized tests. All these are fulfilling education historian Diane Ravitch's prediction that "no one will escape [the Common Core's] reach, whether they attend public or private school."<sup>74</sup>

Perhaps the most immediate threat to homeschool and private school students is the expansion of statewide longitudinal databases. The designers of the new systems fully intend for homeschool and private school students to be part of the massive data collection. At the National Conference on Student Assessment in 2011, officials from Oklahoma explained to CCSSO how the challenge of meeting the data requirements of federal and state education policies are motivating them to "Include student groups not now included (e.g., home-schooled) in the data system."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> "Preparing Students for College and the Workforce," White House, 2010, accessed June 4, 2013, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/education\\_standard\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/education_standard_factsheet.pdf); see also "Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (Title I, Part A)," U.S. Department of Education, accessed June 17, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html>.

<sup>74</sup> Diane Ravitch, "Why I Oppose the Common Core Standards," *Washington Post*, February 26, 2013, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/02/26/why-i-oppose-common-core-standards-ravitch/>.

<sup>75</sup> Sunny Becker et al., *Data, Data Everywhere: Progress, Challenges, and Recommendations for State Data Systems* (HumRRO, July 20, 2011), accessed June 5, 2013, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/110361334/Data-Data-Everywhere-CCSSO-Presentation-at-National-Conference-on-Student-Assessment>.

In light of the growing revelations that the government is engaging in massive invasion of privacy in spheres other than education, it is utterly impossible to believe that these databases will not be mined and misused to serve the ulterior purposes of a centralized government intent on growing its own power. For more information on the growing possibility of a national database, please see <http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/201309100.asp>.

Apart from the databases, we fear that the Common Core will eventually impact homeschool and private school students by affecting college admissions standards. Institutions of higher education are being pressured to adapt their standards for college readiness to the Common Core standards. The National Governors Association, instrumental in writing the Common Core, compiled a guide for states to use while implementing the Common Core. The document emphasizes that the Common Core standards for college readiness will be used by institutions of higher learning to determine whether a student is ready to enroll in a postsecondary course.<sup>76</sup> Achieve, one of the main organizations evaluating the Common Core, even exhorts institutions of higher education to revise their curricula to create “seamless transitions” from K–12 to postsecondary schools.<sup>77</sup>

This concern is being realized in multiple states, including Illinois. In a 2012 policy brief, the Illinois State Board of Education emphasized the need to seamlessly connect high school and college education by streamlining the curriculum taught to high school seniors and college freshmen according to the Common Core.<sup>78</sup> Though Illinois encouraged state universities to share with state high schools what kind of material students will be expected to know in their first year of college, nothing indicates that homeschools or private schools would be privy to the same information. This movement to standardize postsecondary academic standards reveals that the Common Core’s emphases and methods will permeate American education beyond elementary and secondary public schools.

The final area of concern for homeschoolers is that national and other popular standardized tests across the country are being rewritten to be aligned to the Common Core. David Coleman, the president of the College Board, was one of the primary authors of the Common Core English language arts standards. He has announced that the SAT will be redesigned to fully implement the Common Core.<sup>79</sup> Questions are being added to the ACT to reflect the Common Core’s

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<sup>76</sup> Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 19, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>77</sup> Jacqueline E. King, *Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Action Agenda for Higher Education* (Achieve, January 2011), 5, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Implementing-the-Common-Core-State-Standards-2011.pdf>.

<sup>78</sup> *Bridging the Gap: An Illinois Toolkit for Using the Common Core for Secondary and Postsecondary Alignment* (Eugene, OR: Educational Policy Improvement Center, 2012), 11, accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.epiconline.org/publications/document-detail.dot?id=fe40a824-dd0e-455b-a605-c14c8de1eabb>.

<sup>79</sup> Tamar Lewin, “Backer of Common Core School Curriculum Is Chosen to Lead College Board,” *New York Times*, May 16, 2012, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/16/education/david-coleman-to-lead->

emphasis on tracing ideas through multiple texts and increased focus on statistics. The ACT will also contain optional open-ended questions to assess students' ability to explain and support their claims.<sup>80</sup> The latest version of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is based on the Common Core.<sup>81</sup> The GED has been redesigned for the first time since 2002 to incorporate "practices and skills from the Common Core State Standards for Mathematical Practice."<sup>82</sup> Writers of the GED explain that they decided to revise the test now because "The shift to the Common Core standards is happening nationwide at the current time."<sup>83</sup>

The alignment of standardized tests with the Common Core may not seem alarming, because homeschool students consistently score much higher on standardized assessments than public school students. However, as information about the content of newly designed curriculum begins to surface, it is becoming clear that the Common Core's focus on informational texts makes it easy to accentuate particular schools of thought. For example, English language arts curriculum in Utah inculcates the welfare-state mentality and characterizes a parent's directions as "nagging."<sup>84</sup> Students taking the SAT, ACT, or the Iowa Tests could soon encounter progressive ideologies including social engineering and alternative lifestyles.

The Stanford 10 Achievement Tests have not been changed to reflect the Common Core.<sup>85</sup> Pearson Assessments, the publisher of the Stanford 10 Achievement Tests, did announce that the English language arts assessment was 100% aligned to the Common Core without revision. The mathematics assessment was 98.5% aligned. But parents wishing to avoid traces of the Common Core in standardized tests should still consider this examination an excellent option.

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college-board.html?\_r=0; Jason Tomassini, "New College Board President to Seek Common Core-SAT Link," *Education Week*, May 16, 2012, accessed June 10, 2013, [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/marketplacek12/2012/05/new\\_college\\_board\\_president\\_has\\_common\\_core\\_backgroud.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/marketplacek12/2012/05/new_college_board_president_has_common_core_backgroud.html).

<sup>80</sup> "Continuous Improvement Announcements at ACT—May 2013," ACT, Inc., accessed August 20, 2013, <http://www.act.org/announce/improvements/index.html#act>.

<sup>81</sup> "Riverside Introduces the All-New Iowa Assessments, Form E: Monitor the Growth and Achievement of Today's Students," Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.riversidepublishing.com/products/ia/index.html>.

<sup>82</sup> *The GED Test: A Content Comparison* (GED Testing Service, 2012), accessed July 10, 2013, <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/uploads/files/2487f6e1ca5659684cbe1f8b16f564d0.pdf>.

<sup>83</sup> "2014 GED Test FAQs," GED Testing Service, July 10, 2013, accessed July 10, 2013, <http://www.gedtestingservice.com/educators/2014-faqs#about>.

<sup>84</sup> Oak Norton, "USOE Recommends Social Justice Curriculum Materials for 1st Grade," Utahns Against Common Core (May 11, 2013), accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.com/usoe-recommends-social-justice-curriculum-materials-for-1st-grade/>.

<sup>85</sup> *A Study of the Stanford Achievement Test Series, Tenth Edition (Stanford 10) Alignment to the Common Core State Standards* (Pearson Education, Inc., 2011), accessed June 10, 2013, [http://www.pearsonassessments.com/hai/images/PDF/Stanford\\_10\\_Alignment\\_to\\_Common\\_Core\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.pearsonassessments.com/hai/images/PDF/Stanford_10_Alignment_to_Common_Core_Standards.pdf).

## 8. Does the Common Core lead to a national curriculum?

“To make standards meaningful, they have to be integrated with changes in curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy.”<sup>86</sup> The words of Jay P. Greene, professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas, regarding the Common Core are proving prophetic, because implementing the Common Core is requiring states to substantially alter their curricula.<sup>87</sup>

School officials have recognized the need for massive curriculum changes since 2011 when 64% of the officials surveyed by the Council of Chief School Superintendents Officials (CCSSO), one of the authors of the Common Core, said that their states would need completely new or significantly revised math curriculum in order to implement the Common Core. Fifty-six percent responded identically concerning their English language arts curriculum.<sup>88</sup> As of 2012, 29 states had developed new curriculum aligned to the Common Core.<sup>89</sup>

Though the implementation of the Common Core is supposed to be “state-led,” the continued involvement of the federal government and the authors of the standards indicates that the Common Core is intended to realize a national curriculum. The federal government is prohibited by three sets of laws from prescribing a national curriculum, but the Department of Education has paid other organizations to do what it cannot.

The consortia receiving millions from the federal government to write standardized assessments are also being paid to produce curriculum guides for their 42 member states. The Performance Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium stressed in its application for a supplemental Race to the Top award that it would develop “model instructional units” for teachers. It received \$15.9 million to fund these efforts.<sup>90</sup> U.S. Secretary of Education

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<sup>86</sup> Lindsey Burke, “Publicizing the Hidden Costs of the National Standards Push,” Education Notebook: Heritage Foundation, accessed June 7, 2013, <http://links.heritage.org/hostedemail/email.htm?h=ec4d3bd2a208dbd824288c7fa9ecb9c4&CID=9795639416&ch=2E03C8C87B70F318B54BE93A9A394F60>.

<sup>87</sup> As part of being members of a consortium or receiving Race to the Top funding, states are bound to implement all of the Common Core standards and may supplement the list with only 15% of their own standards. “Notice Inviting Applications,” *Federal Register* 75 no. 68 (April 9, 2010): 18171, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-04-09/pdf/2010-8176.pdf>.

<sup>88</sup> *Common Core State Standards: Progress and Challenges in School Districts’ Implementation*, Center on Education Policy, September 2011.

<sup>89</sup> *Moving Forward: A National Perspective on States’ Progress in Common Core State Standards Implementation Planning* (Education First and Editorial Projects in Education, Inc., February 2013), 7, accessed June 10, 2013, [http://www.edweek.org/media/movingforward\\_ef\\_epe\\_020413.pdf](http://www.edweek.org/media/movingforward_ef_epe_020413.pdf).

<sup>90</sup> *PARCC Proposal for Supplemental Race to the Top Assessment Award* (Performance Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, December 23, 2010), accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.edweek.org/media/parccsupplementalproposal12-23achievementfinal.pdf>; Joseph Conaty, *Race to the Top: SBAC Award Letter* (U.S. Department of Education, September 28, 2010), accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/sbac-award-letter.pdf>.

Arne Duncan affirmed that “PARCC . . . will be developing curriculum frameworks.”<sup>91</sup> Similarly, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium promised to build “curriculum materials . . . to support states’ transition to the Common Core State Standards” and was rewarded with \$15.9 million.<sup>92</sup> The efforts of the federal government to develop curriculum models confirm the analysis of two members of the Common Core Validation Committee who refused to sign the standards: the Common Core is “a laudable effort to shape a national curriculum.”<sup>93</sup>

The groundwork for a national curriculum is also being laid by groups of states and private organizations collaborating to develop common curricula. In an effort funded by the Gates Foundation, the states of New York, Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Colorado have started creating an open-source “platform” that will allow teachers to download and share resources aligned to the Common Core. The platform will be available to all states in 2014.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, Achieve, one of the organizations that advised the National Governors Association (NGA) and CCSSO during the drafting of the Common Core, has partnered with those same groups to produce model curricula for the states.<sup>95</sup>

Implementation instructions for the states written by the authors of the Common Core suggest that a national curriculum is the goal of the standards. NGA recommends that “States and districts . . . share the costs of developing new curricula and instructional tools and not each develop their own at greater expense for each.”<sup>96</sup> The Common Core, Inc., calls for cooperation between the states to ensure that math standards are “translated into textbooks, workbooks, diagnostic tests for teacher use, and other classroom materials that enable teachers to bring the curriculum into the classroom in a relatively *consistent*, effective way” (emphasis added).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Arne Duncan, “Beyond the Bubble Tests: The Next Generation of Assessments,” Department of Education, September 2, 2010, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/beyond-bubble-tests-next-generation-assessments-secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-state-l>.

<sup>92</sup> *Supplemental Funding Scope: Overview Table* (SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, January 16, 2011), accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Smarter-Balanced-Supplemental-Funds.pdf>.

Conaty, *SBAC Award Letter*, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/sbac-award-letter.pdf>.

<sup>93</sup> Sandra Stotsky and Ze’ev Wurman, “Common Core’s Standards Still Don’t Make the Grade: Why Massachusetts and California Must Regain Control over Their Academic Destinies,” *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 65 (July 2010): iii, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/common-cores-standards-still-dont-make-the-grade/>.

<sup>94</sup> Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 24, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>95</sup> “Model Course Pathways in Mathematics,” Achieve, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.achieve.org/mathpathways>.

<sup>96</sup> Grossman, Reyna, and Shipton, *Realizing the Potential*, 25, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>97</sup> Craig D. Jerald, *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receive a World-Class Education* (NGA, CCSSO, and Achieve, 2008), 26, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.achieve.org/files/BenchmarkingforSuccess.pdf>.

The Department of Education acknowledged in its announcement of Race to the Top that standards are supposed to affect curriculum.<sup>98</sup> Those who support the Common Core also recognize that standards are intended to mold curriculum.

Kathleen Porter-Magee, a fervent supporter of the Common Core, explains, “While one could choose to pit those two policy advancements against each other (standards versus curriculum), a much more logical way to view it is that while strong standards provide a solid foundation, you still need to build the schoolhouse.”<sup>99</sup>

One of the main arguments for implementation of the Common Core is that it will increase the ability of families to move from one state to another without interrupting their child’s education. But completely uninterrupted education is only possible if the *same* material is taught at the *same* time across the entire country.

Academic standards are meaningless if they do not shape the curriculum used. If this movement to nationalize curriculum continues, it will endanger the ability of homeschools and private schools to choose their own curriculum.

Former deputy general counsel of the Department of Education Robert S. Eitel and former general counsel Kent D. Talbert warn, “Left unchallenged by Congress, these standards and assessments will ultimately direct the course of elementary and secondary study in most states across the nation, running the risk that states will become little more than administrative agents for a nationalized K–12 program of instruction and raising a fundamental question about whether the Department is exceeding its statutory boundaries.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See *Federal Register* 74 no. 221 (18 November 2009): 59836, <http://www2.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2009-4/111809a.html>.

<sup>99</sup> Kathleen Porter-Magee, “No Love for Common Core? Why Tom Misses the Mark with His Critique,” Thomas B. Fordham Institute, February 17, 2012, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-core-watch/2012/no-love-for-common-core.html>.

<sup>100</sup> Robert S. Eitel and Kent D. Talbert, “The Road to a National Curriculum: The Legal Aspects of the Common Core Standards, Race the Top, and Conditional Waivers,” *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 81 (February 2012): 15.



## 9. Does it matter that testing is being aligned with the Common Core?

Since March 2009, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has stressed the need for a new kind of assessment test to “set a consistent, high bar for success nationwide.”<sup>101</sup> And indeed, states have flattened proficiency standards over the past 10 years attempting to fulfill the steep proficiency requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Analysts at the Fordham Institute observed that students can get fewer than 50% of items correct and score “proficient.”<sup>102</sup> This has spurred the federal government to fund a set of nationalized tests that measure student progress through open-ended and research-based questions.<sup>103</sup> Forty-two states are committed to administer these tests beginning in the fall of 2014.

After the states applied for Race to the Top grants and promised to implement common academic standards and assessments, Secretary Duncan announced that consortia of states boasting at least 15 members could receive part of \$362 million to craft standardized assessments based on the Common Core.<sup>104</sup> To be considered, applicants had to submit assurances from each state in their consortium that they would:

1. adopt a common set of college- and career-ready standards “substantially identical across all States in a consortium” by December 31, 2011, and implement the standards by the 2014–15 school year;
2. administer the new assessments beginning in the 2014–15 school year; and
3. collect student achievement and growth data that “will be available on an ongoing basis for research, including for prospective linking . . . that can be used to determine whether individual students are college- and career-ready.”<sup>105</sup>

Two consortia—the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers with 26 member states and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium with 31 member states—received \$170 million and \$160 million respectively from the Department of Education. Just as it had done with the Race to the Top Competition for individual states, the federal government successfully bound 45 states to the Common Core, nearly identical national assessments, and

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<sup>101</sup> Arne Duncan, “Beyond the Bubble Tests: The Next Generation of Assessments,” Department of Education, September 2, 2010, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/beyond-bubble-tests-next-generation-assessments-secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-state-1>.

<sup>102</sup> John Cronin et al., *The Proficiency Illusion* (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, October 2007), accessed June 11, 2013, [http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2007/200710\\_theproficiencyillusion/Proficiency\\_Illusion\\_092707.pdf](http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2007/200710_theproficiencyillusion/Proficiency_Illusion_092707.pdf).

<sup>103</sup> Arne Duncan, “Beyond the Bubble Tests,” <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/beyond-bubble-tests-next-generation-assessments-secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-state-1>.

<sup>104</sup> *Federal Register* 75 no.68 (April 9, 2010): 18171, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-04-09/pdf/2010-8176.pdf>.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

newly expanded data systems.<sup>106</sup> Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Utah have since withdrawn from their respective consortia, but each of these states is still committed to administering standardized tests aligned to the Common Core.<sup>107</sup> Kentucky and New York have developed their own assessment tests that align with the Common Core.<sup>108</sup>

Secretary Duncan has persistently emphasized that the new tests are “designed and developed by the States,” but the Department of Education quietly asserted even more authority over the assessments in March 2013 when it established a technical review board. The board has been charged with analyzing the consortia’s adherence to the Race to the Top requirements and “identifying how we [the Department of Education] can better partner with the consortia during this critical development phase.”<sup>109</sup>

The Department of Education’s continued emphasis on comparing students across state lines is clearly aimed at implementing a scheme of national standardized testing controlled, at least in a de facto fashion, by the federal government. In 2011, the National Governors Association offered national testing as a goal by encouraging “Governors and other state leaders [to] keep pressure on the two assessment consortia to build assessment systems that will allow comparability across

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<sup>106</sup> *Transition to High-Quality, College- and Career-Ready Assessments: Principles to Guide State Leadership and Federal Requirements* (Council of Chief State School Officials, May 23, 2013), accessed June 11, 2013, [http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2013/CCSSO\\_State\\_Principles\\_on\\_Assessment\\_Transition\\_5-23-13.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2013/CCSSO_State_Principles_on_Assessment_Transition_5-23-13.pdf).

<sup>107</sup> Evelyn B. Stacey, “Alabama Exits National Common Core Tests,” Heartland Institute, February 13, 2013, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://news.heartland.org/newspaper-article/2013/02/13/alabama-exits-national-common-core-tests/>; “Governor Rick Scott Announces Path Forward for High Education Standards,” Rick Scott 45th Governor of Florida, September 23, 2013, accessed October 4, 2013, <http://www.flgov.com/2013/09/23/governor-rick-scott-announces-path-forward-for-high-education-standards-decision-to-withdraw-from-parcc/>; “Georgia Withdrawing from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium,” July 22, 2013, accessed August 1, 2013, <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Pages/PressReleaseDetails.aspx?PressView=default&pid=123>; Indiana Governor Mike Pence, “Governor Pence Announces Intent to Withdraw Indiana as a Member from the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Governing Board,” news release, July 29, 2013, accessed August 16, 2013, [http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?fromdate=7/29/2013&todate=7/29/2013&display=Day&type=public&eventidn=115942&view=EventDetails&information\\_id=185774](http://www.in.gov/activecalendar/EventList.aspx?fromdate=7/29/2013&todate=7/29/2013&display=Day&type=public&eventidn=115942&view=EventDetails&information_id=185774); Andrea Eger, “Oklahoma to Drop Testing Consortium, Develop Own Tests, Barresi Says,” *Tulsa World*, July 2, 2013, accessed July 10, 2013, [http://www.tulsaworld.com/article.aspx/Oklahoma\\_to\\_drop\\_testing\\_consortium\\_develop\\_own\\_tests/20130702\\_11\\_A1\\_CUTLIN399354](http://www.tulsaworld.com/article.aspx/Oklahoma_to_drop_testing_consortium_develop_own_tests/20130702_11_A1_CUTLIN399354); “Utah Withdraws from Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Developing Common Core Tests,” *Huffington Post*, August 7, 2012, accessed June 8, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/07/utah-withdraws-from-smart\\_n\\_1752261.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/07/utah-withdraws-from-smart_n_1752261.html).

<sup>108</sup> Chester E. Finn, Jr., “Will the Assessment Consortia Wither Away?” *Flypaper* (blog), Thomas B. Fordham Institute, April 18, 2013, accessed June 7, 2013, <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-weekly/2013/april-18/will-the-assessment-consortia-wither-away.html>.

<sup>109</sup> “Performance—Race to the Top Technical Review,” U.S. Department of Education, March 2013, accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/performance.html>; *Race to the Top Assessment Program: Technical Review Process* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, April 2013), accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/technical-review-process.pdf>.

states regardless of which consortia a state has joined.”<sup>110</sup> Mandatory national testing would be detrimental to parental rights and educational freedom.

For information on the aligning of the SAT, the ACT, the GED, and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills to the Common Core, please see Topic Paper 7, “Will the Common Core impact homeschools and private schools?”

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<sup>110</sup> Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 7, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

## 10. Does the Common Core include a national database?

The Common Core website asserts that “There are no data collection requirements of states adopting the Common Core State Standards,” but the actions of the Department of Education prove otherwise.<sup>111</sup> Secretary of Education Arne Duncan summarized the Obama administration’s vision, explaining,

We want to see more states build comprehensive systems that track students from pre-K through college and then link school data to workforce data. We want to know whether Johnny participated in an early learning program and completed college on time and whether those things have any bearing on his earnings as an adult.<sup>112</sup>

All 50 states have had statewide longitudinal databases in place to track their students’ scores on assessments for the past decade. Yet the authors of the Common Core are clear: the success of the standards hinges on the increased collection of student data.<sup>113</sup> Every state that agreed to the Common Core in order to receive Race to the Top (RTTT) funding committed “to design, develop, and implement statewide P–20 [preschool through workforce] longitudinal data systems . . .”<sup>114</sup> Data collection must follow the 12 criteria set down in the America COMPETES Act and record, among other things, student demographics, reasons that untested students were not tested, and student success in postsecondary education.<sup>115</sup> The 23 states that did not receive RTTT grants but are part of one of the two assessment consortia are also committed to cataloging students from preschool through the workforce.<sup>116</sup> In 2012, the U.S. Department of Labor announced \$12 million in grants for states to build longitudinal databases linking workforce and education data.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” Common Core Standards State Initiative, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>.

<sup>112</sup> Arne Duncan, “Robust Data Gives U.S. the Roadmap to Reform,” U.S. Department of Education, June 8, 2009, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/news/speeches/2009/06/06082009.html>.

<sup>113</sup> Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 10, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>114</sup> “Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems,” U.S. Department of Education, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/slds/factsheet.html>.

<sup>115</sup> *Federal Register* 74 no. 221 (November 18, 2009): 59836, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-11-18/pdf/E9-27427.pdf>.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> Jason Kuruvilla, “US Department of Labor Announces More Than \$12 Million in Grants Available to States to Improve Workforce Data Quality,” United States Department of Labor, February 12, 2012, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/eta20120352.htm>.

Earlier this year, the Department of Education unilaterally altered the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA formerly guaranteed that parents could access the data collected by schools concerning their children but barred schools from sharing this information with third parties.<sup>118</sup> But the Department of Education has reshaped FERPA so that any government or private entity that the department says is evaluating an education program has access to students' personally identifiable information.<sup>119</sup> Notifying the students' parents is no longer required. The Electronic Privacy Information Center, an advocacy center focusing on civil liberty infringements, warned that this revision will expose "troves of sensitive, non-academic data."<sup>120</sup> Combined with the changes to FERPA, the implementation of the Common Core is unleashing what is arguably the most comprehensive tracking of citizens that America has ever seen.

The dangers of the data systems are not confined to public school students. FERPA does not currently protect homeschooling families in states where families must submit documentation of intent to homeschool.<sup>121</sup> Furthermore, at the National Conference on Student Assessment in 2011, officials from Oklahoma explained to CCSSO how the challenge of meeting the data requirements of federal and state education policies are motivating them to "Include student groups not now included (e.g., home-schooled) in the data system."<sup>122</sup> (To view CCSSO slide referenced in footnote 117, see Appendix 1.)

Data collection will not be limited to homework grades, extracurricular activities, and future career paths. In February 2013, the Department of Education sponsored a study called *Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance* which analyzed how to record any factors that might affect educational success including socioeconomic background, classroom climate, personal goals, and emotions during homework assignments. The study laments that functional MRI machines, which can measure specific brain activity, are not practical for use in a school setting. But the authors note that the Gates Foundation is collaborating with researchers to explore other methods of "how specific brain activity is correlated with other cognitive and affective indicators that are

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<sup>118</sup> "Family Educational Records Privacy Extension Act," HSLDA, September 21, 2011, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.hslda.org/Legislation/National/2011/HR2910/default.asp>.

<sup>119</sup> Emmett McGroarty and Jane Robbins, "Controlling Education from the Top: Why Common Core Is Bad for America," *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 87 (May 2012): 19.

<sup>120</sup> The changed regulations allow any governmental or private entity that the Department of Education designates as an "authorized representative" and who is evaluating an education program to access students' personally identifiable information without notifying their parents. The Electronic Privacy Information Center is currently engaged in a lawsuit challenging these modifications to FERPA. For more information, see <http://epic.org/apa/ferpa/default.html>.

<sup>121</sup> "Family Educational Records Privacy Extension Act," HSLDA, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.hslda.org/Legislation/National/2011/HR2910/default.asp>.

<sup>122</sup> Sunny Becker et al., *Data, Data Everywhere: Progress, Challenges, and Recommendations for State Data Systems* (HumRRO, July 20, 2011), accessed June 5, 2013, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/110361334/Data-Data-Everywhere-CCSSO-Presentation-at-National-Conference-on-Student-Assessment>.

practical to measure in school settings.”<sup>123</sup> The study recommends that facial expression cameras, posture analysis seats, pressure computer mice, eye tracking devices, and computer programs to track a student’s mood be used in schools.<sup>124</sup> Keeping tabs on the physiological activity of schoolchildren is the trajectory of the data systems developing alongside the Common Core.

Massive new databases are already being built. In 2012, the Gates Foundation used \$17 million to launch inBloom, a company that has built a \$100 million database to track students from kindergarten through college.<sup>125</sup> The databases identify students by name, address, and sometimes Social Security number. Per the revised version of FERPA, information collected on students can be shared with third parties such as education product companies.<sup>126</sup>

Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Massachusetts committed to upload data from some school districts; Louisiana and New York began uploading almost all of their student records.<sup>127</sup> The executive director for the New York Civil Liberties Union chastised the New York school districts saying, “Turning massive amounts of personal data about public school students to a private corporation without any public input is profoundly disturbing and irresponsible.”<sup>128</sup> The American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts similarly lambasted the Massachusetts Board of Education for assisting the Gates Foundation in “building a national ‘data store.’”<sup>129</sup> After these outcries, Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, and Massachusetts announced that they would not upload data to inBloom.<sup>130</sup>

The Common Core and the enlarged data systems containing detailed student information are not severable. It is almost impossible for states to implement the Common Core without agreeing to help build one of the biggest and most detailed data systems in American history.

Big Brother is not just watching—he is attempting to track every child in America.

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<sup>123</sup> *Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century* (U.S. Department of Education, February 2013), 45, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/files/2013/02/OET-Draft-Grit-Report-2-17-13.pdf>.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 44, 69.

<sup>125</sup> “Awarded Grants,” Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.gatesfoundation.org/How-We-Work/Quick-Links/Grants-Database#q/k=inbloom>.

<sup>126</sup> Stephanie Simon, “K–12 Student Database Jazzes Tech Startups, Spooks Parents,” *Reuters*, March 3, 2013, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/03/us-education-database-idUSBRE92204W20130303>.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Corinne Lestch and Ben Chapman, “New York Parents Furious at Program, Inbloom, That Compiles Private Student Information for Companies That Contract with It to Create Teaching Tools,” *New York Daily News*, March 13, 2013, accessed June 18, 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/student-data-compiling-system-outrages-article-1.1287990?pgno=1>.

<sup>129</sup> American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, “Letter to Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,” February 7, 2013, accessed June 11, 2013, [http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/sites/default/files/mass\\_bese\\_letter.pdf](http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/sites/default/files/mass_bese_letter.pdf).

<sup>130</sup> Stephanie Simon, “School Database Loses Backers as Parents Balk over Privacy,” *Reuters*, May 29, 2013, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/29/us-usa-education-database-idUSBRE94S0YU20130529>.

# 11. Who supports the Common Core and why?

Arguments supporting the Common Core fall in three basic categories: the new standards' superiority to current state standards, the ease of moving from state to state made possible by the standards, and the benefits of standardized curricula and assessments. The support for the standards by liberals such as Joel Stein (former chancellor of the New York City Schools) and Michelle Rhee (former chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools) is not surprising. But several prominent conservatives are also backing the Common Core based on these three main arguments.

The first argument—superiority to state standards—was born out of the havoc wreaked by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Desperate to show student proficiency under the utopian demands of NCLB, many states dropped their standards so drastically that only two states had standards for 8th-grade mathematics that reached the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) threshold, and no states had standards that fulfilled the NAEP requirements for English language arts.<sup>131</sup> Additionally, students in some states could be labeled “proficient” after correctly answering fewer than 50% of the questions on assessments.<sup>132</sup>

Supporters of the Common Core contend that it will rebuild these crumbled state standards. Chester E. Finn, Jr., president of the Fordham Institute, bases his support on a Fordham Institute study that found that the Common Core will boost the English language arts standards in 37 states and the mathematics standards in 39 states.<sup>133</sup> Jeb Bush and Chris Christie also support the Common Core for this reason.<sup>134</sup> Finn, Bush, and Christie simply look past the diminution of other state standards by the Common Core.

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<sup>131</sup> Neal McCluskey, “Behind the Curtain: Assessing the Case for National Curriculum Standards,” *CATO Policy Analysis* no. 661 (February 17, 2010): 4, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa661.pdf>.

<sup>132</sup> John Cronin et al., “The Proficiency Illusion,” *Thomas B. Fordham Institute* (October 2007), accessed June 12, 2013, [http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2007/200710\\_theproficiencyillusion/Proficiency\\_Illusion\\_092707.pdf](http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2007/200710_theproficiencyillusion/Proficiency_Illusion_092707.pdf); Tabitha Grossman, Ryan Reyna, and Stephanie Shipton, *Realizing the Potential: How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards* (National Governors Association, 2011), 10, accessed June 8, 2013, <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110CCSSIIMPLEMENTATIONGUIDE.PDF>.

<sup>133</sup> Sheila Byrd Carmichael et al., *The State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010* (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, July 21, 2012), 3, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/the-state-of-state-of-standards-and-the-common-core-in-2010.html>.

<sup>134</sup> See Jeb Bush and Joel Stein, “The Case for Common Educational Standards,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 23, 2011, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304070104576399532217616502.html> and “Christie Administration Takes Action to Implement Building Block of High Academic Standards in New Jersey Schools,” State of New Jersey Press Release, September 13, 2011, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.state.nj.us/governor/news/news/552011/approved/20110913a.html>.

Though proponents confidently assert that the Common Core will remedy the failures of NCLB, there is a shocking lack of education experts endorsing the Common Core. Jay P. Greene, professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas, warns:

The only evidence in support of Common Core consists of projects funded directly or indirectly by the Gates Foundation in which panels of selected experts are asked to offer their opinion on the quality of Common Core standards. . . . The few independent evaluations of Common Core that exist suggest that its standards are mediocre and represent little change from what most states already have.<sup>135</sup>

The second argument raised for the Common Core is academic mobility. The National Governors Association summarizes this saying, “When a student moves from Utah (a member state of SBAC) to Arizona (a member state of PARCC), parents and teachers need to be confident that the understanding about a student’s knowledge and skills gleaned from the state test means the same thing in both places.”<sup>136</sup> Finn also employs this argument, saying that the Common Core allows families “in our highly mobile society” the opportunity “to enroll their kids seamlessly in schools that are teaching the same things at the same grade levels.”<sup>137</sup>

In attempting to further the mobility argument, Finn ironically undercuts an important point in the case for the Common Core. Proponents must show that the Common Core does not lead to a national curriculum, because a national curriculum is prohibited by federal law. But if the mobility argument is to stand, it requires a national curriculum. Gaps in education when a student transfers from a school in Vermont to a school in Texas can only be avoided if the *same* things are being taught at the *same* time across the entire nation.

The final argument—the benefits of standardization—hinges on the premise that one textbook, or just a few aligned with the Common Core, would be an improvement over the numerous and varied textbooks available today. Bill Gates explains, “It’s ludicrous to think that multiplication in Alabama and multiplication in New York are really different.”<sup>138</sup> In 2008, the Mathematics Advisory Board told the Department of Education that textbooks in the United States have become bloated trying to cater to the standards of every state.<sup>139</sup> William Bennett, secretary of

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<sup>135</sup> Jay P. Greene, “Testimony before the United States House of Representatives Education and Workforce Committee,” U.S. House of Representatives, September 21, 2011, accessed June 12, 2013, [http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/09.21.11\\_greene.pdf](http://edworkforce.house.gov/uploadedfiles/09.21.11_greene.pdf). Most vocal supporters were involved in the writing or evaluation of the Common Core, such as David Cole, the new president of the College Board who has announced that the SAT will be aligned with Common Core standards.

<sup>136</sup> Grossman, Reyna, and Shipton, *Realizing the Potential*, 17.

<sup>137</sup> Chester E. Finn, Jr., “The War against the Common Core,” *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*, March 1, 2012, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-weekly/2012/march-1/the-war-against-the-common-core-1.html>.

<sup>138</sup> Tom Loveless, “How Well Are American Students Learning?” *Brown Center Report on Education Policy at the Brookings Institute* (2012): 7, accessed June 12, 2013, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/newsletters/0216\\_brown\\_education\\_loveless.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/newsletters/0216_brown_education_loveless.pdf).

<sup>139</sup> *The Final Report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel* (U.S. Department of Education, 2008), accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/report/final-report.pdf>.



education under Ronald Reagan and founder of K12 Online Learning, adds a sociological element to this argument by emphasizing that the common knowledge imparted by the Common Core will lead to more fervent national discussions.<sup>140</sup>

The consequences of stealing every tool from teachers except for one set of standardized books would be devastating. Will curriculum material be influenced by anyone other than wealthy benefactors and the few professors writing curriculum? Will regionalisms be lost? Is it even possible for national discussion to flourish if no student has any unique knowledge to contribute?

The argument for the superiority of Common Core standards is poorly documented, and the only other arguments for the standards implode upon inspection. The arguments against the Common Core, however, are increasingly substantiated.

## 12. Who opposes the Common Core and why?

Education professionals, policy analysts, and government officials center their critiques of the Common Core on four points: the standards are pedagogically nonsensical and academically deficient, the standards will not fix the broken education system, the method of implementing the standards is flawed and expensive, and the federal government has overstepped its bounds.

Five members of the Common Core Validation Committee refused to validate the standards.<sup>141</sup> Three of these individuals—R. James Milgram (professor of mathematics emeritus at Stanford), Sandra Stotsky (professor of education reform at the University of Arkansas and member of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education), and Ze’ev Wurman (a U.S. Department of Education official during the George W. Bush administration)—have collaborated to write two studies that condemn the academic merit of the standards.

Stotsky and Wurman conclude that the Common Core English Language Arts standards do not make students “college- and career-ready,” arguing that the lack of literary material required by the standards does “not ensure . . . sufficient literary and cultural knowledge for authentic college-level work.”<sup>142</sup> Milgram and Stotsky debunk the assertion that the standards are internationally benchmarked by demonstrating that the required readings for the British

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<sup>140</sup> William Bennett, “‘A Nation at Risk’ 30 Years Later: The State of American Education,” Thomas B. Fordham Institute, April 26, 2013, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.edexcellence.net/events/a-nation-at-risk-30-years-later.html>.

<sup>141</sup> Common Core State Standards Validation Committee, *Reaching Higher* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, June 2010), “The Common Core State Standards Initiative Validation Committee” in front matter and “Certification” on p. 4, accessed June 5, 2013, [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CommonCoreReport\\_6.10.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CommonCoreReport_6.10.pdf); Sandra Stotsky, “Testimony for a Hearing on House Bill No. 2923” (before the Texas Legislature), accessed July 3, 2013, <http://coehp.uark.edu/colleague/9863.php>.

<sup>142</sup> Sandra Stotsky and Ze’ev Wurman, “Common Core’s Standards Still Don’t Make the Grade: Why Massachusetts and California Must Regain Control over Their Academic Destinies,” *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 65 (July 2010): 25, accessed June 11, 2013, <http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/common-cores-standards-still-dont-make-the-grade/>.

Columbia high school exit test and for Finnish secondary students are far above the Common Core requirements.<sup>143</sup> Stotsky, in commenting on the English language arts standards, notes that the vagueness of the Common Core makes it extremely difficult for teachers to design a workable course of study that actually follows the standards.<sup>144</sup>

Wurman specifically examines the Common Core mathematics standards and concludes that the Common Core leaves students one or two years behind the National Mathematics Advisory Panel's recommendations, the requirements of some states, and the standards of leading countries by students' 8th-grade year.<sup>145</sup> He also cautions that the Common Core employs an approach to teaching geometry that "has not been widely used anywhere in the world, and the only known experience with it is considered a failure."<sup>146</sup> Curiously, one of the key writers of the mathematics standards, Jason Zimba, alluded to the inadequacy of the standards when he told the Massachusetts State Department of Education in 2010 that "the concept of college readiness [in the standards is minimal and focuses on non-selective colleges."<sup>147</sup> Andrew Porter, the vice president of the National Academy of Education and a supporter of a national curriculum, and Andy Rotherham, special assistant for domestic policy during the Clinton administration, also oppose the Common Core because of its academic flaws.<sup>148</sup>

The second argument against the Common Core is that the standards will not repair the broken education system. Brookings Institute policy analyst Grover Whitehurst observes that high academic standards and high student achievement are not connected.<sup>149</sup> In fact, statistics show that states with high academic standards score about the same on standardized assessments as states with low standards.<sup>150</sup> Tom Loveless of the Brookings Institute further notes that low national achievement levels result from varied performance levels *within* individual states, not

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<sup>143</sup> R. James Milgram and Sandra Stotsky, "Fair to Middling: A National Standards Progress Report," *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 56 (March 2010): 13–14, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/fair-to-middling/>, 21.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–14, .

<sup>145</sup> Stotsky and Wurman, iii.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>147</sup> Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, March 23, 2010, 5, accessed September 20, 2013 [www.doe.mass.edu/boe/minutes/10/0323reg.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/minutes/10/0323reg.doc).

<sup>148</sup> See Andrew C. Porter, "In Common Core, Little to Cheer About," *Education Week*, August 9, 2011, accessed June 13, 2013, [http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/08/10/37porter\\_ep.h30.html?tkn=TYPFs%2B5eaCVID%2FpCcM%2FaCAmn%2FVrm9T3wXVoL&cmp=clp-edweek](http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/08/10/37porter_ep.h30.html?tkn=TYPFs%2B5eaCVID%2FpCcM%2FaCAmn%2FVrm9T3wXVoL&cmp=clp-edweek) and Ze'ev Wurman and W. Stephen Wilson, "The Common Core Math Standards," *Education Next* 12, no. 3 (Summer 2012), accessed June 13, 2013, <http://educationnext.org/the-common-core-math-standards/>.

<sup>149</sup> See Grover J. Whitehurst, "Don't Forget Curriculum," Brookings Institute, October 2009, accessed June 13, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2009/10/14-curriculum-whitehurst>.

<sup>150</sup> See *Mapping 2005 State Proficiency Standards onto the NAEP Scales* (National Center for Education Statistics, June 2007), accessed June 13, 2013, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2007482.pdf> and Sheila Byrd Carmichael et al., *The State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010* (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, July 21, 2012), 3, accessed June 12, 2013, <http://www.edexcellence.net/publications/the-state-of-state-of-standards-and-the-common-core-in-2010.html>.

between different states.<sup>151</sup> But the Common Core will do nothing to remedy this problem, because it maintains the status quo of statewide standards and does nothing to assist struggling school districts.

Critics of the Common Core also condemn the way that the standards are being implemented. Randi Weingarten, president of the second-largest teachers' union in America, opposes the Common Core because of the "high stakes attached" to its implementation.<sup>152</sup> She argues that the Common Core will only be destructive since the government has done nothing to prepare teachers to successfully utilize the standards. Diane Ravitch, an education historian who has pushed for national standards for years, criticizes the government's use of Race to the Top funding to coerce states into adopting the Common Core. She summarizes, "The Common Core standards effort is fundamentally flawed by the process with which they have been foisted upon the nation. . . . Their creation was neither grassroots nor did it emanate from the states."<sup>153</sup> Ravitch also warns that the mass implementation of the standards before they were tested in a small area blindly ties 45 states to a potentially disastrous system.

Additionally, states will have a difficult time shouldering the cost of buying new curriculum, using new assessments, and increasing the use of technology in schools. The Fordham Institute calculated the cost of implementing the Common Core to be \$12 billion across the states, and the Pioneer Institute estimates \$16 billion.<sup>154</sup> The shares of \$4.35 billion that the states received through Race to the Top will not even come close to footing the bill.

Finally, members of Congress, U.S. senators, and the Republican National Committee oppose the Common Core because it has handed the education authority of the states to the federal government. Lawmakers have raised concerns about the Department of Education's unilateral revision of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, its push for expanded state longitudinal data systems, and its close involvement in the implementation of the Common Core.<sup>155</sup> The

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<sup>151</sup> The variation of National Assessment of Educational Progress scores within individual states is four to five times larger than the variation between states; Tom Loveless, "How Well Are American Students Learning?" *Brown Center Report on Education Policy at the Brookings Institute* (2012): 12, accessed June 12, 2013, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/newsletters/0216\\_brown\\_education\\_loveless.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/newsletters/0216_brown_education_loveless.pdf).

<sup>152</sup> Randi Weingarten, "Common Core: Do What It Takes before High Stakes," *Huffington Post*, May 19, 2013, accessed June 13, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingarten/common-core-do-what-it-ta\\_b\\_3300790.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/randi-weingarten/common-core-do-what-it-ta_b_3300790.html).

<sup>153</sup> Diane Ravitch, "Why I Oppose the Common Core Standards," *Washington Post*, February 26, 2013, accessed June 7, 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/02/26/why-i-oppose-common-core-standards-ravitch/>.

<sup>154</sup> See Patrick Murphy and Eliot Regenstein, *Putting a Price Tag on the Common Core: How Much Will Smart Implementation Cost?* (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, May 2012) and Accountability Works, "National Cost of Aligning States and Localities to the Common Core Standards," *A Pioneer Institute White Paper* no. 82 (February 2012).

<sup>155</sup> See Marco Rubio, "Letter to the Honorable Arne Duncan," September 12, 2011, accessed June 13, 2013, [http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/files/serve?File\\_id=7c1cf499-4bfc-4db0-8a5b-5e3cc5291560](http://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=7c1cf499-4bfc-4db0-8a5b-5e3cc5291560), "Letter to Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran," April 26, 2013, accessed June 13, 2013, [http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/Harkin\\_Moran\\_Letter\\_April\\_2013.pdf](http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/Harkin_Moran_Letter_April_2013.pdf) and Letter to the Honorable Arne

Republican National Committee called the federal government's actions "an inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children so they will conform to a preconceived 'normal.'"<sup>156</sup>

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Duncan, April 30, 2013, accessed June 13, 2013,  
[http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/CommonCore\\_Duncan\\_FINAL.PDF](http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/CommonCore_Duncan_FINAL.PDF).

<sup>156</sup> "Resolution Concerning Common Core Standards," Republican National Committee, accessed June 13, 2013 at <http://illinoisreview.typepad.com/illinoisreview/2013/04/republicans-to-discuss-opposition-to-controversial-common-core-curriculum.html>.

Document updated November 19, 2013



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