



Common Core - A Trojan Horse for Education Reform

A booklet by Orlean Koehle, State President of Eagle Forum of California and former teacher

“Common Core State Standards Initiative” is the latest education program coming down from the Obama administration, preparing the way for Obama’s “Race to the Top Assessments,” which will take place in 2014, when all the computer software is in place to test the minds of the nation’s children to see how well Common Core (CC) has been sufficiently taught. The test will be given online, as are most of the lessons preparing for it.

CC pretends to be a benign “State” program, State-written and controlled. It is touted as being “more rigorous” and will “better prepare students for college and the workplace.” However, none of the above is true.

CC is really a deceptive Trojan Horse, a national program, written by a national cartel, supported by President Obama and the Federal Department of Education. It is imposing national standards and curriculum on all of the 46 States that have signed onto it. [Texas, Alaska, Nebraska, and Virginia have refused it. Minnesota has adopted part of it – only the math.] CC is not improving education standards but is dumbing them down. The following are facts and reasons why parents and educators should be concerned and reject Common Core in their States:

- **No Vote by Congress:** Since Obama has his “cart blanche” stimulus money, he did not go to Congress for permission or funding to come up with a new education program. He just went straight to the governors and enticed them with funding if they would sign on to Common Corp.
- **No Vote by State Legislators:** Legislators have had no vote concerning Common Core either. They were bypassed in the decision to accept it into their States. If this truly is a State and local program why have they been left out?
- **No Vote or Voice of the People:** The majority of Americans know nothing about this program and have had no opportunity to voice an opinion on it.
- **Bribes and Enticements for the State Governors:** State governors and State education boards have signed onto Common Core because of promised grants and competitions to get those grants, but with strings attached. Governors had to apply and sign on the dotted line “sight unseen”—before ever seeing the curriculum or standards.
- **Waivers:** If states sign onto Common Core, they are rewarded by receiving waivers to get out of the rigid requirements and accountability of No Child Left Behind. (According to NCLB, all students in a State are to reach a certain proficiency level by the year 2014 which is almost impossible to achieve.)
- **Threats:** As more “incentives” for States to sign on to Common Core, Obama stated in November of 2009 that “Title One Money” might be withheld. Title One money is a huge grant of money that goes to the States to help in the education of poor and needy children. It is a big part of every State’s budget. Of course, in these difficult financial times, States desperately need their Title One money.
- **Enormous Cost to the States:** In spite of the grants that some governors are receiving, it is estimated that the over-all costs for the States to implement the program will be \$16 billion. It is mainly for the cost of the computers and software that is needed for the assessments. California who did not win the federal government grant is stuck with a bill for an estimated \$1.6 billion.
- **Nationalized Education is Contrary to States Rights and the U.S. Constitution:** A national education program, top-down, centrally controlled is not what our Founding Fathers ever wanted. They realized that by controlling all the information going into the minds of the people is how a despotic government and dictators take over a nation. Education then becomes indoctrination and propaganda. Our Founding Fathers purposely left the word education out of the Constitution; what was left out was to be left up to the States and to local and parental control.
- **Education Laws Against National Standards, Curriculum and Control:** 1)The Department of Education Organizational Act (1979), 2) The General Education Provisions Act and 3) The Elementary and Secondary Act (1965) and most recently amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. Each of these says the same thing that “The Federal Department of Education shall not be involved in developing, supervising or controlling instructional materials or curriculum.”
- **Parents and Local School Boards are to be in Charge of Education:** Bill Evers, a Research Fellow of the Hoover Institute located at Stanford, stated the following about the importance of local control: “*The insight of competitive federalism is that the 51 State school boards are better than a single federal executive branch office, and 15,000 local school boards are better than either 51 State school boards or a single federal office.*”

- **Increased Data Collection:** The Federal Department of Education, in December 2011, amended the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to exceed the agency's statutory authority and thus allows them to collect invasive data on our children. How does that improve education if student information is made available to marketers and snoopers? Why the obsession with data?
- **Math Standards Not Improved But Lowered:** Where the CC math has been tried, it is not any improvement or has actually lowered the test scores from prior programs. In Utah, it was no better; in Massachusetts, it lowered the scores. CC math postpones teaching algebra from the traditional 8th grade to 9th grade. How is that any improvement?
- **English Standards Cut Out Much Classical English Literature:** The CC language arts curriculum lowers the standards to only 50% classical literature from what was traditionally 80%. The other 50% is just informational text, such as reading a computer manual. Why is that so bad? Classical literature is the foundation of our nation. It teaches children to: "investigate their surroundings; to make wise decisions, to have empathy; it teaches them how to exercise their liberties." Anthony Esolen, a professor of Renaissance English Literature at Providence College in Rhode Island states:

What appalls me the most about the Common Core Standards is the cavalier contempt for great works of human art, thought and literary form... We are not programming machines; we are teaching children. We are not producing functionaries, factory like. We are to be forming the minds and hearts of men and women. Frankly, I do not wish to be governed by people whose minds and hearts have been stunted by a strictly utilitarian miss-education.

- **National Tests Tied to Common Core:** Common Core is preparing the States for a national assessment, which students can only do well on if they have the common core curriculum. Teachers are forced to teach to the test. Their salaries are dependent on how well the students do on the tests.
- **Teachers are Being Forced to Use CC Standards at Peril of their Jobs:** Teachers are concerned that they are being forced into a program that has not really been tried or tested at peril of losing their jobs. The reaction of teachers is as follows: "a maelstrom of pent-up resentment over being forced to do what's wrong for kids, and being afraid of losing gainful employment by speaking out."
- **Much Money to be Made for Text Books and E-Books:** Special interests and billions of dollars are driving the push to Common Core for people like Bill Gates and the Pearson book companies who will be making \$millions because of every child using and e-books for their learning. The e-learning market in the U.S. is expected to grow to \$6.8 billion by 2015, up from \$2.9 billion from 2010.
- **Common Means "Nothing Special":** Many believe Common Core is lowering the curriculum and standards to "common" as defined by Webster's Dictionary as meaning: "ordinary," "of little value," "lacking distinction" and "belonging equally to all the people." No mother wants her child to be regarded as common and ordinary, nothing special.
- **Who really wrote Common Core—a Cartel of "the Chiefs":** It consisted of members of: the CCSSO, Council of Chief State School Officers, the NGA, National Governor's Association, and a chief education policy group part of the NGA. These groups were joined by members of the Obama Administration and a progressive group called Achieve, FTA, NEA, ACT and the College Board."
- **"Suggestion Box Input" from State Board Members:** That was the only influence that States had. CC was not States-written, or is a State's initiative.
- **CC is Really International, driven by UNESCO and Agenda 21:** This is how sustainable development will be pushed into every school and university.
- **What Can We Do?** Do your own research and gather more information. Form a coalition to help fight it. Speak out in school board meetings; write letters to the editor; contact your State legislators; give them information; contact your governor and State school board members. Let them know how opposed you are. To order the booklet *Common Core, A Trojan Horse for Education Reform* go to www.smallhelmpressassociates.org.

Check out the following websites: www.utahnsagainstcommoncore.org; www.missourieducationwatchdog.com; www.truthinamericaneducation.com/commoncore; www.eagleforum.org/educate; www.parentsacrossamerica.org; <http://whatiscommoncore.wordpress.com/author/christelswasey/>; www.americanprinciplesinaction.org.