

CURE-NJ

CITIZENS UNITED FOR RESPONSIBLE EDUCATION – NEW JERSEY

PTO President & Members
New Jersey Public Schools
April 25, 2013

Dear Parents,

As a group of concerned New Jersey parents, grandparents and citizens, we are writing to alert you to a most horrific agenda attacking our public schools. It goes by the name **Common Core**. It is a national content standard for K-12 curriculum which forces all students onto the same academic page. Although touted as “tough international standards to prepare students for college”, they are not, and do not. Local and state governments, and parents, have no power to change what students learn in school. If fully implemented, education will never be the same.

This is a virulent attack on our system of locally-governed education. The Common Core Standard was designed by financially-interested insiders, behind closed doors. Before it was finalized, states were required to sign on to have a chance at a large sum of money via Race to the Top. The strings attached to this funding is conformance with Common Core Standards. No study ever was done at any level of the cost of implementing this standard, which includes massive new technology requirements. To date, 45 states including the District of Columbia have adopted **Common Core**. NJ is one of them. It is due for full implementation in the 2013-14 school year – this fall. ***It must be stopped now.***

Our members sent a letter to state officials in NJ on 4/15/13, expressing our concern and requesting immediate investigation and a stop to implementation of this program. However, ***YOU are the true first line of defense when it comes to your child.*** Please do not disregard this or think it to be insignificant. It is real and true. We have done our research; we can share it with you. (see attached CC bullet points). Together we can stop this in New Jersey.

Please read this information and share with your PTOs, local government and anyone who needs to be made aware. Two very good sources of information are: www.stopcommoncore.com (a national information forum) and <http://youtu.be/coRNJluF2O4> (a five part YouTube video, which includes everything you need to know). *It is imperative to watch all 5 parts of this video, as it does give all the facts.*

Get answers from your school officials. Ask to see the curriculum. *Hold their feet to the fire. Be firm. Let them prove you wrong! We want to be wrong about this.*

Our education was plain and simple. We went to school, carried our heavy book bags home, learned Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, History, Geography and Science. We said the Pledge of Allegiance. We had recess and even dealt with bullies now and again. We dealt with it ourselves. We were disciplined and never spoke back to teachers, if we did, we'd be in more trouble after school. **We were very, very fortunate!** Will our children be?

Thank you for your support and attention to this most crucial matter. For further resource information feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

CURE-NJ Citizens United for Responsible Education – New Jersey
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/CURE-NJ/274974855970782>
Attachment (Common Core Bullet Points and Petition)

Common Core Standards: DID YOU KNOW

- your Governor agreed to CC before the standards were written?
- CC is NOT state led?
- schools must adhere to the program word for word, with the ability to ADD only a small amount of content—but that additional content will not be on the exam?
- if you do not like what is being taught, neither you nor any official in the state of Tennessee will have any power to change it or anyone to call?
- no one really knows how much CC will cost in the future?
- the estimated extremely high cost of CC will rest on the backs of the taxpayers?
- CC will require massive upgrades in computer equipment and upgrades to current bandwidth?
- even though the federal government said the program was voluntary, Tennessee has to adopt CC to be eligible for Race To The Top and President Obama has said he wants to tie federal Title 1 funding to adoption of CC?
- while CC was advertised as “internationally benchmarked” it is not?
- the federal government requires the state to maintain a database on every child from P-K to workforce and encouraged collection of over 400 data points to track everything about your child AND their family?
- the federal government by law is not allowed to maintain a national database? They are evading this law by requiring the state to collect the data and then forward it to the federal government to be used by other agencies and private foundations?
- CC math teaches an experimental geometry method created by a Soviet mathematician, in the 1950’s, that was abandoned in K-12 because it failed?
- a world-renowned math expert who worked on CC stated that CC fails to meet the stated goal of improved US K-12 mathematic achievement?
- Dr. Stotsky (member of CC validation team) considers CC ELA and reading standards as “simply empty skill sets”?
- at least in grades 6-12 English teachers would be required to spend at least 50% of their time on nonfiction and informational texts such as US political documents, court decisions and scientific and technical manuals?
- English teachers would need to be retrained in order to teach children how to read technical manuals instead of works of literature?
- Dr. Milgram of Stanford University, the only mathematician on the CC validation team, refused to sign off on the math standards?
- a radical professor who has been a colleague of, and is a favorite of, anti-capitalist terrorist Bill Ayers is directing the creation of one set of CC tests?
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a major funder? What do they know about education? They sure know how to sell computers, though.
- Bill Gates’ Microsoft and many other companies are bound to benefit handsomely from the implementation of CC?
- a child could answer a math question correctly but be marked wrong because he did not use the CC prescribed method for getting to the correct answer?
- SAT testing is being structured to conform to CC? This would mean the home schoolers, private school and charter schools will have to conform to CC as well?
- Children as young as kindergarten will eventually participate in the evaluation of a teacher’s performance?
- the testing costs under CC may be triple what Tennessee is currently incurring?
- although CC claims to prepare all children for college, the college they talk about is a nonselective community college not a 4-year university?
- our children may graduate reading at a 7th grade level and according to Dr. Milgram, by 8th grade, will be two years behind other countries in math skills?
- children could be required to select a career path as early as middle school or even elementary school?

Call your Governor, state Representative and state Senator today! Demand they stop implementing CC. For more truth about Common Core go to: Tennessee Against Common Core www.tnacc.weebly.com

1. What is “Common Core”?

- Sometimes referred to as College Ready Standards, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is a set of learning standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. These standards replace existing state standards for K-12 that define what students must know and be able to do, and that are identical across all States in a consortium.

2. Why should we be concerned about it?

- The standards are controlled by unaccountable private interests in DC. These private interests take control of educational content and standards away from parents, taxpayers, local school districts and even the states.
- Private grants and stimulus money given to states to create K-workforce data collection systems. These databases will include, among other information, all students’ health records, family income and family voting status. Over 400 specific pieces of data are collected. This information can be shared with other federal and state agencies.
- Dumbing-down students: Experts in English Language Arts and Mathematics who were on the CC validation committee stated that the poor quality of standards would not prepare students for a university.
- Cost: One study estimates initial implementation costs alone of at least \$16 billion nationwide. This does not account for the ongoing costs each year.

3. Are Common Core and CSCOPE related?

- They are different: Common Core is a standard that drives, but does not itself provide, specific lesson content. CSCOPE is a curriculum. Texas rejected Common Core but then opted for CSCOPE, an online curriculum which was rolled out in such a way that parents were not permitted to know what was in it. Teachers were required to sign documentation agreeing not to discuss lessons with parents. These lessons included designing a Communist flag, portrayed the Boston Tea Party activists as terrorists, and much more factually incorrect or questionable content.

4. What can we do about it?

- Sign the attached letter
- Call, fax, send post cards to local and state government to stop Common Core
- Visit school boards and distribute these bullet points
- Talk to your circle of influence
- Write letters to editors and respond (comment) on education articles
- Call radio talk shows
- Speak up!

Common Core State Standards Opt Out

As the parent, or legal guardian, of _____ (child's full name), I realize I have the fundamental and legal right to direct the upbringing and education of my child and I respectfully and formally request my child:

___ be placed in a classroom that will not be using the Common Core State Standards.

___ be placed in a classroom that provides explicit example based instruction, guided practice, and independent practice to reinforce the learning.

___ not be administered any formative or summative assessment related to the Common Core State Standards or used to assess student learning of the Common Core State Standards.

___ not to be administered any computerized assessment and is prohibited from using any computer or handheld mobile device for any assessment purpose.

Please honor my request. Keep this request on file in my child's cumulative folder.

I also request:

- the restoration of powers to the people and the state to determine the educational content to be taught in local schools as guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States of America.
- local districts and the state provide a true and honest accounting of any and all direct and indirect costs related to the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards and their related assessments.
- no further public monies (tax dollars) be spent on anything related to or supporting the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards including related assessments, professional development for teachers and administrators, and CCSS aligned text books and curriculum materials.
- local districts and the state fully disclose information about the state longitudinal data system to parents and the general public as well as what student, parent, and teacher information is collected and how and to whom such data is shared both within and outside the state (including the federal government and any federal agency).

Child's name _____ Grade Level _____

Parent's name _____

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

School Name _____

School District _____ School Year _____

Instructions and Information About Using the Common Core State Standards Opt Out Form

What to Do

- ❖ Make copies and share the form with other parents.
- ❖ Fill the form out. Check the boxes to indicate your specific requests.
- ❖ Take the completed form to the school office or have your child take it to school and give to the teacher.
- ❖ Make your request by submitting a form each year in the spring and again at the beginning of each school year. Schools begin to make up class lists in the spring for the following school year.

What to Expect

- If you send the form to school with your child, the teacher should send the form to the office.
- If your requests are in the hands of the school, your requests may be considered when the school determines the class placement of your child.
- The school may not be able to honor your request for having your child placed in a class that will not be using the Common Core State Standards. Your request, however, may result in your child being placed in a class with a teacher who exercises more professional judgment in providing instruction. This could result in a class placement where explicit example based instruction is the predominate mode.
- Information about explicit instruction verses reform instruction (constructivism, inquiry-based, and other minimal guidance approaches to instruction) can be found on the following webpage:
- <http://wheresthemath.com/curriculum-reviews/explicit-instruction-or-reform/>
- The additional bulleted requests are provided more as a statement on your part than something you can expect your child's teacher or school to act on. Many school personnel, teachers and administrators included, may not be aware of some of these issues and the concerns people have about them. Hopefully, these bulleted items will be passed on to administrators, school board members, legislators, public officials, and others involved in making decisions about education.

PETITION TO RESCIND COMMON CORE EDUCATION STANDARDS

We the undersigned, parents, taxpayers and concerned citizens of

(local group, town or education district)

ask Governor Chris Christie, the New Jersey State Legislature and New Jersey State Board of Education to take *immediate* steps to rescind Common Core adoption, the Race to the Top funds application, the No Child Left Behind waiver and all other requirements placed upon our state that are related to these, and return to the New Jersey standards in use prior to the June 16, 2010 Common Core adoption.

Second, we ask the Governor and the Commissioner of Education to review all documentation related to such applications and contracts above to ensure our state and local sovereignty are inviolate. Further, we ask that this review of programs, documents and applications include an examination to ensure NO private or personal information about students and their families is transmitted outside of local schools and districts (except as presently permitted by state law).

Third, we contend that the New Jersey State Board of Education acted negligently when it unanimously adopted the federal Common Core “Standards” *before* they were ever written, *failed* to perform a cost analysis related to statewide adoption, and *failed* to hold public meetings where New Jersey citizens could review the actual standards *prior* to adoption. Nor were our representatives in the Legislature given an opportunity to vote on it. Therefore, we request that the state legislature immediately hold public hearings this session with a *thorough inquiry* into the cost to implement these standards, and why the state Board of Education adopted standards that had not yet been finalized. Further, we request an evaluation of the quality of the standards that have been written (English and Math) and how Common Core will affect student privacy, considering the mandatory collection of over 400 points of highly sensitive student and family information.

Other states’ experiences clearly suggest ample cause for serious concern about the potential harm of implementing Common Core standards. At least *nine states* have already either drawn up legislation to stop Common Core implementation, or have refused to participate, delayed participation pending investigation or are withdrawing from participation based on their experience with the program. In addition, other states are seeking to reclaim their right to control education.

Taxpayers pay millions in state and local taxes *per year for* K-12 education, and as such have a right to know that hard-earned money is spent. All parents have the inalienable right to know what their children learn and have a say in it. We look

forward to a *written response* from you soon, particularly as to how you plan to proceed to opt out of these questionable programs

SERIOUS PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED WITH COMMON CORE

The serious problems identified with Common Core include:

- **Education without Representation:** The Federal Government is forcing states into a “one size fits all” program (Common Core) through the use of Race to the Top grants. Education is not one of the powers delegated by the Constitution to the U.S. federal government. However, the federal government is acting in clear violation of three federal laws: the Department of Education Organizational Act of 1979, The General Provisions Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1965 which prohibit the federal government from “developing, supervising or controlling instructional materials or curriculum” of the states. Yet Common Core standards cannot be changed by state legislatures or state school boards. Why not?
- **Education without Parental Input:** Taxpayers pay millions in state and local taxes *per year* for K-12 education. Yet Common Core denies Taxpayers and Parents the right to control what their children will learn in English and math...or even see what is being taught. Indeed, Common Core is being implemented in this state *without* state legislative approval *nor even* public hearings. Why?
- **Education without Accountability:** Common Core was approved, and is being implemented, without any cost analysis or performance comparison. A recent study shows implementation will cost \$16 billion or more nationwide, with 90% of the burden being placed on states and local districts in spite of \$4.35 billion in Race to the Top grants. California, which did not win federal government grants, faces a bill for an estimated \$1.6 billion in implementation costs. It will cost \$650 million – more than a half *billion* – to implement in Pennsylvania. As we have seen in other areas of government, this huge expenditure, combined with the lack of control by the people footing the bill, this leaves the system open to preferential treatment of vendors and other forms of corruption. Why is this situation being created yet again?
- **Education or Violation?** Common Core requires the state to build expensive high-tech systems to track student performance and other personal data...and turn that information over to the Federal government. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in 2009, “Hopefully some day, we can track children from preschool to high school...to college...to career.”
- **Common Core Standards are Sub-Standard:** Dr. Sandra Stotsky of the University of Arkansas served on the Common Core Validation Committee, but

refused to sign off on the English Language Arts Standards because of poor quality, empty skill sets, its de-emphasis on literature and low reading levels (e.g., 8th grade levels for 12th grade students). Even the Fordham Institute – a Common Core proponent – admitted that some states already had better standards than Common Core. Likewise, Dr. James Milgram of Stanford University – the only mathematician on the Common Core Validation Committee – refused to sign off, stating, “It’s almost a joke to think students [who master the common standards] would be ready for math at a university.” Further, according to Dr. Milgram, by 8th grade our students will be *two years behind* in math skills.

- **Violation of Parental Rights and the Constitution:** Even parents who decide they want something different or better for their children and choose homeschooling, private school, parochial schools and charter schools *will be affected*, as their curricula will be required to conform with Common Core. For parents of many faiths and of no faith at all, this is a violation of their right of free exercise of religion under the First Amendment, which also prohibits the establishment of a state religion. Many faith traditions identify the right and responsibility of children’s education as belonging solely to the parents. Furthermore, Education is one of the powers **not** delegated to the federal government by the U.S. Constitution, *nor prohibited by it* to the states. The Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifically states that

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

- **Disrespects Teachers’ Creativity and Skill, and Children’s needs:** Many teachers around the country have published critiques of Common Core that note Common Core demands the lessons be taught in a specific way, with no regard for the students ability to grasp it, nor teachers’ knowledge and ability to put forth material in a way the students they know so well from daily interactions, need them to be put forth. Teachers will be rewarded and remain gainfully employed solely on the basis of how well the students do on tests, whether or not those tests accurately reflect what the students have learned. Also, the lessons and tests for math, for example, do not teach the children to think and solve problems for themselves, but rather use calculators and “apps.” Indeed, the children will be marked wrong *even if they arrive at the correct answer*, if they do not use the Common Core prescribed method.

April XX, 2013

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan,

As you know, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) allows Congress to authorize and allocate funding for public K-12 education and, most importantly, is the primary vehicle in which we implement education policy reform. Most recently reauthorized through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the ESEA's authorization expired on September 30, 2008, and has yet to be reauthorized. Since the ESEA's expiration, the Department of Education (Department) has moved forward with education policy reform without Congressional input. Such action is, at best, in contravention with precedent.

In addition to expressing our concern with the Department's circumvention of Congress to reform education policy, we are writing you to express our concerns with the implementation of Common Core standards and changes to federal data collection and disbursement policies.

In 2009, forty-six governors signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Governor's Association committing their states to the development and adoption of new education standards within three years. As we understand it, states then had the option of adopting Common Core standards or creating their own equivalent standards. At the time, Common Core standards were simply an idea where states would collaborate to create uniformed education standards. Details about Common Core were not only unknown to the states, they did not exist. From there, your department offered Race To The Top (RTTT) grants and NCLB waivers to states under the condition that each state would implement "college and career ready" standards. At the time, the only "college and career ready" standards with the Department's approval were Common Core.

In addition to serious concerns we have regarding the Department's aforementioned coercion of states to opt-in to Common Core standards, many of which were and continue to have serious budgetary issues and specific issues with existing education policies, we have become increasingly concerned over the development of the Common Core standards themselves. Though initially promoted as state-based education standards, Common Core standards, as they have been developed over the last few years, are nothing of the sort. In just one very troubling instance, Common Core standards will replace state-based standardized testing with nationally-based standardized testing, the creation and initial implementation of which will be funded in full by the federal government. The long-term, annual administering of the exams, the cost of which has not been specified by the Department, is to be funded by the states.

As representatives from states across the nation, we understand the diverse cultures and state-specific education needs that exist in America. We believe that state-driven education policy is vital to the success of our children and that Members of Congress can best demonstrate the specific needs of their constituents. As with most one-size-fits-all policies, Common Core standards fail to address these needs.

As you know, because states opted-in to Common Core standards, there is little Congress can do to provide any relief from these burdensome and misguided standards. Instead, the ability to opt-out of

these standards lies with the state. With that in mind, we will be working with our respective state legislatures and governors to provide relief to our education systems. In the meantime, we urge you to work with Members of Congress to reauthorize the ESEA in a manner that allows state-specific education needs to be addressed.

Separate from reauthorization, we are extremely concerned over recent changes your department has made to the manner in which the federal government collects and distributes student data.

As you know, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was signed into law in 1974, guaranteeing parental access to student education records and limiting their disclosure to third parties. FERPA was intended to address parents' growing privacy concerns and grant parental access to the information schools use to make decisions that impact their children.

Once again circumventing Congress, in 2011 your agency took regulatory action to alter definitions within FERPA. With the technological advances that have occurred in recent years, changes to FERPA deserve the full scrutiny of the legislative process more so than ever before.

In addition, we understand that as a condition of applying for RTTT grant funding, states obligated themselves to implement a State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS) used to track students by obtaining personally identifiable information.

Regarding these two very concerning changes to the manner in which government collects and distributes student data, we formally request a detailed description of each change to student privacy policy that has been made under your leadership, including the need and intended purpose for such changes. We also request that you submit to us the authority under which the Department has implemented Common Core, FERPA and SLDS.

It is our sincere hope that the Department works with the Legislative Branch to implement any changes to education standards and student privacy policy. We look forward to your response and welcome the opportunity to address these issues in the future.

Sincerely,

Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (MO-03)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING COMMON CORE EDUCATION STANDARDS

WHEREAS, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of academic standards, promoted and supported by two private membership organizations, the National Governor's Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) as a method for conforming American students to uniform ("one size fits all") achievement goals to make them more competitive in a global marketplace, (1.) and

WHEREAS, the NGA and the CCSSO, received tens of millions of dollars from private third parties to advocate for and develop the CCSS strategy, subsequently created the CCSS through a process that was not subject to any freedom of information acts or other sunshine laws, and never piloted the CCSS, and

WHEREAS, even though Federal Law prohibits the federalizing of curriculum (2.), the Obama Administration accepted the CCSS plan and used 2009 Stimulus Bill money to reward the states that were most committed to the president's CCSS agenda; but, they failed to give states, their legislatures and their citizens time to evaluate the CCSS before having to commit to them, and

WHEREAS, the NGA and CCSSO in concert with the same corporations developing the CCSS 'assessments' have created new textbooks, digital media and other teaching materials aligned to the standards which must be purchased and adopted by local school districts in order that students may effectively compete on CCSS 'assessments', and

WHEREAS, the CCSS program includes federally funded testing and the collection and sharing of massive amounts of personal student and teacher data, and

WHEREAS, the CCSS effectively removes educational choice and competition since all schools and all districts must use Common Core 'assessments' based on the Common Core standards to allow all students to advance in the school system and to advance to higher education pursuits; therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Republican National Committee, as stated in the 2012 Republican Party Platform, "do not believe in a one size fits all approach to education and support providing broad education choices to parents and children at the State and local level," (p35)(3.), which

is best based on a freemarket approach to education for students to achieve individual excellence; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the Republican National Committee recognizes the CCSS for what it is-- an inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children so they will conform to a preconceived "normal," and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Republican National Committee rejectsthecollection of personal student data for any non-educational purpose without the prior written consent of an adult student or a child student's parent and that it rejects the sharing of such personal data, without the prior written consent of an adult student or a child student's parent, with any person or entity other than schools or education agencies within the state, and be it finally

RESOLVED, the 2012 Republican Party Platform specifically states the need to repeal the numerous federal regulations which interfere with State and local control of public schools, (p36) (3.); and therefore, the Republican National Committee rejects this CCSS plan which creates and fits the country with a nationwide straitjacket on academic freedom and achievement.

References:

1. www.corestandards.org
2. Federal Law 20 USC 1232a-Sec. 1232a. and The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Pub.L. 89-10, 79 Stat. 27, 20 US.C.ch. 70.

<http://us-code.vlex.com/vid/prohibition-against-federal-control-19195093>

3. http://www.gop.com/rnc_counsel/