

In 1983, President Reagan's National Commission on Excellence produced a report: "A Nation at Risk." This touched off a renewed interest in educational reform. By the early 2000's every State had developed and adopted its own learning standards (what students were expected to learn and know by graduation).

There were two basic problems with this: (1) The Standards varied from state to state; and (2) The Standards were not working - student and schools were and are failing.

The **Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI)** is an attempt to establish national educational standards, and thereby "fix" both problems.

Common Core was developed primarily by a nonprofit called **Achieve, Inc.**, in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of the **National Governors Association (NGA)** and the **Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)**.

The claim is that, "The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy."

<http://commoncore.pearsoned.com/index.cfm?locator=PS11Ue>

They further state: "The standards were drafted by experts and teachers from across the country and are designed to ensure students are prepared for today's entry-level careers, freshman-level college courses, and workforce training programs. The Common Core focuses on developing the critical-thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills students will need to be successful."

<http://www.corestandards.org/what-parents-should-know/>)

There are four parts of the program:

1. Common Core Standards which gives the basics (scope and sequence) that a student must master in each grade level in English Language Arts and Math. But note: "The Standards set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects."

2. Curriculum –Although they state: "The Common Core is *not* a curriculum. It is a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help our students succeed. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and others will decide how the standards are to be met."
<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts/>

But the truth is "assessments drive curriculum." Bill Gates, a huge Common Cores benefactor, states:

"When the tests are aligned to the common standards, the curriculum will line up as well—"

The New York State Department of Education has already approved "curricular materials" for most grades and notes that, "NYSED is working with our partners to deliver high quality curricular materials for all remaining grades in both Mathematics and ELA." <https://www.engageny.org/common-core-curriculum>

3. Assessments – students will be given tests in all grades levels to determine progress. Testing is being implemented by two testing consortiums; (1) Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career, commonly known as PARCC; or (2) Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or SBAC.

4. Evaluation – The results of these tests will be used to evaluate students, schools and staff. This includes not only student advancement, but also teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness.

"Once the development process concluded, states began voluntarily adopting the Common Core State Standards . . ."

<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/development-process/>

The final Common Core Standards were revealed publicly on June 2, 2010. Six weeks later, the **New York Board of Regents** adopted Common Core (July 10, 2010) with full implementation in the 2013-14 school year.

This program may sound good – Everyone agrees our public schools are failing and something must be done –but there are significant problems.

Unconstitutional

"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."–10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

Since the U.S. Constitution does not mention it, education has been left up to the States and local communities.

Furthermore according to federal laws make it clear that the federal government cannot "exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any school; or "the selection of...textbooks, or other ... instructional materials." (20 U.S.C. *1232.A)

Dr. Diane Ravitch, Research Professor of Education at New York University, told the Huffinton Post:

"Why does state and local control matter? Until now, in education, the American idea has been that no single authority has all the answers. Local boards are best equipped to handle local problems. States set state policy, in keeping with the concept that states are "laboratories of democracy," where new ideas can evolve and prove themselves. In our

federal system, the federal government has the power to protect the civil rights of students, to conduct research, and to redistribute resources to the neediest children and schools.”

I would take this a step farther – parents, not the State should direct their children’s education. There is no biblical mandate for the government on any level to direct education.

Untrue

A number of the claims made by the Common Core developers are clearly false. For example,

The Standards were developed, copyrighted and implemented by corporate financial interests and private trade organizations, and not “*experts and teachers.*”

Furthermore the states did not just “*voluntarily*” adopt the Common Core Standards. They were forced to either do so, or lose billions of federal dollars through programs such as “*Race to the Top.*”

Utilitarian

The Home School Legal Defense Association notes, “Three philosophical threads weave through Common Core – statism, moral relativism, and progressivism. The statist’s goals are implicit in the lockstep uniformity that is the central thesis of the program.” <http://www.hsllda.org/commoncore/>

This “uniformity” is explained as “*college and career ready*” and enforced with dire warnings about “*competing in the global economy.*”

Instead of preparing students to face life, schools are expected to prepare students for “*college and career.*”

In other words the goal is to produce adults who can be “cogs in a managed economic machine,” rather than thinking and caring people.

This “one size fits all” may suit the elitists in government and business, but it certainly is not in the best interest of students, families, or our nation.

Unfunded

States face enormous costs in four areas: textbooks and instructional materials, professional development, assessments; and technology and infrastructure. These costs put an increase and unnecessary strain on schools and taxpayers.

Unproven

The **Common Core Standards Initiative** impose an education experiment on our students and schools without an open discussion, or pilot project to demonstrate the effectiveness. There is no evidence that national standards alone lead to higher academic results.

Conclusion: The Common Core Standards are not the answer for “fixing” our schools.

What is then?

Parents – couples that love their children and are involved in their children’s education. Parents who “fear God,” because “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” (Proverbs 9:10). Parents who take seriously their responsibility to “train their children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

And Secondly,

Philosophy – We used to understand the purpose of education was fourfold –to help a child develop mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially (Luke 2:52). Somehow we have lost that, but the answer is simple:

We need to get back to basics!

The Truth About... Common Core Standards



“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”-- Proverbs 9:10

By Tom Stiles



ARISE! MINISTRIES

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