

**From:** Karen R. Effrem, MD [mailto:[dockaren@edlibertywatch.org](mailto:dockaren@edlibertywatch.org)]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 18, 2013 5:09 PM  
**To:** 'asherman@miamiherald.com'  
**Subject:** Common Core fact-check  
**Importance:** High

Ms. Sherman,

I apologize for the delay in responding, but both Mr. Osborne and I were traveling, speaking and preparing for the final hearing on the standards.

While there is plenty of evidence in the policy analysis to substantiate the claim about which you enquire, let me lay out the evidence in even greater detail:

1. That the Common Core standards are intended and will be used to teach and instill non-cognitive/psychological/socioemotional attitudes is beyond dispute as evidenced by the following quotes:

- “In national policy, there is increasing attention on 21st-century competencies (*which encompass a range of noncognitive factors*, including grit), and persistence is now part of the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.” (Emphasis added - U.S. Department of Education Office of Technology – Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – February 2013 <http://www.ed.gov/edblogs/technology/files/2013/02/OET-Draft-Grit-Report-2-17-13.pdf>, p. 8 of pdf)
- “There are many other Common Core Standards that these social and emotional basic skills can be integrated with.” (EduThompson Blog - Integrating Social Emotional Curricula and the Common Core – [7/20/13http://insidetheclassroomoutsidethebox.wordpress.com/2013/07/07/integrating-social-emotional-curricula-and-the-common-core/](http://insidetheclassroomoutsidethebox.wordpress.com/2013/07/07/integrating-social-emotional-curricula-and-the-common-core/))
- “As we began to unpack these standards, we found a clear correlation between Common Core and social, emotional learning.” (Pamela Orme, Anchoage, School District, social studies curriculum coordinator, Social Emotional Learning in Common Core State Standards - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZMhn-9SRoA> )

2. That there is psychological and attitudinal teaching in curriculum and lesson plans aligned to the Common Core is also very clear:

- September 9 [Political Party Activity for middle school students in Indian River County](http://teachersites.schoolworld.com/webpages/sgmscivics/masterisn.cfm?subpage=1764110) in English class linked to specific Common Core standards per teacher's lesson plan (<http://teachersites.schoolworld.com/webpages/sgmscivics/masterisn.cfm?subpage=1764110>):
    - CCSS: LACC.68.RH.1,2, LACC.68.RH.2.4, LACC.68.WHST.1.2, LACC.7.SL.1.1
  - Here is such an example for first grade English Language Arts, entitled Voices, approved for use with the Common Core in Utah (Voices ELA Curriculum as quoted and filmed in You Tube video "Indoctrination in Common Core ELA Texts": <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGph7QHymo8&feature=youtu.be>):
    - "In the Voices Democracy theme, students use their voices to advocate solutions to social problems that they care deeply about. They are involved in learning the following theme related social knowledge and skills: social role models, social advocacy, and respect for each other."
    - "Tell students when they write a call to action, they should include emotional words to get readers to feel so strongly about a problem that they want to do what is being asked of them."
3. Plans to assess psychological traits in the Common Core aligned assessments are also abundantly evident:
- "[A]s new assessment systems are developed to reflect the new standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science, significant attention will need to be given to the design of tasks and situations that call on students to apply a range of 21st century competencies that are relevant to each discipline. A sustained program of research and development will be required to create assessments that are capable of measuring cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills." (Emphasis added).
  - "There are important opportunities to leverage new and emerging advances in technology (e.g., educational data mining, affective computing, online resources, tools for teachers) to develop unprecedented approaches for a wide range of students."
  - The "affective computing" mentioned above, according to the same federal report (Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance) will be accomplished using the devices in this picture :

- An official for the ACT who is developing Common Core tests for other states in grades 3-10 such as those that have pulled out of PARCC and SBAC said, "There would be interest inventories for students, as well as assessment of behavioral skills for students and teachers to evaluate."

([http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/college\\_bound/2012/07/act\\_plans\\_to\\_roll\\_out\\_career\\_and\\_college\\_readiness\\_tests\\_for\\_3rd-10th\\_grades.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/college_bound/2012/07/act_plans_to_roll_out_career_and_college_readiness_tests_for_3rd-10th_grades.html))

- Psychological assessment and monitoring is also accomplished directly via Common Core aligned curriculum, such as in the Voices curriculum quoted above, but in this instance for third grade :

- "The Student Observation Form on Assessment Handbook page 11 is an informal assessment tool that notes growth and change in individual students' behaviors and attitudes."

- Under that rubric, students are graded at various levels on whether they "Use first person plural voice (our) to advocate ways to solve the problem."

4. Despite what the [FL DOE says on its website](#), it is clear that the federal government has a very large role in funding and supervising the development of the national tests for the two multi-state testing consortia, SBAC and PARCC, to the latter of which the state of Florida still belongs even though Governor Scott's order only removed the state from serving as fiscal agent, and whose test, the state is still

considering (See [Analysis - What Governor Scott's Documents Do and Do Not Accomplish](#)). This quote from the US DOE announcement of the formation of the technical review panel in March of this year indicate that **the federal government is involved in supervising the writing of the test questions for the Common Core tests that will include testing of these psychological attitudes and traits:**

- "The review will focus on two broad areas of assessment development: the consortium's research confirming the validity of the assessment results and the consortium's approach to developing items and tasks." (Emphasis added)

5. Finally, PARCC and SBAC have signed [memoranda of understanding](#) with US DOE to give them individual, student level data from the assessments, including the psychological data that will be assessed on these tests, for various purposes:

- "Comply with and where applicable coordinate with the ED staff to fulfill the program requirements established in the RTTA Notice Inviting Applications and the conditions on the grant award, as well as to this agreement, including, but not limited to working with the Department to develop a strategy to make **student - level data** that results from the assessment system available on an ongoing basis for **research, including for prospective linking, validity, and program improvement studies**; subject to applicable privacy laws"

The "subject to applicable privacy laws" part of that agreement is useless given the major regulatory undermining of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that occurred in 2011 and which has been the subject of a federal lawsuit brought by the Electronic Privacy Information Center. We lay out these concerns on pages 19 and 20 of the policy analysis (Pages 20 and 21 of the PDF).

With regard to your other question, "If the state says it doesn't collect this data, what proof do you have that the state does collect it or will due to Common Core?", I believe that I have answered that by showing:

- 1) Psychological and attitudinal data is being collected or will be as part of Common Core aligned curriculum and assessments
- 2) Individual data from those Common Core aligned assessments will be given to the federal government via the PARCC and SBAC tests.

In addition, as I showed above with the claim in that same document that you cite that the federal government is in fact involved in the Common Core test development, despite the document's claim to the contrary, there are other statements in that document that are incorrect. One example is the one stating that only aggregate data goes to the federal government, which is contradicted both by the PARCC agreement I cited and the fact that the grant agreement for the state longitudinal database that is included in the [Race to the Top grant](#) that also includes Common Core and the aligned assessments promised that the state would give the federal government any data it wants and change its laws and regulations accordingly. This was tried last session with SB 878 that, among other egregious faults, promised to align the state's data elements to the National Center for Education Statistics data elements, the 400 hundred data points involved in the National Education Data Model and the NCES Data Handbook:

"To promote adoption of a common set of data elements identified by the National Center for Education Statistics to support the effective exchange of data within and across states." (See lines 114-116 of SB 878 found at <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0878/BillText/e2/HTML>. Identical language is found in HB 7027.)

More details and analysis of the problems with that bill are available at the following links:

**[Issues with Florida SB 878 – Common Core Linked Data Warehouse Bill](#)**

**[Education Liberty Watch Response to Senate Author of Florida Data Tracking Bill](#)**

**[More Interaction on Florida Common Core Data Mining Bill](#)**

**[Activists & Education Liberty Watch Combine to Stop Florida Data Mining Bill](#)**

Because of the actions of the parents and citizens of Florida combined with the research and advocacy of our group, that bill, though written and heavily lobbied by the Foundation for Florida's Future and supported by the Department and passing both chambers unanimously with the difference of a small amendment, was stopped.

Finally, I would remind you that concerns about data mining do not reside solely on one point on the philosophical or political spectrum. [The Democratic Progressive Caucus of Florida's Statement issued a statement](#) on Common Core raising similar concerns.

I hope this answers your questions.

Best,

*Karen R. Effrem, MD*

President – Education Liberty Watch

Co-Founder of the Florida Stop Common Core Coalition

[www.FLStopCCCoalition.org](http://www.FLStopCCCoalition.org)

[www.EdLibertyWatch.org](http://www.EdLibertyWatch.org)

**From:** Sherman, Amy [mailto:[asherman@miamiherald.com](mailto:asherman@miamiherald.com)]

**Sent:** Thursday, October 17, 2013 10:57 AM

**To:** [office@edlibertywatch.org](mailto:office@edlibertywatch.org)

**Subject:** Common Core fact-check

Hi -

I am fact-checking a claim by [Florida Stop Common Core](#) and I saw that Dr. Effrem is involved in that group and Education Liberty Watch. Could you forward this email to her or someone at your organization who could respond to this?

Here is the claim I am fact-checking:

The goal of Common Core “is not simply to improve academic achievement but also to instill federally determined attitudes and mindsets in students including political and religious beliefs.”

The policy analysis states that the National Education Data Model includes collecting 400 data elements including religious affiliation, political affiliation and voting status. ([See page 17](#))

Could you please email me documentation (reports, news articles, etc.) to support your claim that Common Core will “instill federally determined attitudes and mindsets in students including political and religious beliefs.” Is this based on the National Education Data Model or are you referring to some other documentation or source?

The Florida Department of Education states in a [document](#) that it “does not collect or maintain information on students’ religion, political party affiliation, biometric information, etc. that some have listed as possible areas of concern. The FDOE does not plan to collect this information as it is irrelevant to students’ education.” If the state says it doesn’t collect this data, what proof do you have that the state does collect it or will due to Common Core?

Thanks - Amy

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Amy Sherman

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