



Common Core Policy Analysis Executive Summary

About Common Core

The Common Core Standards Initiative is a set of National K-12 standards were developed by a nonprofit called Achieve, Inc., based in Washington, D.C., the National Governors Association (80% of its funding comes from the federal government), and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Common Core was introduced and implemented in Florida, along with many other states, without legislative approval and minimal public engagement. Their creation was neither grassroots nor did they emanate from the states. These standards are initially in English language arts and math. However, proponents including the federal government have plans for all subjects to be included.

Loss of State and Local Control

Common Core proponents claim the standards are being implemented on a voluntary basis. However, many state and local governments “voluntarily” chose to adopt the standards because the state and local governments are being coerced by the federal government through financial contingencies. In addition, states had little or no part in developing the standards, which are now copyrighted, and were encouraged to adopt the standards before they were completely written. Local governments will lose control almost entirely. Local school board members say they are being required to apply these “national educational policies” that are supposedly “state-led” and “voluntary;” and, because these standards were created at the top, state autonomy is being severely diminished.

Psychological Manipulation and Data Mining

The Common Core standards, along with the aligned curriculum and the mining of nearly 400 data points reveal that the goal of the standards is not simply to improve academic achievement but also to instill federally determined attitudes and mindsets in students including political and religious beliefs. According to the US Department of Education, this will be carefully regulated through the extensive data-mining of both students and teachers using devices such as “facial expression cameras,” “posture analysis seats,” “a pressure mouse,” and “wireless skin conductance sensors” as well as the use of the actual assessments. The federal government asserts to secure their definition of improving the quality of education, a student’s right to privacy may be sacrificed.

Academic Quality, Rigor, and International Benchmarking

Though Common Core proponents claim that, by implementing the standards, students will graduate better equipped to compete in the global marketplace, research reveals that the standards are academically of lower quality than current state standards. In fact, a study performed by the Fordham Institute suggests that Common Core standards are inferior to Florida's current standards. The creative development of students has been diminished using the Common Core standards. No proof has ever been provided that Common Core standards were ever internationally benchmarked, though the proponents continually make this claim.

The Effect on Parental Rights and Autonomy

Local and state governments will not be the only ones forfeiting power to the federal government but parents will lose the right to oversee their child's development – making the government the primary parental figure. The government will have standard beliefs that it will require every child to be taught, regardless of their background or family's values.

The Effect on Teachers and the Teaching Profession

Heavy government intrusion already exists in the teaching profession. Teachers already must find a sensitive balance between meeting required government stipulations and meeting the specific needs of each child in his/her classroom. Federal government intrusion only intensifies the problem. Teachers will be given a "cookie-cutter" set of directives and expected to make each child come out with the same philosophy and academic experience, despite the fact that each child is unique. The stringent requirements of Common Core and its test-based standards will make it extremely difficult for teachers to adapt to their classroom needs and, in the end, will make many students good test-takers instead of thoughtfully educated individuals – a problem that already exists and will only exacerbate with Common Core implementation.

Another concern amongst educators is that the data-mining aspect of Common Core is not limited to students. Teachers themselves will also be data-mined which may suggest that those whose religious or political beliefs do not align with the government's standards could be terminated. Of course, proponents would say that would never occur and the purpose for the data is entirely different. However, it is noteworthy that everything would be in place for that kind of discrimination to occur which is another reason why this kind of centralized power is dangerous.

The Cost to Implement Common Core

The school system across the state is currently suffering from the economic stresses that plague the entire nation. So, when the federal government offers money in exchange for implementing one of their programs, it is like promising cold water to a vagabond in the desert in exchange for his shirt. It seems like a good deal at first - until there is no water and the sun starts beating down on a bare back. The federal government is already multi-trillions of dollars in debt. It does not have any money to offer. Therefore, in short, the entire system is based on an empty promise. Of course, the money the government does entertain, the government gets from each state's taxpayers. So, how much is this program going to cost taxpayers? \$1,024,163,000 is one estimate. Are the taxpayers of Florida willing to pay for another intrusive government program destined to fail?

The Effect on Private, Religious, and Home Schools

Contrary to some claims, Common Core will affect private, religious and home schools in several of the following ways:

- 1) According to the Department of Education and Governor Rick Scott, their goal is to require private schools to adhere to the Common Core assessments in order to receive state vouchers.
- 2) Because college entrance exams will align with the standards, any graduates from non-compliant schools could be denied grant funding, student loans, and enrollment into public universities.
- 3) The cost to bring private and home schools in line with technology-based assessments without state and federal funding could make these alternative education sources no longer financially feasible.
- 4) Implementation allows for content to be taught that conflicts with the values and beliefs of many private and home schools.