

Crisis in the Classrooms

Background on Education

What Does this Mean to Me?

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Why should I be concerned about what is happening in the schools, the state boards of education and the federal Department of Education? Those controlling education in the United States have so muddied the waters with layers of bureaucracy and organizations and plans that sound like a child repeating the alphabet on steroids that I would not know where to start! So, why should I stress my brain to understand it? What does it *really* mean for my children or grandchildren?

We are what we think. And, what and how we think is ingrained in us during our school years. Should “international elites” and “progressives,” who are more interested in an adequate workforce than academics, be the ones in charge of what our children are being taught in schools? Should our children be taught and then tested in a way that ensures that they have embraced ideas that are contrary to our Judeo-Christian worldview? To freedom? To a constitutional view of government? And, should the overworked taxpayers be required to fund this destruction?

THE EVIDENCE AND THE PLAN

The evidence abounds that well-placed influential Americans are pushing for effective control over all of America’s school children by the elite/progressives at the federal/international level. The control will be exercised through the states signing contracts to use the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the aligned tests, and of course, the national curriculum that is on the horizon, which will be used to *teach to the test*. The states have been encouraged and pressured to sign up by money from the Federal Department of Education and its assorted grantees and contractors. President Obama’s proposed 2012 budget alone provides \$77.4 billion for the Department of Education, which includes \$1.4 billion for the *Race To The Top* program, which is pushing CCSS.

The Common Core State Standards are nothing more than the old Outcome Based Education from the top down. Most Americans want standards, but the CCSS are not just academic and objective. They are not just tests (knowing that $2 + 2$ equals 4), but are assessments, which means tracking a student from one point to another, with the points to be determined by unelected, unaccountable unknowns.

Presently, assessments for mathematics and English have been completed. Social studies and science assessments are under way, but raise red flags. Consider the Texas State School Board battle over the Declaration of Independence, as well as the differences of opinions over global warming and evolution.

In Missouri, federal money has made “voluntary” meaningless. Missouri State Board members have observed that the assessments themselves coerce the schools into begging for a curriculum to be handed to them. In past years in Missouri, when the MAP scores became tied to accreditation, teaching to the test became critical to improve scores, and schools soon began asking for materials they could use to teach the tests.

WHO IS BEHIND IT?

A number of private special interest groups are involved in this push. One of the more powerful groups is ACHIEVE, created in 1996 by the nation’s governors and corporate leaders in response to the Clinton drive for OBE. In 1996, people such as Marc Tucker, (Hillary Clinton’s education guru), established these private consortia, such as the National Center for Education and the Economy (Tucker is still its head.) and others, so they could be in charge.

ACHIEVE is the private entity in charge of the national standards. When asked if some of the standards are voluntary, ACHIEVE chided, “When 48 states and three territories signed on to the Common Core State

Standards Initiative (CCSSI), it was their goal to create a shared set of expectations in English/language arts and mathematics. Therefore, states that adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are expected to adopt them in their entirety. While states will not be considered to have adopted the common core if any individual standard is left out, states are allowed to augment the standards with an additional 15% of content that a state feels is imperative.”¹

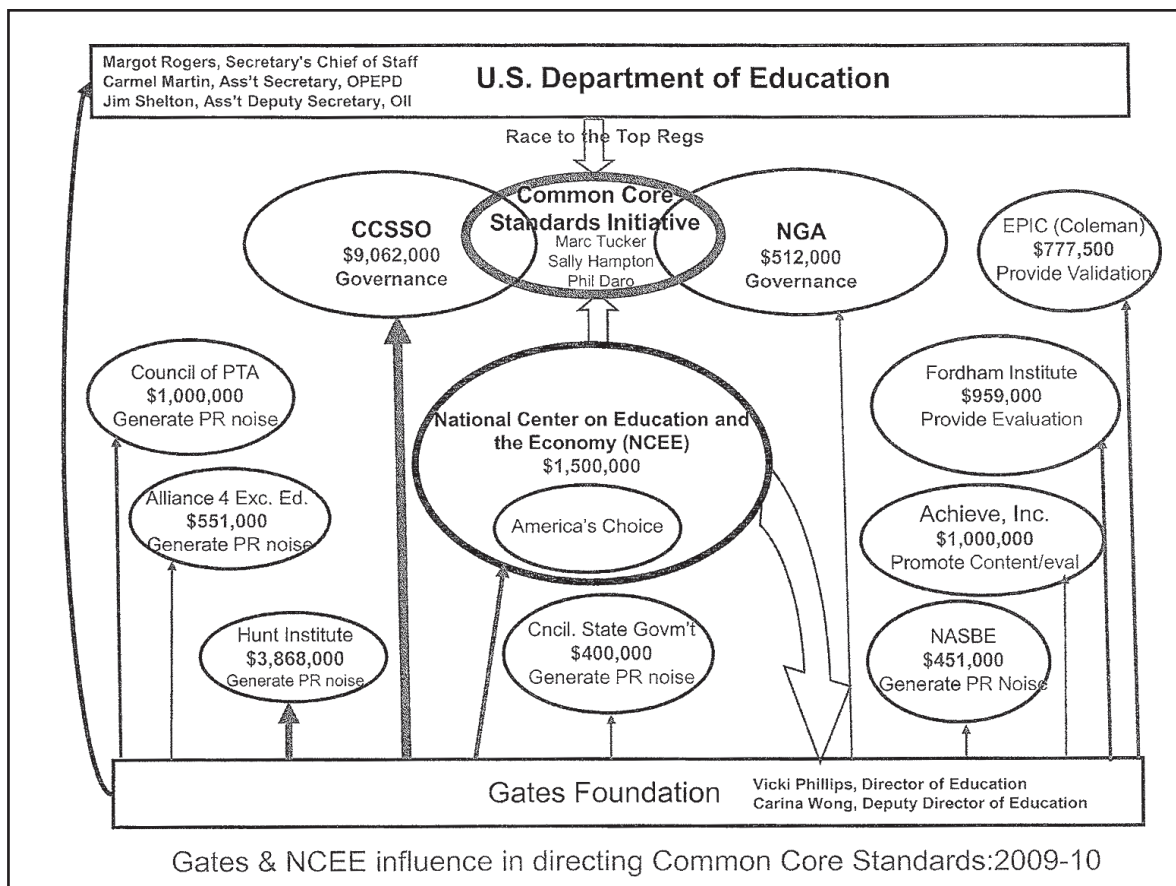
When the state signs the contract, the fine print says, “The following are *prohibited uses of the Common Core State Standards: (a) revising, including editing; ...*” [Emphasis added.] So much for state input. On top of the lack of the ability of the state to make changes, the state locks in all their students to a privately owned, unaccountable, commercial business paid for in part with tax dollars.

States sign a commercial license, which opens with, “The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers

(collectively, NGA Center/CCSSO), *as the owners of the Common Core State Standards* (College- and Career-Readiness Standards and K-12 Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics), grant this license to the Licensee identified below, subject to the terms set forth herein. The Common Core State Standards are protected by copyright and/or other applicable law, and any use of the Common Core State Standards other than as authorized under this License is prohibited.”² (Emphasis added.)

**NATIONAL STANDARDS
EQUAL
NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

Published in *Online*, February 24, 2011, *Education Week's* article, “AFT Presses Need for Curriculum Linked to Standards,” spelled out how the American Federation of Teachers is adamant that there be a national, well-defined, mandated curriculum that their teachers would



This chart shows some of the interlocking private and public entities that are making educational decisions today. See www.pioneerinstitute.org/pdf/gates_money.pdf.

be familiar with. Their reasoning is that if teachers are going to have their pay connected to the results of the student's assessments, then the teachers had better know what is being assessed. Both of the assessment consortia, which the states (including Missouri) have contracted with and which have been funded by the federal government to the tune of \$330 million, are essentially writing curriculum and assessments according to the *Education Week* article.

Missouri is a governing member of the federally-funded assessment consortia, the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium. One of the reasons the Missouri State Board of Education was told for joining this consortium was due to the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium's work with *formative assessments*. *Formative assessments* are given frequently and provide, according to The National Middle School Association, "the information needed to adjust teaching and learning ... [and to] help to ensure students achieve targeted standards-based learning goals within a set time frame." They are used to monitor the students more on a daily/weekly basis. The Board helped justify their involvement in the assessment consortia as a way to avoid the cost of independently having to develop local assessments.

Another consortia that Missouri is very involved in, is the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) that is working on *summative* assessments as well as pushing for a "national" diploma. *Summative* assessments according to the National Middle School Association "are ... State assessments, District benchmark, End-of-unit or chapter tests, ... semester exams. ... [They] are a means to gauge, at a particular point in time, student learning relative to content standards. ... [and] are spread out and occur *after* instruction every few weeks, months, or once a year, ... [and] are tools to help ... [the] alignment of curriculum, ..." ³

The current plan by the Missouri Department of Education is to field-test elements of the new assessment system during the 2012-13 school year and introduce operation exams to the program for English/language arts and mathematics in 2013-14.

Looking beyond the fancy words on assessments, whoever is writing the assessments, *formative* or *summative*, is determining the curriculum. If these

consortia are nationally/internationally aligned across district, state, and national boundaries, and if these consortia at the federal/international level control the multiple classroom assessments, how much input can the teacher and parents have?

WHAT IS THE END GAME?

Lou Gerstner, current CEO Emeritus of ACHIEVE, recommended that Obama "Abolish all local school districts, save 70 (50 states; 20 largest cities). Some states may choose to leave some of the rest as community service organizations, but they would have no direct involvement in the critical task of establishing standards, selecting teachers, and developing curricula. ... Establish a set of national standards for a core curriculum ..." (*The Wall Street Journal*, December 1, 2008)

"Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, writing in *The Washington Post*, listed 'working toward common, internationally benchmarked standards' as his No. 1 requirement for states to win funding ... In addition, the Obama administration announced in February [2010] that it intends to require states to adopt common national standards in order [for states] to remain eligible for Title I money. Nearly every school district in America participates in the \$14.5 billion Title I program, which provides federal funds for low-income students."⁴

In February 2011, The Heritage Foundation's Tina Korbe noted, "The Obama administration's 'Blueprint' for reauthorization of No Child Left Behind also signals that Title I funding, the largest source of federal funding for K-12 education, could be contingent on a state's adoption of national standards – and the national tests that go with them."

PUSH FOR INTERNATIONALLY-CONNECTED CURRICULUM

PARCC notes that their assessments "will be designed to ensure that students are being held to internationally competitive expectations via: tight alignment with the internationally-benchmarked Common Core State Standards."⁵ The Global Learning Resource Connection (GLRC) notes "GLRC partners are to be able to correlate educational resources to state and national standards [curriculum]. The National Education Association (NEA), a Premier Sponsor of the GLRC, is making sure this happens for their 3.3 million members ... [And]

there is a common need to share education resources between countries that are correlated to each country's curriculum."⁶

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY CHILDREN?

Again, we are what we think, and what and how we think is ingrained in us during our school years. Content determines character. The use of formative and summative assessments cement that content. **Whoever controls that content, controls the future.**

For our nation to remain free, our nation's children must be taught the exceptionalist history of a free people, the moral values of the Judeo-Christian Western Civilization and the academics to provide the intellectual power of the future.

WHAT TO DO

Local push-back is occurring. Watch a video about some Missouri teachers and their concerns at: <http://blog.heritage.org/2011/02/02/video-national-academic-standards-pose-threat-to-local-control-of-education/>. What can you do?

- 1) **READ ALL** the textbooks and handouts of your school/college age children. Rationally and politely visit with their teachers if you find content that is inaccurate or contrary to your beliefs.
- 2) **SHARE** what you are learning with other parents and neighbors; attend school board meetings; get to know the school board members. Contact school board candidates and discuss what you know with them. Get your friends and neighbors together and study the issues. An excellent discussion of these issues was presented at the Educational Policy Conference 22, January 27-29, 2011, St. Louis, Missouri. A printed copy of the speech, *Federal Standards & Mind Control*, by Betty Peters, Alabama State Board of Education member, is available. To order, contact **FRONT LINE**, PO Box 37054, St. Louis, MO 63141.
- 3) **RESEARCH** what your school is doing as to where they are obtaining their curriculum, tests and funding.
- 4) **CONTACT** state and federal legislators; encourage de-funding and de-coupling the state from the CCSS.

- 5) **CONSIDER** running for your local school board, but be sure to be factually informed on what is happening in your local schools and the decisions that are being made on state-wide and national levels. Subscribe to *Education Reporter* (\$25 a year), 7900 Bonhomme Ave., St. Louis, Missouri 63105 (314-721-1213).

A number of articles further address the challenge to keep education in the hands of parents and local communities. See:

- <http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/hey-national-curriculum-standardizers-stop-lying-to-us/>
- <http://texasedequity.blogspot.com/2011/02/lets-get-off-national-standards-train.html>
- <http://www.navigator-news.com/component/content/article/4-national/206-lets-get-off-the-national-standards-train>
- http://www.educationnews.org/ed_reports/107107.html

Endnotes:

- ¹ *On the Road to Implementation, Achieving the Promise of the Common Core State Standards*, August 2010, p. 22, ACHIEVE, <http://www.achieve.org/files/FINAL-CCSSImplementationGuide.pdf>.
- ² <http://www.corestandards.org/commercial-license>.
- ³ *Overview of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career*, May 4, 2010, www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder874/item5_PARCC.pdf.
- ⁴ Jessup, Meredith, "School of Barack," Townhall, September 2010, p. 49.
- ⁵ *Overview of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career*, May 4, 2010, www.ocmboces.org/tfiles/folder874/item5_PARCC.pdf.
- ⁶ Global Learning Resource Connection newsletter, Issue #1, www.jesandco.org/.