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**Testimony Regarding Common Core State Standards as Adopted by
State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction
Select Committee for Review of the Common Core Standards Initiative
Julaine K. Appling, WFA President
October 3, 2013 – Madison, WI**

Thank you, Senator Farrow and Representative Thiesfeldt, and all committee members, for holding this series of hearings to allow the people of this state to assist you in the very important work of assessing the educational standards that have been recently adopted by Tony Evers in his capacity as State Superintendent of Public Instruction as well as the process by which these standards were adopted and implementation plans developed.

I speak today primarily as president of Wisconsin Family Action, a statewide organization that champions Wisconsin's best natural resource—her families. We believe that fundamentally education of the next generation is the responsibility of parents. In order for parents to fulfill that responsibility, it is critical that they are fully informed and very involved with what their children are expected to learn in school, how they are performing, and how they are being assessed. Our testimony reflects these beliefs.

I am also by training and experience an educator. I have undergraduate and graduate degrees in education, classroom experience from junior-high through college, as well as administrative experience in a K-6 private school. Curriculum and instruction are areas where I have considerable interest and expertise. In addition, from 2000-2005 I served on the Watertown Unified School District Board of Education and was on the Curriculum and Instruction Committee for the duration of my tenure. My background and experience, including my current position, give me a solid foundation and something of a unique perspective from which to assess the Common Core State Standards.

Developing educational standards, properly done, requires a great deal of time and expertise, not to mention developing the related testing to ensure standards are met. This is especially true when we are talking about state standards that attempt to lay a foundation for what students statewide should be able to do when they complete grades and educational programs.

Wisconsin's former standards were inadequate. I doubt many would argue otherwise. The goal of revising the standards was and is worthy. We rightly take pride in our schools and our teachers and want an excellent education for our children and expect them to perform well when measured against the rest of the county and against international programs.

I would be remiss if I did not remind you that educational standards do not ensure learning or student success. Time and again we have seen that quality, committed teachers are the real difference-makers. They can take ridiculous standards and poor textbooks and ancillary curricula materials and still turn out students who have mastered grade-level concepts—and much, much more. That is not to say standards are not important; but it is imperative we keep standards in proper perspective. They are, or certainly should be, minimums, not maximums—learning “floors,” not “ceilings.”

Too often in attempts to improve upon the standards already being employed in our public education system, we fail to sufficiently subject these standards, as well as implementation methods and systems and assessment tools, to the scrutiny they inherently deserve. In our rush to provide our children with the “next best thing,” we can at times miss our intended target and create for ourselves additional, albeit unintended, new problems.

And so it is with Wisconsin’s adoption of Common Core State Standards.

A national initiative to implement new educational benchmarks for each individual grade level, Common Core State Standards were adopted in Wisconsin as a way of addressing a very real need here in our state: the updating of Wisconsin’s dated and some would say overly broad educational standards that have been in place for some time now.

We agree conceptually with the need to have rigorous, robust standards that are challenging to our students and prepare them for the future. We also believe that standards, from time to time, need to be reviewed and appropriately updated and improved. So in that regard, we don’t fault those who have set out to accomplish this.

What we do question, however, is whether the solution that has been adopted, the Common Core State Standards, was the best solution for our state and for our children. We question whether due diligence was really done in looking at all possible avenues for improvement, or if Common Core State Standards were adopted in large part simply because they were the first readily available solution to a real problem that needed attention. Putting together committees to review standards that are already created, tasked with making a recommendation regarding adoption, is far different from putting together committees tasked with creating the standards.

Common Core State Standards were well funded, slickly marketed, and presented as a comparatively easy fix to a complex issue here in our state and around the country. We overlooked and under-utilized the valuable and capable people we have right here in our own state, choosing instead to take the far easier path of adopting standards that are decidedly “one-size-fits-all” determined by people whose primary interest is not Wisconsin’s children. Thus, wittingly or unwittingly, we yielded to the federal level even more local control of our educational programs.

We have some very real concerns with the standards we are implementing. We have concerns over the security of our children’s personal information; concerns over a perceived lack of local control over what our children are being taught and how they are being tested; questions regarding oversight; and questions regarding the rigor of the standards that have been adopted. I am sure that all of these concerns will be well represented here today, so I will refrain from going into any more depth and move on to what I think is the most important question of the day: Where do we go from here? What do we do now?

We believe there are several things that can be done legislatively to address some of the broader concerns that have been revealed through the recent discussions on this matter and also address the deficiencies of the currently adopted program. These recommendations are not to be interpreted as “ways to make Common Core State Standards better,” but rather, as ways to mitigate some of the problems inherent in establishing educational standards for a state, whether they are Common Core State Standards or standards designed by Wisconsin educators specifically for Wisconsin students.

- 1) **“Firewalls” to Protect Personal Information** The first firewall needs to be at the district level protecting all specific information relating to our children, their families, their health, and their testing scores. Only minimal, randomized, or aggregate information is to be passed through to DPI for the sake of school performance evaluations. The second firewall needs to be at DPI to prevent the transfer of information from the department through to the federal government or any other outside entity. These need to be legislatively clarified and enforced.

- 2) **Reaffirm and Clarify Local Autonomy Over Curriculum** Districts need to be expressly responsible for the curriculums used in their schools. Curriculum content should be vetted and determined locally, as should be the addressing of parental concerns over curriculum substance or content. Current law provides for this but this needs to be reiterated when it comes to state educational standards. Standards and curriculum are not the same thing. And much of the problem many have with Common Core State Standards is actually because textbook publishers and curriculum producers are taking extreme liberty to indoctrinate students with liberal, un-American, anti-American teaching that promotes values that are at cross-purposes with many of our communities. These curricular decisions are rightly made at the school board level.
- 3) **Clarify Rights of Parental Access** Textbooks, and all supplemental curricular educational materials, used by teachers must be made available to parents at their request. Parents should have access to their child's classroom, by and large, whenever requested. Again, ultimately parents are responsible for the education of their children, not the state.
- 4) **Establish State Level Accountability for the Substance of all Standardized Tests** Educational standards themselves can be expected to continually evolve. Therefore, we need to definitively establish clear cut responsibility and accountability for the substance of any testing assessing whether or not students have met the standards. Because a Wisconsin-based, Wisconsin-developed alternative set of educational standards may very well end up being the preferred option for the future, we must have the capability of creating and administering standardized tests at the state level. Right now, people upset with the standards and/or testing have no way to effectively express their concerns because no one in the state really has ownership of the Common Core State Standards developed by and funded by national groups. DPI should be the responsible party for both the creation of and content of standardized tests.
- 5) **Establish a Permanent Means To Review Educational Standards and Testing** Existing standards should continually be reviewed and improved. This review should be ongoing and systematic and should ultimately result in the creation of Wisconsin-based standards that set the bar sufficiently high to ensure our students are truly "college and career ready." We believe the Common Core State Standards too often set the bar too low. Students rise to expectations; standards need to expect more of students, not settle for the minimum. We believe we truly can do better. However, any standards must be regularly reviewed.
- 6) **Prevent Any Implementation of Common Core State Standards beyond Math and English and Establish a Sunset/Replacement Clause on Common Core in General** Wisconsin has committed to adopting an unproven set of academic standards and in hindsight should have looked internally for a Wisconsin-based solution to our education needs. DPI should be tasked to work, in a transparent manner, on the creation of educational standards that are truly rigorous and represent the proud educational heritage that we have here in the Badger State. These Wisconsin-based standards should be ready for implementation in conjunction with the above-stated sunset of the Common Core State Standards currently adopted.

We trust the legislature will look closely at these recommendations. This problem is not going away. Taking appropriate action now will show concerned citizens and parents that you truly want our children to receive the very best education possible while maintaining Wisconsin's proud tradition of local control of our educational programs and institutions. Thank you for your time.

Align, Critical Thinking, and Pilot

Jim Scott, October 3, 2013

My name is Jim Scott and I reside in the Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools school district.

First, I would like to thank Senator Farrow and the members of the Special Committee for allowing me to testify.

Today, I would like to talk about Common Core code words, the buzz words, or “teacher speak” often used by educators to impress or intimidate the uninitiated. So let’s try to crack the Common Core code.

Every time you hear an educator use the word “**align**” sit up, pay attention, it’s a misnomer and a *red flag*. Wisconsin schools have always enjoyed “local control” over curriculum, but with the adoption of Common Core local control, flexibility, and academic freedom are being slowly abrogated to Madison, Washington, and special interests (such as Achieve, Inc.). Curriculum, texts, and exams are all being “**aligned**” with each other, thus controlling the message. The Smarter Balanced Assessment exam, the content of the textbooks, and the curriculum are all tightly intertwined to allow strict management of knowledge, which can be easily hijacked in to *indoctrination* and *mind control*, or what we used to call “brainwashing.” **Aligning** also creates the temptation for teachers to “teach to the test,” because the results of the Smarter Balanced Assessment exam have a significant impact on the teacher’s performance review, compensation, and career. **Alignment** makes Common Core standards and curriculum *inseparable*. The scope and depth of the Common Core standards act like a corral, trapping the curriculum inside its fence. In the past standards were a goal to achieve, through multiple paths designed by locally created curriculum and academic freedom, but as the **alignment** of Common Core is fully implemented our choices will evaporate. Whenever you hear an academic utter the word “**align**” alarm bells should sound off in your head!

The second buzz word is “**critical thinking**,” the educator code word *du jour*. It sounds pretty important; was it developed by NASA or some elitist educational think tank? Nah, it’s no more than the “how and why” of a fact. Whereas rote teaches us the “what” of a fact; Common Core’s “**critical thinking**” component wants students to go beyond the fact itself, and delve in to the abstract behind it. On face value that sounds pretty legit, however, “**critical thinking**” is an area where a fact can be blurred, twisted, spindled,

and mutilated into a corrupt piece of knowledge fitting the situational ethics of the messenger. There are good and bad ways of teaching the concept of “**critical thinking**,” make sure students are not being “molded” by **critical thinking**.

The last code word is, “**pilot**.” Truth be told, Common Core has never been tested in its entirety! Common Core has never been tested over a 12 year education cycle; we have no idea of how our kids will turn out when they walk across the commencement stage in 2026. It’s interesting that the public education community, a culture that extols and embraces the concept of scientific inquiry and the rigors of testing have embraced a program that has not passed the test of time. Instead they have used “**piloting**” to test components of Common Core. It’s testing bits and pieces, but not testing the program, as a whole. Proponents talk about Common Core being “rigorous” and internationally benchmarked; show me! I am assuming that the Smarter Balanced Assessment exam is the “rigorous” part of the program. It’s extremely rigorous for those third graders who do not have adequate keyboard skills, yet are expected to complete the Exam using a computer. How do you pilot bad habits without incurring hidden costs? The “international benchmarking” feature is problematic, to what, PISA? Every time you mention PISA (which stands for The Programme for International Student Assessment, the internationally recognized ‘benchmark’ test) to a Common Core proponent they become defensive; maybe it’s because it works. **Piloting** leaves us vulnerable to fragmentation and incomplete appreciation of the big picture.

In the past the WRPS system has tried “failed” programs; they tried a real flyer called “core math,” that was quietly swept under the rug at the end of its textbook cycle. We will never know how many kids were used as guinea pigs, and had their futures adversely affected by a deficient concept. “Whole language” was another program that met with disappointment. Lawmakers must be prepared to decode the jargon of Common Core in order to understand its illegitimacy and tertiary toxicity. The buzz words “**align, critical thinking, and pilot**” often misrepresent their true intent, it’s time for lawmakers to apply *critical thinking* to comprehend Common Core’s deficiencies, and protect the best interests of Wisconsin students.

I will leave you with an axiom; “Common Core is always related to money.”

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Align, Critical Thinking, and Pilot

Common Core Hearing, 3 October 2013, Norm Reynolds

No matter your emotional, political, or logical persuasion, our governor made his best truism when addressing the Common Core issue by declaring to us and other states “We can do better.” I consider it capital W and capital E, as in Wisconsin Education and emphasizing it to all of us collectively.

Common Core is essentially unconstitutional, and there are no provisions for it or anything like it in the United States Constitution. Education is NOT an enumerated power and no concern or responsibility to or from the federal government. In fact, the word “education” or anything related to it does not appear in the United States Constitution. Our Founders especially preserved, and the ratifying states demanded, that right to the several states only. That preservation continues to this day.

Usually the federal government invokes either the Commerce or General Welfare clauses to extend its enveloping mandates upon the states. Applied to Common Core activities, there is no commerce being conducted and education is too far a reach to be considered general welfare. Thomas Jefferson often clearly professed that “Congress has not unlimited powers to provide for the general welfare, but only those specifically enumerated.” Do you think he knew something about the states sentiments during Constitution creation? Jurisprudence covering education is unequivocally with the states and a domain for the states.

President Carter created the Department of Education in 1979, yet its establishment is still in question and effectively does little for the states educational systems. There is no legitimacy for federal creation, support, or imposition for Common Core. So where is this effort coming from?

Common Core is properly termed in reducing the several states educational programs to LCD. You may recall that term from arithmetic being the Lowest Common Denominator. Common, as in mandating all states, and core, as a basic educational level. Common Core does not address diverse cultures or state-specified educational needs and requirements. Further, the standards were arbitrarily made by the American Diploma Project without any open input or debate on their results. Who are they to determine this?

Common Core directly violates 4th Amendment in creating and maintaining a national database system from all states from kindergarten thru collage. This national database will contain extensive and personal information for every student and their parents well beyond educational needs for their educational life. One just has to recall the Patriot Act and recent NSA scandals to know how quickly any database information can be compromised and distributed to the internet and the world. These databases have enormous profit potential to drive unethical behavior and abuse. We do not trust the federal government, then extending to foreign governments, to discreetly protect our student's lifelong data streams. You know there will be the eventual internet distribution. Where is all this information going and what is it for? Will it be sold for profit to book publishers, student loan entities, or numerous marketing firms?

As in other states, Wisconsin's State Constitution provides numerous pages for educational direction and implementation. Invoking Common Core provides the Department of Education with a purpose and breathes new life into a failing agency. This essentially nationalizes all the states programs into the American educational system. As usual, the federal government will expand its power and influence with more strings attached. Where else would this combined effort result? Our own Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction would become a burdened puppet with all the many federal strings attached.

Wisconsin is in the top ten manufacturing states in the country. Where do you think Harley Davidson's come from? The two world's largest mining equipment companies are in Milwaukee County. When the Navy needs gear boxes for its ships and submarines they come from Falk. American and foreign land forces use numerous Oshkosh trucks. Our agricultural, milk, and meat processing and packing industries supply the state, the nation, and nearly half the world. Equally important are paper and packaging industries supplying over half the world. Wisconsin's economy cannot sustain all these many industries by accepting second or third rate education for our future employees. Whether financial, clerical, institutional, technical, or any other they require the highest level of education accessible. Right here in Madison is one of the few national think tanks, how did that happen?

Wisconsin needs to wean the federal government from its influence, and stand on its own to assume and support the state's responsibilities. After all, the federal government is the only child from the several states. It's time for the states to grow up and be the parent, no matter the spoiled brat hissy-fits from the federalists.

The Wisconsin Grandsons of Liberty conducts diligent investigations to determine factual information. Most members are professional people, such as engineers, IT personnel, military, educators, and the like. We interact our combined capabilities to determine supported positions, then impart those results to responsible parties. In summation, we have determined that Common Core is not in the best interest for students, parents, educators, related state officials, nor our state in general. There are no substantial gains and benefits to Wisconsin citizens for the vastly expended costs, adversarial risks, and detrimental issues involved. Common Core greatly diminishes and retards Wisconsin's educational programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our investigative research.



Position on Common Core Standards

Overview:

The education of America's children was of primary importance to our nation's Founders. Thomas Jefferson wrote "I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man". Yet, the United States Constitution does not mention the word "education". The Founders believed in a limited federal government and local control of educating children. In the 1970's it became measurably apparent that a ten year comparison of the average American students revealed a considerable decline of academic achievement. The ensuing attempt to remedy public education brought decades of studies, the formation of committees, and eventually the development of educational standards. With the aim of developing one set of standards for every American child the result was the Common Core State Standards.

Liberal view of public education:

After over 200 years of public education being controlled at the local and state level, the dismal results of recent testing indicate that the federal government is uniquely enabled to set uniform academic standards for every American child. National uniform standards would assure mobility, international competitiveness, and a more rigorous and controllable curriculum in a technologically advancing world.

Conservative view of public education:

Historically, parents and teachers determined the curriculum, textbooks, course content and graduation requirements at the local level with an eye towards the local necessities for economic survival. Parents were considered the primary educators of their children. Post-1900, school districts began consolidation in the major cities and school boards began devising and implementing curricula. By the Great Depression and the New Deal Era, school corporations were supplanting the local districts, and statewide education departments were usurping the local control and imposing statewide curricula. Conservatives view this gradual and deliberate removal of local control as a pre-emption of parental and local control. The parents are now relegated to being mere checkbooks, sitters and the chauffeurs of children that belong to the state. Education is NOT a constitutionally enumerated power and therefore neither the concern nor responsibility of the federal government. Conservatives believe that local control and free market principles, when applied to curriculum and assessments, will yield a more manageable educational process and superior results.

Chronographic History:

In order to fully appreciate the complexity of what encompasses the Common Core Standards, one needs to start with a timeline of events leading to their development.

- 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – The education portion of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program. Latest incarnation expired without reauthorization on 30 September 2008 (31 pages and 1 billion dollars).



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- 1974 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – gives certain rights to students and their parents which protect sensitive information.
- 1979 The Department of Education (DoE) is established by President Jimmy Carter (3rd largest budget after DOD and DHHS).
- 1981 The Commission on Excellence in Education is formed by direction of President Ronald Reagan. It is headed by Sec. of Education T.H. Bell.
- 1983 “A Nation At Risk: The Imperative For Education Reform” report is published by The Commission on Excellence in Education.
- 1989 President George Bush calls for The First National Education Summit. This summit was attended by the nation’s governors and led to the push to build a system of national education standards.
- 1996 The Second Educational Summit. Led to the creation of Achieve Inc., a bipartisan organization founded by business leaders including Bill Gates, Craig Barnett of Intel, and Louis Gerstner of IBM in association with the nation’s governors.
- Achieve, Inc. begins the American Diploma Project (ADP) partnering with The Educational Trust, The National Alliance of Business, and the Fordham Foundation. The funding comes from the governors and business leaders.
- 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is enacted as the seventh reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB included 80 programs at a cost of 23 billion dollars. Twenty of the programs were formula grant programs. (Title I of NCLB provides funds for states’ low income school districts through a system that is so complex that it is said only a handful of people can understand it entirely. It is described as opaque and unaccountable.
- 2004 The American Diploma Project released its report identifying the common core of English and math skills and knowledge that high school graduates will need to succeed in college and the workforce.
- 2008 Achieve releases a report “Out of Many, One: Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards from the Ground Up” which points out that individual states that had set standards for academics had students consistently improving in math and English.
- 2009 Race to the Top (RTT) created by President Obama’s administration. It is a contest funded by 4.35 billion dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (The Stimulus) as competitive grant funding. In competing for the funds the states had to agree to criteria such as adopting “college and career ready” standards. Also as a condition of applying for this grant a state would be obligated to implement a State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS). See the implications of this in the 2011 bullet point.



Position on Common Core Standards

- 2009 Achieve begins work on Common Core Standards in a partnership of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Some argue that this partnership created the means to develop the standards without open discussion.
- 2010 The Common Core Standards are released. There are two consortia of states that are using the standards: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), of which Achieve serves as project management partner, and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).
- 2011 Department of Education acts to change the 1974 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Changing this act coupled with the formation of a State Longitudinal Database System creates many “right to privacy” issues.

Pro CCSS:

- Previously some states developed adequate educational standards but many failed; putting forth standards that lacked content and rigor. ¹
- School Choice, being market based requires standardized testing to provide consumer information. Additionally, standardized testing provides accountability when tax dollars are involved.
- Having one set of standards for many states will save the costs of each state duplicating the assessment process.
- The economy of scale will make text books and teaching materials cheaper.
- Fordham Institute found Common Core Standards in Math and English to be superior to the academic standards set by three-quarters of the states and at par with the rest. ²
Fordham Institute’s claim to have developed better standards than most states is based on their own interpretations and is in need of independent third party corroboration.
- Common Core’s guidance devotes 200 pages to suggesting literature examples that are “on the top of most educators’ lists of worthy reading”. ³
- The Common Core Initiative is and has always been a state-led effort.
- Control of curriculum, instruction and pedagogy remains at the local level. ⁴
- “(T)he gains made by replacing Wisconsin standards with the Common Core are some of the largest in the nation.” ⁵
- When Common Core Standards are compared with standards of other high performing countries the agreement is very high. Furthermore, no states standards were as close of a match as the Common Core. ⁶
- Looking back, states that were closest to the Common Core did better on the national NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) tests. ⁷
- Common Core is a totally voluntary program and not tied to Federal funding.
- There are two federally funded assessment consortia but states are free to join any of the several private entities that are developing assessments.



Position on Common Core Standards

Con CCSS:

- Susceptible to “revisionist” manipulation of social studies such as history, civics, etc.
- For an undertaking that claims to be largely free of federal involvement, Common Core has quite a few federal fingerprints on it. 8
- As a condition of applying for \$4 billion in Race To The Top (RTTT) grant funding, states obligated themselves to the implementation of a State Longitudinal Database System which will contain a large amount of personal information on each student. 9
- Common Core does not address diverse cultures and state-specific educational needs.
- Common Core Standards were developed by the American Diploma Project (ADP) without the benefit of open debate and public input. 10
- Education reform should give primary control over education to those closest to students.
- Nationalization of standards is a centralizing overreach of government and represents an abdication of local authority.
- Fifty years of ever-increasing federal involvement in education has failed to increase academic achievement. 11
- The Common Core Standards Initiative is a system that has not been tested and with most states signing on, a failure of this system would be catastrophic for our nation.
- The states are responsible for funding the implementation of Common Core and the cost may be prohibitive.
- Teachers will have to develop a new pedagogy (method of teaching children) which is unfamiliar to many existing teachers.
- The Constitution gives the federal government no authority to govern education, and numerous laws prohibit Washington from influencing school curricula. 12

Additional Existing Law:

- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship Act of 1994
- Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988
- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Communications Act of 1934
- Community Services Block Grant Act
- Department of Education Organization Act
- District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999



Position on Common Core Standards

- Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975
- Education Amendments of 1972
- Education Amendments of 1978
- Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999
- Education for Economic Security Act
- Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
- Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993
- General Education Provisions Act
- Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- Higher Education Act of 1965
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- James Madison Memorial Fellowship Act
- Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934
- National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977
- National and Community Service Act of 1990
- National Child Protection Act of 1993
- National Education Statistics Act of 1994
- National Environmental Education Act of 1990
- Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
- State Dependent Care Development Grants Act
- Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1987
- Workforce Investment Act of 1998

SCOTUS Rulings:

The SCOTUS has made few rulings on the specific aspect of school curriculum standards. The majority of relevant rulings have been in the area of equal provision or assessment.

- 1925 – *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (SCOTUS) – held that students cannot be forced into public schools.
- 1938 – *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* – states must offer the same level of standardized curricula to all students regardless of race
- 1954 – *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*
- 1972 – *Wisconsin v. Yoder* – students are not required to attend public school
- 1973 – *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*
- 1978 – *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*
- 1985 – *School District of the City of Grand Rapids v. Ball*



Position on Common Core Standards

Constitutionality:

Nowhere in the US Constitution do the people grant power to the federal government to regulate, control, direct or influence the field of education at any level. The Commerce Clause cannot be stretched far enough or wide enough to cover education. Rulings such as the *US v. Lopez* decision show that the SCOTUS will not extend just any power under the Commerce Clause. The General Welfare Clause is also insufficient to cover education. The body of jurisprudence covering education is firmly and unequivocally on the side of the states. To the contrary, state constitutions often specifically address education – the Wisconsin state constitution devotes an entire article to education. Education is the domain of the states.

Relationship to Pro-Constitution Movement/TEA Party Movement Principles:

Free Markets:

The implementation of the CCSS will apply across the board to all students and will thus impact the private and parochial schools. Since all schools will need to “teach to the test” the curricula of all schools will need to change to accommodate the assessment tests. The variation between competing school systems may be reduced. Massive contracts will be let for textbooks, standardized tests and curriculum guidelines. Much of the potential profit will be found in the sale of the personal information of the students and their parents. The databases created hold enormous potential of unethical behavior and abuse.

Limited Constitutional Government:

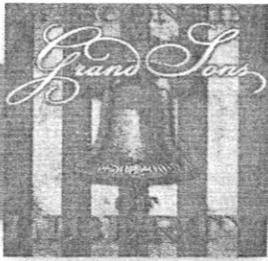
Since state governments are not limited in power in the same manner as the federal government, they have more opportunities for legal intrusion into the personal lives of citizens. Federal authority for intrusion is completely lacking and any claim to the contrary is spurious at best. The databases created will obviously violate 4th Amendment constitutional safeties. As Jefferson noted, “The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield, and *government to gain ground.*” Therefore we can expect that any database use as designed will be quickly compromised as evidenced by the Patriot Act and the NSA spying scandals.

Fiscal Responsibility:

Common Core will breathe new life into the Department of Education spending and precipitate a new round of the expansion of its powers and influence. Although the CCSS comes with no federal funding initially, it is conceivable that eventually the federal government will put more strings on federal funding. The states’ dependence on federal money will lead to the cession of more control to the federal government.

Effect on Wisconsin:

The relevance of the Department of Public Instruction will be diminished as the federally based standards take over and relegate the DPI to a mere functionary of the DOE. Two major problems will emerge: first, the database limitations will evaporate quickly as personal information is spread and second, the 426 Wisconsin school districts will see their local control disappear. Issues that are pertinent to Wisconsin will be minimized as inferior to the federal issues.



Position on Common Core Standards

Effect on Wisconsin's Federal Officials:

Abolition of the Department of Education would be the most beneficial act that our federal officials could take. In the interim until that happens, our federal officials should be working to reduce the federal influence and protect Wisconsin's state level decision making in education.

Position of the Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty:

After reading the original 1983 report "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative For Education Reform" it is evident that the American school system had failed on several fronts especially when benchmarked internationally. Attempting to address the challenges of improving the education of all American children and retaining local control, the task was given to the governors of the states and to the business community. We do recognize that the road we are on was paved with good intentions. Unfortunately, the Federal government, with its propensity for expansion, found ways to influence critical aspects of the process. Senator Marco Rubio, in a letter to Arne Duncan, found three laws that were broken by the Obama Administration with the "Race to the Top" grant requirements. Because the Federal government has managed to influence the system of development of core curriculum and assessment standards in which states must abdicate authority to distant entities, we cannot trust the education of Wisconsin children to an organization so permeable to government intrusion. We, therefore, support the action taken by the members of the Wisconsin Joint Committee on Education which postpones implementation of the CCSS until potential concerns can be studied and addressed. At this point the apparent overreach of the federal government in the area of education leaves us far from being in support of CCSS.

With the recent passage of HR5 in the U.S. House of Representatives (July 19, 2013), some of our concerns are being addressed. This legislation-the *Student Success Act*- which is a rewrite of the No Child Left Behind law, contains language giving several important functions back to the states. Currently under a federal program called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), students are required to show proficiency in reading and math by 2014. This federal mandate did not function as designed and HR5 eliminates AYP and brings the design of student assessments back to state and local control. HR5 also eliminates the High Quality Teacher (HQT) mandate returning the teacher's qualification requirements to the local level. Under this bill the U.S. Secretary of Education is prohibited from dictating standards and assessments. Representative Luetkemeyer (R,MO) added a 'sense of Congress' stating that "states and local educational agencies should maintain the rights and responsibilities of determining educational curriculum, programs of instruction, and assessments for elementary and secondary education." Within the bill that passed the House, state's Title I dollars would follow the child to any public or charter school. The bill was sent to the U.S. Senate where it has been read into the records and is in the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (July 24, 2013). The Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty are in full agreement with this "sense of Congress", and we anticipate passage in the U.S. Senate.

Furthermore, we are opposed to the enactment of the State Longitudinal Database System, which was dictated as a requirement of applying for "No Child Left Behind" grant money. The



Position on Common Core Standards

Overview:

The education of America's children was of primary importance to our nation's Founders. Thomas Jefferson wrote "I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource to be relied on for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man". Yet, the United States Constitution does not mention the word "education". The Founders believed in a limited federal government and local control of educating children. In the 1970's it became measurably apparent that a ten year comparison of the average American students revealed a considerable decline of academic achievement. The ensuing attempt to remedy public education brought decades of studies, the formation of committees, and eventually the development of educational standards. With the aim of developing one set of standards for every American child the result was the Common Core State Standards.

Liberal view of public education:

After over 200 years of public education being controlled at the local and state level, the dismal results of recent testing indicate that the federal government is uniquely enabled to set uniform academic standards for every American child. National uniform standards would assure mobility, international competitiveness, and a more rigorous and controllable curriculum in a technologically advancing world.

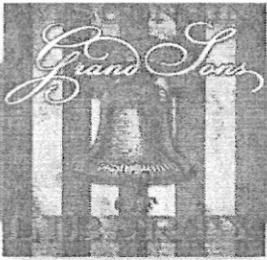
Conservative view of public education:

Historically, parents and teachers determined the curriculum, textbooks, course content and graduation requirements at the local level with an eye towards the local necessities for economic survival. Parents were considered the primary educators of their children. Post-1900, school districts began consolidation in the major cities and school boards began devising and implementing curricula. By the Great Depression and the New Deal Era, school corporations were supplanting the local districts, and statewide education departments were usurping the local control and imposing statewide curricula. Conservatives view this gradual and deliberate removal of local control as a pre-emption of parental and local control. The parents are now relegated to being mere checkbooks, sitters and the chauffeurs of children that belong to the state. Education is NOT a constitutionally enumerated power and therefore neither the concern nor responsibility of the federal government. Conservatives believe that local control and free market principles, when applied to curriculum and assessments, will yield a more manageable educational process and superior results.

Chronographic History:

In order to fully appreciate the complexity of what encompasses the Common Core Standards, one needs to start with a timeline of events leading to their development.

- 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – The education portion of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program. Latest incarnation expired without reauthorization on 30 September 2008 (31 pages and 1 billion dollars).



Position on Common Core Standards

- 1974 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – gives certain rights to students and their parents which protect sensitive information.
- 1979 The Department of Education (DoE) is established by President Jimmy Carter (3rd largest budget after DOD and DHHS).
- 1981 The Commission on Excellence in Education is formed by direction of President Ronald Reagan. It is headed by Sec. of Education T.H. Bell.
- 1983 “A Nation At Risk: The Imperative For Education Reform” report is published by The Commission on Excellence in Education.
- 1989 President George Bush calls for The First National Education Summit. This summit was attended by the nation’s governors and led to the push to build a system of national education standards.
- 1996 The Second Educational Summit. Led to the creation of Achieve Inc., a bipartisan organization founded by business leaders including Bill Gates, Craig Barnett of Intel, and Louis Gerstner of IBM in association with the nation’s governors.
- Achieve, Inc. begins the American Diploma Project (ADP) partnering with The Educational Trust, The National Alliance of Business, and the Fordham Foundation. The funding comes from the governors and business leaders.
- 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is enacted as the seventh reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. NCLB included 80 programs at a cost of 23 billion dollars. Twenty of the programs were formula grant programs. (Title 1 of NCLB provides funds for states’ low income school districts through a system that is so complex that it is said only a handful of people can understand it entirely. It is described as opaque and unaccountable.
- 2004 The American Diploma Project released its report identifying the common core of English and math skills and knowledge that high school graduates will need to succeed in college and the workforce.
- 2008 Achieve releases a report “Out of Many, One: Toward Rigorous Common Core Standards from the Ground Up” which points out that individual states that had set standards for academics had students consistently improving in math and English.
- 2009 Race to the Top (RTT) created by President Obama’s administration. It is a contest funded by 4.35 billion dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (The Stimulus) as competitive grant funding. In competing for the funds the states had to agree to criteria such as adopting “college and career ready” standards. Also as a condition of applying for this grant a state would be obligated to implement a State Longitudinal Database System (SLDS). See the implications of this in the 2011 bullet point.

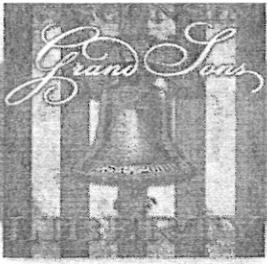


Position on Common Core Standards

- 2009 Achieve begins work on Common Core Standards in a partnership of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Some argue that this partnership created the means to develop the standards without open discussion.
- 2010 The Common Core Standards are released. There are two consortia of states that are using the standards: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), of which Achieve serves as project management partner, and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).
- 2011 Department of Education acts to change the 1974 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Changing this act coupled with the formation of a State Longitudinal Database System creates many “right to privacy” issues.

Pro CCSS:

- Previously some states developed adequate educational standards but many failed; putting forth standards that lacked content and rigor. 1
- School Choice, being market based requires standardized testing to provide consumer information. Additionally, standardized testing provides accountability when tax dollars are involved.
- Having one set of standards for many states will save the costs of each state duplicating the assessment process.
- The economy of scale will make text books and teaching materials cheaper.
- Fordham Institute found Common Core Standards in Math and English to be superior to the academic standards set by three-quarters of the states and at par with the rest. 2 *Fordham Institute's claim to have developed better standards than most states is based on their own interpretations and is in need of independent third party corroboration.*
- Common Core's guidance devotes 200 pages to suggesting literature examples that are “on the top of most educators' lists of worthy reading”. 3
- The Common Core Initiative is and has always been a state-led effort.
- Control of curriculum, instruction and pedagogy remains at the local level. 4
- “(T)he gains made by replacing Wisconsin standards with the Common Core are some of the largest in the nation.” 5
- When Common Core Standards are compared with standards of other high performing countries the agreement is very high. Furthermore, no states standards were as close of a match as the Common Core. 6
- Looking back, states that were closest to the Common Core did better on the national NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) tests. 7
- Common Core is a totally voluntary program and not tied to Federal funding.
- There are two federally funded assessment consortia but states are free to join any of the several private entities that are developing assessments.



Position on Common Core Standards

Con CCSS:

- Susceptible to “revisionist” manipulation of social studies such as history, civics, etc.
- For an undertaking that claims to be largely free of federal involvement, Common Core has quite a few federal fingerprints on it. 8
- As a condition of applying for \$4 billion in Race To The Top (RTTT) grant funding, states obligated themselves to the implementation of a State Longitudinal Database System which will contain a large amount of personal information on each student. 9
- Common Core does not address diverse cultures and state-specific educational needs.
- Common Core Standards were developed by the American Diploma Project (ADP) without the benefit of open debate and public input. 10
- Education reform should give primary control over education to those closest to students.
- Nationalization of standards is a centralizing overreach of government and represents an abdication of local authority.
- Fifty years of ever-increasing federal involvement in education has failed to increase academic achievement. 11
- The Common Core Standards Initiative is a system that has not been tested and with most states signing on, a failure of this system would be catastrophic for our nation.
- The states are responsible for funding the implementation of Common Core and the cost may be prohibitive.
- Teachers will have to develop a new pedagogy (method of teaching children) which is unfamiliar to many existing teachers.
- The Constitution gives the federal government no authority to govern education, and numerous laws prohibit Washington from influencing school curricula. 12

Additional Existing Law:

- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975
- Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship Act of 1994
- Augustus F. Hawkins-Robert T. Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988
- Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998
- Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Communications Act of 1934
- Community Services Block Grant Act
- Department of Education Organization Act
- District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999



Position on Common Core Standards

- Education for all Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975
- Education Amendments of 1972
- Education Amendments of 1978
- Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999
- Education for Economic Security Act
- Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
- Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993
- General Education Provisions Act
- Goals 2000: Educate America Act
- Higher Education Act of 1965
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- James Madison Memorial Fellowship Act
- Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1934
- National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977
- National and Community Service Act of 1990
- National Child Protection Act of 1993
- National Education Statistics Act of 1994
- National Environmental Education Act of 1990
- Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
- State Dependent Care Development Grants Act
- Tribally Controlled Schools Act of 1987
- Workforce Investment Act of 1998

SCOTUS Rulings:

The SCOTUS has made few rulings on the specific aspect of school curriculum standards. The majority of relevant rulings have been in the area of equal provision or assessment.

- 1925 – *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (SCOTUS) – held that students cannot be forced into public schools.
- 1938 – *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* – states must offer the same level of standardized curricula to all students regardless of race
- 1954 – *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*
- 1972 – *Wisconsin v. Yoder* – students are not required to attend public school
- 1973 – *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*
- 1978 – *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*
- 1985 – *School District of the City of Grand Rapids v. Ball*



Position on Common Core Standards

Constitutionality:

Nowhere in the US Constitution do the people grant power to the federal government to regulate, control, direct or influence the field of education at any level. The Commerce Clause cannot be stretched far enough or wide enough to cover education. Rulings such as the *US v. Lopez* decision show that the SCOTUS will not extend just any power under the Commerce Clause. The General Welfare Clause is also insufficient to cover education. The body of jurisprudence covering education is firmly and unequivocally on the side of the states. To the contrary, state constitutions often specifically address education – the Wisconsin state constitution devotes an entire article to education. Education is the domain of the states.

Relationship to Pro-Constitution Movement/TEA Party Movement Principles:

Free Markets:

The implementation of the CCSS will apply across the board to all students and will thus impact the private and parochial schools. Since all schools will need to “teach to the test” the curricula of all schools will need to change to accommodate the assessment tests. The variation between competing school systems may be reduced. Massive contracts will be let for textbooks, standardized tests and curriculum guidelines. Much of the potential profit will be found in the sale of the personal information of the students and their parents. The databases created hold enormous potential of unethical behavior and abuse.

Limited Constitutional Government:

Since state governments are not limited in power in the same manner as the federal government, they have more opportunities for legal intrusion into the personal lives of citizens. Federal authority for intrusion is completely lacking and any claim to the contrary is spurious at best. The databases created will obviously violate 4th Amendment constitutional safeties. As Jefferson noted, “The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield, and *government to gain ground.*” Therefore we can expect that any database use as designed will be quickly compromised as evidenced by the Patriot Act and the NSA spying scandals.

Fiscal Responsibility:

Common Core will breathe new life into the Department of Education spending and precipitate a new round of the expansion of its powers and influence. Although the CCSS comes with no federal funding initially, it is conceivable that eventually the federal government will put more strings on federal funding. The states’ dependence on federal money will lead to the cession of more control to the federal government.

Effect on Wisconsin:

The relevance of the Department of Public Instruction will be diminished as the federally based standards take over and relegate the DPI to a mere functionary of the DOE. Two major problems will emerge: first, the database limitations will evaporate quickly as personal information is spread and second, the 426 Wisconsin school districts will see their local control disappear. Issues that are pertinent to Wisconsin will be minimized as inferior to the federal issues.



Position on Common Core Standards

Effect on Wisconsin's Federal Officials:

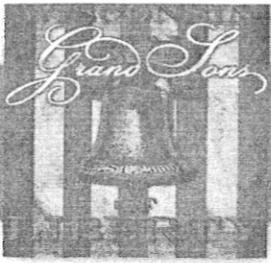
Abolition of the Department of Education would be the most beneficial act that our federal officials could take. In the interim until that happens, our federal officials should be working to reduce the federal influence and protect Wisconsin's state level decision making in education.

Position of the Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty:

After reading the original 1983 report "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative For Education Reform" it is evident that the American school system had failed on several fronts especially when benchmarked internationally. Attempting to address the challenges of improving the education of all American children and retaining local control, the task was given to the governors of the states and to the business community. We do recognize that the road we are on was paved with good intentions. Unfortunately, the Federal government, with its propensity for expansion, found ways to influence critical aspects of the process. Senator Marco Rubio, in a letter to Arne Duncan, found three laws that were broken by the Obama Administration with the "Race to the Top" grant requirements. Because the Federal government has managed to influence the system of development of core curriculum and assessment standards in which states must abdicate authority to distant entities, we cannot trust the education of Wisconsin children to an organization so permeable to government intrusion. We, therefore, support the action taken by the members of the Wisconsin Joint Committee on Education which postpones implementation of the CCSS until potential concerns can be studied and addressed. At this point the apparent overreach of the federal government in the area of education leaves us far from being in support of CCSS.

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Position on Common Core Standards

personal and confidential information. We recognize that the federal government is already changing current laws protecting the privacy of student data. The re-disclosure of this type of data is of great concern to us. We do not trust the government, domestic or foreign, to possess a lifelong stream of data of Wisconsin children. Therefore we are opposed to any modification of Wisconsin's existing Longitudinal Database and propose legislation enacted to further secure and protect any student data that is generated.

Finally, we recognize that the implementation of CCSS with its technological ramifications, training, and new courseware will be very costly for the state of Wisconsin. As previously noted, it has been documented that states that have rigorous standards have better academic achievement. The benefit and need of academic standards is not in dispute. However, the extra cost of implementation of CCSS in comparison to further development of equally rigorous state standards is in need of analysis. We therefore call for a cost/benefit comparative analysis of the continued implementation of CCSS compared to the development of or purchase of academic standards.

Additional Information:

www.commoncorestandards.com

1 Chester E. Finn. "Conservatives and the Common Core" May 2, 2013 Fordham Institute, <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-weekly/2013/may-2/conservatives-and-the-commoncore.html>

2 Ibid Chester E. Finn

3 Kathleen Porter-Magee. Dec. 14, 2012 "The weak critique of Common Core's approach to great literature" Fordham Institute: <http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-corewatch/2012/the-weak-critique-of-common-cores-approach-to-great-literature.html>

4 Kathleen Porter-Magee. May 22, 2013 Testimony to Wisconsin Committee on Education, Information Hearing.

5 Ibid Porter-Magee

6 Ibid Porter-Magee

7 William Schmidt. Nov. 12, 2012 "Study supports move toward common math standards". <http://edwp.educ.msu.edu/news/2012/study-supports-move-toward-common-math-standards/>

8 Lindsey M. Burke. April 8, 2013 "Why There's a Backlash Against Common Core" National Review Online: <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/344897/why-there-s-backlash-against-common-core-lindsey-m-burke>

9 Ibid, Lindsey M. Burke

10 Darcy Pattison. May 16, 2011 "History of National Standards: Where Did Common Core Standards Come From?" : <http://commoncorestandards.com/faq/from-where/>

11 Lindsey M Burke. "A National Education Standards Exit Strategy for States" The Heritage Foundation WebMemo No. 3437. <http://report.heritage.org/wm3437>

12 Neal McCluskey. June 11, 2013 "The Common Core: De Facto Federal Control of America's Schools" The Cato Institute.

Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty Testimony Concerning the Cost Impact of the Common Core Standards

Ladies and Gentlemen, I appreciate the opportunity to address you today on the issue of the implementation of the Common Core Standards in Wisconsin. I speak on behalf of the Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty, a statewide constitutionalist group. As my time is limited, I will focus on a singular aspect of the issue at hand – the cost impact of implementation and maintenance of the Common Core Standards.

Considerable work has been done on this topic by think tanks and also by state government budget offices. White papers have been published by organizations ranging from the Pioneer Institute in opposition to the Common Core to the Thomas B. Fordham Institute supporting the Common Core. A majority of the states have issued a paper or position statement on the financial impact of the Common Core implementation for that particular state. In all cases, the same conclusion is reached: the cost impact on state budgets will be both significant and difficult to fully predict. The cost analysis prior to implementation must take into consideration such factors as: textbooks and materials, periodic testing, instructor professional development, technology upgrades, and student baseline assessment. The cost projections can be further segregated into transitional implementation or initial costs and on-going or maintenance costs. For some factors, such as technology, periodic reinvestment on a 3-7 years cycle is necessary to sustain the program, leading to sizable, recurring budget fluctuations. Not all of these expenditures will be boosting the bottom line of assessment test scores; it is necessary to be cognizant of what goes into the calculus of these costs and, perhaps more importantly, what is omitted. I am sure that most everyone here has at least a passing familiarity with both the phrase and the concept of 'throwing good money after bad.'

We are presenting averaged values and not skewed numbers cherry picked and given in support of a pre-determined outcome. Fordham's transitional numbers in support of the Common Core include, admittedly, only instructional materials, student assessment, and professional development. These numbers do not include infrastructure costs and ancillary costs. The supporting data may be found in the reports cited in our submitted printed testimony.

The first figure mentioned in any analysis is that of the overall national cost impact. Depending on the study cited, this figure will vary due to the inclusion or omission of certain factors but the overall numbers are not far out of line with each other. Fordham gives a cost of \$12.1 billion whereas Pioneer published a figure of \$15.835 billion and these have an average value of \$13.97 billion – very close together but a frightening number nonetheless when considering that this is for a maximum 7 year outlay for transitional costs. And remember that these figures are only for the English and Mathematics core and not for all subjects. Additionally, there is only \$5.4 billion in federal Race To The Top grants. The differential to Wisconsin taxpayers is an estimated \$313.092 million over 7 years that will not be covered by federal money.

Of greater concern is the cost of technology upgrades for school districts. The Fordham Institute is honest in their acknowledgment of omitting these numbers from their assessment and they do put their estimates in an appendix. The hopeful cost projections for textbooks and materials are obliterated when

compared to the cost impact of technology upgrades. An estimated national average of \$62 for textbooks for each student is overshadowed by the minimum upgrade cost of \$300 for an iPad or at least \$600 for a laptop – per student – all before increased bandwidth, software, licensing, and hardware outlays. The Pioneer Institute included these numbers in their evaluation and found that the cost of new technology will drive up district costs and force periodic repetition of upgrades. It is notable that the Fordham report did not include the cost of technology upgrade as it constitutes the largest part of the projected \$15.8 billion outlay at \$6.9 billion, or 43%, of the total initial expenditures. This is not insignificant.

Wisconsin's per student cost of implementation is estimated to be \$294 of which federal grant money will cover only a projected \$109. The full 7 year outlay per student is estimated to be \$380.

The meatiest portion of all of these reports and white papers are found in the fine print and the foot notes of the think tank reports. It is in these reports that we learn about the funding schemes. The cost analyses available all break into time periods for the first year and one-time costs and then the on-going costs for years 2 through 7. After that period, federal grants and subsidies are unknown and any prudent fiscal planning on the part of the states will require the assumption of no federal assistance. Much of the Common Core will result in unfunded mandates on the states by the federal consortia, and in turn, unfunded mandates on the local districts by the states. These unfunded mandates are budget-busters at all levels.

In an era when Wisconsin is struggling to balance its budgets and close the deficits, reduce its debt, and lay a fiscally responsible foundation for the state's future, the Common Core represents an extremely large question mark painted dollar green.

<http://watchdog.org/104325/how-much-will-common-core-cost-you/>

[http://www.accountabilityworks.org/photos/Appendices.Common Core Cost.AW.pdf](http://www.accountabilityworks.org/photos/Appendices.Common%20Core%20Cost.AW.pdf)

<http://www.nasbo.org/node/1769>

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/82477413/Common-Core-State-Standards-Implementation-Cost>

<http://pioneerinstitute.org/opeds/what-will-common-core-standards-cost-states/>

<http://www.intellectualltakeout.org/library/chart-graph/costs-common-core-state>

<http://www.educationviews.org/states-taxpayers-cannot-afford-common-core-standards/>

<http://www.edexcellencemedia.net/publications/2012/20120530-Putting-A-Price-Tag-on-the-Common-Core/20120530-Putting-a-Price-Tag-on-the-Common-Core-FINAL.pdf>

Protecting the Privacy, Security and Confidentiality of Student Information

My name is Robert Fischer and I am representing the Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty. I would like to thank you for taking testimony on the topics related to Common Core State Standards.

In the time allowed, I would like to convey our concerns regarding the collection, warehousing and disclosure of student information.

Wisconsin's Statewide Longitudinal Data System is a combination of several projects which combined will form a means of using student and system data to facilitate decision-making. This has been a long and arduous process that began around 2005, and with the recent rollout of several components of the WISEdash (Wisconsin Information System for Education) the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction is nearing its goal to be in compliance with commitments made with several federal grant requirements. Another goal is to use WISEdash components to expand the ability of this database to link between the P20 education pipeline and across state agencies for research and analysis. The advantages of using quality information in the educational decision making processes is apparent.

We do, however, have three main concerns:

- ✓ As a child progresses into final years of data collection, there will be a large amount of information collected. Comparing data to the resolution of a photograph: as more data is added, the photo becomes increasingly high definition and in the case of student data, high recognition. As recognition increases, the significance of student a ID number decreases.
- ✓ According to the DPI, there is a hierarchy of administration devoted to security of data in the SLDS and WISEdash system. When considering a "warehouse" of data which will eclipse a million records in time, and thousands of users; can the concept of secure data even be assured?
- ✓ With the current parameters, any organization which the state feels is benefitting education with research and development will have access to student data without the need of parental consent.

Data Security Concerns relating to the Development of Wisconsin's Longitudinal Data System

The development of the Longitudinal Data System currently used, and nearing completion, in Wisconsin has been largely funded by government grants, some of which are competitive grants. The state of Wisconsin has signed contracts when applying for many of these grants which required us to meet certain conditions of the grant. Of particular interest to us are requirements that student information be made available, through access or reports, to researchers or vendors with "education improvement goals". Our concern is the almost impossible task of securing personal information, even with specific ID numbers, as data travels from one domain to the next.

(Federal) Statewide Longitudinal Data System (Grant Program)

- Administered by U.S. Department of Education: Institute of Educational Sciences (IES)
- Authorized in 2002 by Education Sciences Reform Act and the Educational Technical Assistance Act
- Grants are cooperative agreements (U.S. DoE states: there is "more active federal government involvement than typical grants.")
- There have been five rounds of grants awarded and Wisconsin has been awarded three grants.

Goals are to enable grantees to design, develop, and implement SLDSs to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, disaggregate, report and use individual student P-20W (early childhood through workforce) data.

Wisconsin's current SLDS –WISEdash

- WISEdash is a combination of tools from a Wisconsin company called VersiFit Software LLC and Microsoft. The VersiFit contract was signed Feb. 16, 2011.
- The goal of WISEdash is to increase access to educational data for the purpose of enabling data informed decisions.
- WISEdash will become a multilayered and multiuser data warehouse which will make data retrievable through several dashboards.
- This data will be made available through a Multi-Dimensional Analytic Tool (MDAT) for teachers and other decision makers.
- In order to comply with P20-W goals, student data from K to workforce will be warehoused and made available across a wide variety of users with diverse data needs.
- P20-W data will enable decision makers to assess an individual student's progress within a school year or within an entire educational experience.
- Special functionality for power users at district and state level to create specialized reports.
- One example of the functionality of WISEdash will be the ability of assessing a student's progress in a given year through Value-Added which compares previous data with current data.

- Access to specific data will be data level restricted and access groups will be determined by administrators responsible for assigning access.

Laws governing Student Information:

- DPI follows the privacy requirements in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99),
- Wisconsin Pupil Records Law, s.118.125, Stats., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 34 CFR 3000.560-300.577
- 6401 (e) (2) (d) of the America Competes Act
- U.S. Department of Agriculture - Use of Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility Information Nondiscrimination or Identification of Recipients, 42 USC 1758(b)(2)(C)ii,
- And all other federal and state laws and regulations that safeguard education records, privacy, and confidentiality. –
See more at: http://wise.dpi.wi.gov/wise_dataprivacy#sthash.LtWJa7oF.dpuf

Concerns of the Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty:

- On the WI-DPI website under the tab “Data Privacy” and “Exceptions to Written Parental Consent”, personally identifiable information is considered confidential with several listed exceptions. One exception is if the information is disclosed to an organization on behalf of a state educational agency for the purpose of improving education. We find this very broad.
- Will national, or even international, organizations that work to improve education also have access to student level records.
- One would expect that this data system would have a propensity to collect unnecessary information in anticipation of a future need.
- With tens of thousands of non-student users, confidentiality becomes a trust only issue.
- If you compare student data to a digital photograph, more photographic data gives you a *high definition* picture; more personal data information gives you a *high recognition* profile; student ID number becoming less significant.
- Assuming that all users of this system have been properly trained, what recourse does an individual have when data has been disclosed in error? (One only needs to remember the State’s recent inclusion of social security numbers on the front of mail envelopes.)
- Assuming that the developers of the WISEdash software and those responsible for the procedures followed the recommendations of the Data Quality Campaign, is there an independent third party analysis of the entire process to assure that nothing was overlooked. If not, this would be one of our prime directives.

Thank You for including us in this process,

The Wisconsin GrandSons of Liberty

My name is Mike Mayhak. I am a pastor Faith Baptist Church, DeForest, WI. Today, I do not come to represent my church. God ordained three institutions of which the third is the church (Matthew 16:18). The two previously ordained institutions are represented here today: Human Government (Genesis 9:5) and the Family (Genesis 1:27-2:25). The family is the most basic foundation for society. You are here to represent God's second institution. I am here to represent His first, particularly my family.

I have a Christian Education degree with an emphasis in youth. My wife has an elementary education degree, with an emphasis in special education. She followed this degree with a masters in School Administration. We homeschool our three boys ages 15, 13 and 13. We are probably not your typical homeschool family. We are also not part of any homeschool group.

Many times we have been asked about our homeschooling philosophy. Sometimes by parents who have been trying to advocate for their children in public schools. They know what their child needs to succeed and are looking to get them taken "out of the box" of the cookie cutter educational system, so that they can receive the help they need. My wife and I say to each other, "I just wish that they would homeschool." They could give their child just what they need. The delight in homeschooling is that we can give our children just what they need and choose what we want to give them.

I fear the first danger in Common Core is the lack of family input in the education process. God established that education should be the responsibility of the family. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up..." (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Today, I can design my curriculum. Parents can have input into their local school boards for curriculum and education standards. Local government elected by the people establishes education standards. Local boards and States, not the federal government establish the curriculum. They are accountable. Common Core's curriculum guidelines were established WITHOUT any accountability to the public or input from the public. Common Core would remove the use of classics in English curriculum and replace them with documents written by bureaucrats without any specialty in writing. Though homeschooling is not immediately in danger of these ridiculous replacements of curriculum, some day I cannot see otherwise.

I really appreciate homeschooling in WI because I do not have to explain how I am educating my boys. We register with the DPI and that is all. No records are kept outside the DPI and no one can have access to those records without parent consent. Common Core would change this privacy for my family and boys. States signing on to receive Common Core funding have obligated themselves to using the "inBloom" cloud based database system. This system records personal and family data about each child and family. This mandate requires collecting the data even on those who are untested under the Common Core system. It will keep these records and make them available to private organizations. These records would even be (possibly and ultimately) available to future employers. I'll call it a record of achievements which resembles the little books that Russian children, years ago, were required to have to enter school. It followed them into their working days and no one could get a job without it. The "Party" was in

control. I fear that this will label children. Their mistakes will follow them even though they may have repented of attitudes or have been educated beyond their previously held ideas.

Common Core also will and has already infected the testing of students. The ACT and SAT tests have already signed on to changing their tests to fit Common Core. Teaching will become more "teaching for the test" than it has already become. Individuality and creativity are already at jeopardy in our schools. Students already are encouraged to work together in groups. Now it seems they will only have to learn what is required for the test. Common Core's designed testing has been labelled poor by some and even over material that is not yet taught. Redesigned ACT and SAT tests will disadvantage students who have been educated in a much broader manner than Common Core students. This will effect college funding including grants and loans availability for applying students.

While speaking on testing, let's not forget the volume of testing that Common Core will require. Though States sign on for federal funding for Common Core, the indication is that the funding will in no wise be enough to cover all the expenses. This sounds much like No Child Left Behind.

I would encourage you representatives and Governor Walker to exclude WI from this new system. It will take the courage of Governor Scott Walker who has already turned down funding for a high speed rail line that would have drained WI coffers in the years ahead.

I would encourage you to reject the federal government's usurping the rights of States and local school boards to determine their educational standards.

I would encourage you to defend your current legislation about education in the State of WI and not let all the hours of legislators past be in vain.

Sincerely,
Mike Mayhak
206 Kingston Way
Waunakee, WI 53597
(608)849-7333

Testimony October 3, 2013

Thank you, Senator Farrow, Representative Thiesfeldt, and members of the Select Committee on Common Core Standards for making this forum possible.

Hopefully, at least one of the three promised public hearings will occur after the committee members have presented their findings so that the public may have an opportunity to address those findings.

When a state begins to develop academic standards for its students, one would expect that the first goal would be to develop the finest set of standards possible which have some level of proven success. A logical first step might be to look at the progress other states have made in each academic area.

Such research would reveal that there are numerous sets of standards available and that students in Massachusetts have been the highest achieving students in math, English, reading, and science for many years. According to *The New York Times Science Education Issue* dated September 2, 2013, special needs students who routinely failed the math exams now often earn a proficient rating in math.

According to the article, this success is seen across socio-economic and racial lines. (New York Times article is Addendum A)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Schneider". The signature is written in a cursive style and is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

Contacting the Massachusetts Department of Education and asking them to collaborate with Wisconsin by providing a copy of standards, a list of textbooks, and a resource for testing materials used in their state might be an advantageous beginning.

According to the New York Times article, the key to success in mathematics included requiring that all students were to learn algebra **before grade nine**.

Socially and politically ideological centered curricula were replaced with a skill specific, "back-to-basics" curriculum. **Constructivist teaching methods were no longer required**. Teachers were treated as professionals and were encouraged to use the teaching method(s) which they believed were best suited to teach a specific lesson to a specific group of students. This approach allows teachers to devise and improve teaching strategies as they teach a lesson.

In 2001, the Massachusetts English Language Arts standards were among the best in the nation. A 2010 draft provided by Dr. Sandra Stotsky further strengthened the standard. These standards include an emphasis on grammar, writing, and the ability to appreciate and analyze classical works of literature, persuasive texts, and scientific research. These standards were supported by curriculum and testing materials. The standards are available on line and, according to the cover

page, “For use by any state or school district without charge.” (Online access to these ELA standards is: http://alscw.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2013_ELA_Curriculum_Framework.pdf) Addendum B)

According to PIRLS, one of the largest international collections of information on reading literacy, American students are improving in their reading skills. (See chart on Addendum C) PIRLS explains that improvement in reading is dependent upon an “**emphasis on decoding** and comprehension strategies, and access to a variety of reading materials.” Access to online information is provided at: (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2013010rev> Addendum D)

For your convenience, I have included a personal e-mail from Dr. Milgram, a member of the Common Core Validation Committee, and his *Review of Final Draft Core Standards*. These two documents explain why he refused to support the Common Core Standards and why he believes the standards are NOT benchmarked. (Addendum E & F)

Science is another area in which Massachusetts excels. Although science is not an official part of Common Core Standards, the new science standards will be receiving public scrutiny quite soon. According to the New York Times article, “If

Massachusetts were a country, its eighth graders would rank second in the world in science, behind only Singapore, according to TIMSS.”

For your convenience, a set of documents from the Fordham Institute which provide a detailed summary of the TIMSS science standards, assessments, and benchmark student performance is included. (Addendum G) TIMMS recommends that standards return to a logical, fact-based, scientifically proven sequence of instruction.

Many parents believe that any area of scientific study that has been undermined with falsified documentation and flawed research should not be included in any K-9 curricula. Examination of flawed theories is better left for older children who have had an opportunity to develop a broad base of knowledge which includes respect for replicable results and their importance to the integrity of a scientific study.

Abraham Lincoln said, “The philosophy of the classroom of one generation will become the philosophy of the government of the next generation.” Your efforts to find a superior set of standards for our students are considered by many to be more than simply assuring that our children are given the best educational opportunities that we can provide. Citizens understand that the decisions you

make will also impact Wisconsin's economic, social, and political environment now and in the future. American exceptionalism is NOT her wealth and power. American exceptionalism is the freedom enjoyed by her citizens. When people are free to dream and to achieve those dreams, the entire society benefits. Please protect our state autonomy and our state's history of local control of schools by assuring that citizens will retain the freedom to choose the best curricula for their children in their local schools.



Education Issue

This is a special issue devoted to science and math education.

Expecting the Best Yields Results in Massachusetts

By KENNETH CHANG

Published: September 2, 2013

BRAINTREE, Mass. — Conventional wisdom and popular perception hold that American students are falling further and further behind in science and math achievement. The statistics from this state tell a different story.

SPECIAL ISSUE

Learning What Works »

From curriculum to technological advances to experimentation -- a view of the state of science and math education across the country.



Massachusetts: Math Capital?

Graphic: Results of the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

Guesses and Hype Give Way to Data in Study of Education (September 3, 2013)

Cognitive Science Meets Pre-

If Massachusetts were a country, its eighth graders would rank second in the world in science, behind only Singapore, according to Timss — the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, which surveys knowledge and skills of fourth and eighth graders around the world. (The most recent version, in 2011, tested more than 600,000 students in 63 nations.)

Massachusetts eighth graders also did well in mathematics, coming in sixth, behind Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan. The United States as a whole came in 10th in science and 9th in math, with scores that were above the international average.

Of course, Timss is only one test, and achievement tests are incomplete indicators of educational prowess. But l

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American Classrooms (September 3, 2013)

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educators and officials chose a course and held to it even when the early results were deeply disappointing.

While Massachusetts has a richer and better-educated population than most states, it is not uniformly wealthy. The gains reflected improvement across the state, including poorer districts.

"I think we are a proof point of what's possible," said Mitchell D. Chester, the state education commissioner.

On a sunny day in May, fifth graders at Donald E. Ross Elementary School here were gathered at an outdoor gazebo, learning about fulcrums by using a ruler set up like a seesaw and balancing weights at both ends.

At South Middle School, seventh graders in a science class worked in small groups to brainstorm how a box of items — a plastic jar, beaker, water, and a mix of sand, soil, clay and pebbles — could help answer a question posed by the teacher: How do sediments

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What's Popular Now

'Breaking Bad' Creator Gilligan in Deal for CBS Show, 'Battle Creek'



Ground Gives Way, and a Louisiana Town Struggles to Find Its Footing



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1. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR How Do You Say 'Blog' in German?



2. OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR Losing Is Good for You

3. PAUL KRUGMAN

carried in water get deposited? They devised small experiments and wrote down their observations, and at the end of class each group presented its findings.

None of the topics were novel, but they were consistent in their hands-on approach, inviting students to explore and explain. "Much more hands-on than what we ever used to do," said Dianne D. Rees, the district's science director. "Hands-on as much as possible."

Braintree, a town of about 35,000 south of Boston, is neither an inner-city area nor a wealthy suburb. "We're sort of, we used to say, a blue-collar area," said William Kendall, the director of mathematics and technology for the Braintree schools.

When Dr. Kendall arrived in 1973 as a math teacher, the standard approach was talking at the front of the classroom and writing on the blackboard.

Some children learned well from lectures. Others did not. "And it was O.K. those people don't get it, because only we, the math elite, get it," Dr. Kendall said.

Back then, one could graduate from high school without ever taking algebra. "Then came ed reform," Dr. Kendall said, "and now everybody had to learn math."

Ambitious Goals

"Ed reform" was the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, passed by a Democratic Legislature and signed by a Republican governor, William F. Weld.

The three core components were more money (mostly to the urban schools), ambitious academic standards and a high-stakes test that students had to pass before collecting their high school diplomas. All students were expected to learn algebra before high school.

"It was a combination of carrots and sticks," said David P. Driscoll, deputy education commissioner at the time.

Also noteworthy was what the reforms did not include. Parents were not offered vouchers for private schools. The state did not close poorly performing schools, eliminate tenure for teachers or add merit pay. The reforms did allow for some charter schools, but not many.

Then the state, by and large, stayed the course.

The new achievement test, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS for short), was given to 10th graders for the first time in 1998. (The graduation requirement of obtaining an acceptable score on the 10th-grade MCAS did not take effect until 2003.)

The troubled urban schools performed terribly.

In the small city of Chelsea, which borders Boston, almost 90 percent of the students come from low-income families and most did not speak English as their first language. On the first MCAS, two-thirds of Chelsea 10th graders failed math. The science scores were nearly as dismal.

Two years later, scores in the urban districts showed only glacial improvement. A report from the University of Massachusetts at Boston concluded that the reforms were not delivering on the promises.

Critics worried that when the use of MCAS as a graduation requirement kicked in, thousands of students would be deprived of their diplomas and would drop out in despair. Dr. Driscoll, who was elevated to education commissioner in 1998, kept the MCAS.

"People were expecting it to go away," Robert D. Gaudet, the lead UMass researcher, recalled in a recent interview. "He held to his guns."

Officials did make adjustments. Students who fail the MCAS can retake it several times



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until they pass, and can still graduate if they otherwise demonstrate they have learned the material.

2012

Test scores have risen markedly. Last year, 54 percent of Chelsea 10th graders were proficient or advanced on the math MCAS.

On tests administered by the federal Education Department, Massachusetts, which had been above average, rose to No. 1 among the 50 states in math.

Building Blocks

Two decades after Massachusetts passed its education reform, there is still much disagreement over what were the crucial components to its success.

Some think it was the added money; others note that successful countries operate schools at much lower costs.

Some think high-stakes testing imposed accountability on administrators, teachers and students; others say that it merely added stress and that the proliferation of tests takes away too much time from learning.

Some think the standards gave clarity on what was expected of teachers and students; others say there is little correlation between well-written standards and student performance.

Officials like Dr. Driscoll say all three components were essential.

Dr. Rees, the Braintree schools' science director, said the standards helped make sure that teachers across the state covered the same subjects, laying the groundwork for subsequent grades.

"There's a logic to that, a progression," she said. "You start learning about solids in kindergarten. In first grade, you learn about solids and liquids, and then in second grade, you start to learn about solids and liquids and gases."

The MCAS has helped Braintree figure out what works and what doesn't. Middle school students were struggling with chemistry questions on the eighth-grade MCAS. The district changed the order of instruction, covering concrete science concepts in sixth grade and moving some chemistry topics to seventh. "And it worked," Dr. Rees said. "They're doing better on their chemistry."

Still, Massachusetts officials admit they have more to do.

While scores have improved across the board, the gap between the highest achievers and the lowest — notably blacks, Hispanics and special education students — has persisted.

Seeing Results

At East Middle School, the elixir is Kristen Walsh, who teaches math to sixth, seventh and eighth graders with so-called special needs, a potpourri of learning disabilities that include dyslexia and autism. On this day she was introducing a lesson on variables and linear equations with a problem involving gym memberships.

She explained the usual math concepts of beginning algebra — the slope of a line indicating the rate of change, the y intercept where the line intersects the y axis. Where she lingered was less the math concepts but the words used in the word problem, repeatedly checking that the students understood that the "start-up fee" of one health club was the same thing as the membership fee at another.

In essence, she was teaching how to interpret a math problem as much as how to solve it.

Dr. Kendall says teachers now laugh when he tells them that it was once possible to

graduate from Braintree High School without ever taking algebra. “You can’t get out of eighth grade without knowing Algebra I now,” he said. “We’re teaching it to everybody, and everybody is having success.”

The first new math standards in Massachusetts, in the 1990s, echoed the “constructivist” pedagogy then in vogue. Students would construct their knowledge through trial and error, resulting in a deeper understanding.

But many parents rebelled, complaining that their children never mastered basic skills. The state officials in charge of the next revision wanted a back-to-basics curriculum. But Dr. Kendall and others argued that that old approach had already failed.

The “math wars” erupted at the turn of the millennium, culminating in a sort of détente — constructivism was purged, but the new Massachusetts standards did not prescribe a new approach. They stated what students were to learn, but not how teachers were to teach. “What came out of it ended up being a good document, because it contained no pedagogy,” Dr. Kendall said.

That allowed teachers like Ms. Walsh to devise and improve.

Take the multiplication table. The traditional approach was to memorize it in order. A strict constructivist would have children figure it out by playing with sticks and other so-called manipulatives.

Braintree combines those approaches, with the teachers guiding the learning in a particular order.

“Now research shows when you’re teaching multiplication facts, you should start with the 2s, go to the 10s, go to the 5s, do the 4, the 8, don’t hit 0, because the idea of multiplying 0 by 0 is complicated, until they’ve got a foundation in multiplication,” Dr. Kendall said. “Do 0 and 1 in about the middle, and save 7 and 3 until the end, because those are the really hard ones.”

He added, “We’re helping them construct their own knowledge in a way that is successful.”

Abby Federico, one of Ms. Walsh’s special-needs students, said her mother told her the middle school math curriculum was much more advanced than when she was in school. “She was like, ‘I learned this stuff in high school,’” Abby said.

Dr. Kendall said that special needs students in Braintree used to routinely fail the math MCAS. Now those in Ms. Walsh’s class often get “proficient.”

“It’s pretty easy in my opinion, because Ms. Walsh usually teaches us a lot of methods to use in math to make it seem easier,” Abby said, adding that she might even choose a career that requires math skills.

“Math is pretty nice,” she said.

A version of this article appears in print on September 3, 2013, on page D1 of the New York edition with the headline: One State Had a Plan And Saw It Through.

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*For use by any state or school district
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*Chief Author: Sandra Stotsky
Professor Emerita, University of Arkansas*

February 2013

addressing “discussion and presentation” within the Language strand, the 2010 draft devotes a separate strand to “discussion and presentation.” Within this strand, the state has more clearly and rigorously defined standards for discussion, group work, and oral presentation.

Each genre of writing is also now addressed in its own sub-strand, making genre-specific expectations even clearer, more detailed, and rigorous.

Finally, the draft standards have addressed the two minor weaknesses that were noted (above) in the 2001 document. They now include expectations that specifically address foundational U.S. documents, and they require students to write a coherent paragraph in third grade.

No Change

All of the strengths that existed in the 2001 document remain, or have been improved and enhanced, in the 2010 update. For example, the standards continue to include helpful examples to clarify the intent and rigor of the standards, as in these from various strands:

Identify the sense (touch, hearing, sight, taste, smell, and taste) implied in words appealing to the senses (fiction, grade 1)

Analyze the function of character types (e.g., antagonist, protagonist, foil, tragic hero) (fiction, grade 9)

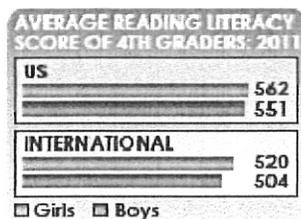
Identify the type of evidence used to support a claim in a persuasive text (e.g., scientific research evidence, anecdotal evidence based on personal knowledge, or the discipline-based opinion of experts) (nonfiction, grade 5)

In addition, the reading, writing, grammar, and research standards remain clear, specific, and rigorous.

The one gap that remains in the 2010 draft is the continued absence of exemplar student writing samples that could further clarify writing expectations across grade levels.

The Bottom Line

The 2001 edition of the Massachusetts ELA standards were already among the best in the nation. The 2010 draft manages to further strengthen these standards without losing any of the essential content or clarity. These standards are a model of clear, rigorous K-12 ELA content and expectations.”



PIRLS is one of the largest international collections of reading literacy. Studies of reading literacy had been conducted prior to the study of 2001. PIRLS is the successor to the IEA studies that started in 1970 and continued to 1991 with the Reading Literacy Study. The study of 2001 started the trend for the PIRLS cyclical testing. They plan on testing every five years. By administering the test every five years, it allows countries to monitor their children's literacy achievement. Also in 2001, background information about the students and schools were collected. "The reading achievement results present each country with an opportunity to examine educational policies and practices against a globally-defined benchmark, while the report also contains rich information about children's early literacy experiences and reading instruction" said PIRLS International Study Directors Ina V.S. Mullis and Michael O. Martin of Boston College.[2]

PIRLS Assessment[edit]

The PIRLS study consists of a main survey that consists of a written reading comprehension test and a background questionnaire. The PIRLS Reading Development Group (RDG) and National Research Coordinators (NRCs) from the 35 countries collaborate to develop the reading assessments. The assessment focuses on three main areas of literacy: process of comprehension, purposes for reading, and reading behaviors and attitudes. The background questionnaire is used to determine the reading behaviors and attitudes. The written test is designed to address the process of comprehension and the purposes for reading. There are two purposes for reading that are examined in this study: reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use information. Each student receives 80 minutes to complete two passages and then time to complete the survey. There are a total of 8 passage. Four passages are for each purpose of reading. "With eight reading passages in total, but just two to be given to any one student, passages and their accompanying items were assigned to student test booklets according to a matrix sampling plan. The eight passages were distributed across 10 booklets, two per booklet, so that passages were paired together in a booklet in as many different ways as possible." [3]

Other sources:

http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/PIRLS2011_Framework-Chapter2.pdf

http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2011/downloads/PIRLS2011_Framework-Chapter3.pdf

Curricular aspects and governing policies particularly relevant to the acquisition of reading literacy include standards or benchmarks established for reading development, prevalence of school and classroom libraries, instructional time, methods and materials, and ways of identifying students in need of remediation. Considerable research evidence, including results from IEA studies (Kennedy, Mullis, Martin, & Trong, 2007; Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, & Foy, 2007), indicates that students' academic achievement is closely related to the rigor of the curriculum. This involves a coherent progression of instruction and materials through the grade levels, including emphasis on decoding and comprehension strategies, and access to a variety of reading materials. Effective methods for disseminating the curriculum to teachers, parents, and the general public are important, as are ways for making sure that revisions and updates are integrated into instruction.

Delivering a coherent and rigorous curriculum is dependent on well-qualified teachers. Research has established the importance of teachers being prepared in the subject matter they teach and of their certification status (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). The requirements to become a primary teacher may include certain types of academic preparation, passing an examination, or meeting other certification criteria. Some countries also have induction or mentoring programs for entering teachers and a number of opportunities for ongoing professional development to keep teachers apprised of current developments.

Home Contexts

Much research has provided insight into the importance of home environments for children's reading literacy. Long before children develop the cognitive and linguistic skills necessary for reading, early experiences with printed and oral language establish a foundation for learning (Adams, 1990; Ehri, 1995; Verhoeven, 2002). Particular



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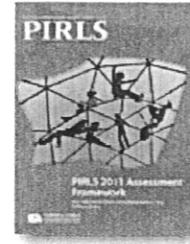
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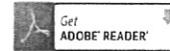
[Released Items](#)

The *PIRLS 2011 Assessment Framework*

serves as a blueprint for IEA's 2011 PIRLS and prePIRLS assessments of reading literacy. The framework describes the purposes for reading and the processes for comprehension that are assessed by PIRLS, and presents the test booklet design and specifications. The framework also establishes the national contexts as well as the home and school factors to be covered in the *PIRLS 2011 Encyclopedia* and the questionnaires completed by the students themselves as well as their parents, teachers, and school principals.



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- **Chapter 3:** Contexts for Learning to Read
- **Chapter 4:** Assessment Design and Specifications
- **References**
- **Appendix A:** Acknowledgements
- **Appendix B:** Sample PIRLS Passages, Questions, and Scoring Guides
- **Appendix C:** Sample prePIRLS Passage, Questions, and Scoring Guides



Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

Science

Introduction

TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) is an established system of international achievement tests for fourth- and eighth-grade students. The IAEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) directs the program and cooperating organizations in several countries, including the U.S., oversee aspects of its management and design of the several assessments.

Organization of the Framework

The TIMSS Framework deals at length with general characteristics of science, with questions of science-subject-matter inclusion or exclusion, and, specifically, with details of test-item construction for the two tested grade levels. While the document is not intended as an explicit set of K-12 science-learning standards, the information provided in the assessment framework clearly provides an implicit standards scheme. This Framework is disciplined and to the point; it elucidates and undertakes to justify its selections of science content to be assessed. In this it succeeds, despite minor concerns to be noted herein. For the purposes of this review, then, we evaluate TIMSS's implied standards for fourth- and eighth-grade science along its two primary dimensions: content and cognition. We evaluate both for the dimensions' content and rigor as well as clarity and specificity. (We use the same criteria and metric here as we did for the State of State Science Standards 2012.)

TIMSS defines its content dimension as: "specifying the subject matter domains to be assessed within science (for example, biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science at the eighth grade)" and its cognitive dimension as: "skills and behaviors; that is, knowing, applying, and reasoning". Fourth-grade science-subject matter is in life science, physical science, and earth science, while the eighth-grade topics are biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science. The cognitive domains (knowing, applying, and reasoning) are represented at both grade levels, but their levels of emphasis differ. Reasoning, for example, is dubbed an explicit element in 30 percent of assessment items for the eighth grade, but in only 20 percent at fourth grade.

Content and Rigor

The Framework's Exhibit 6 reproduced here, lists all content and cognitive domains for the fourth- and eighth-grade assessments, together with the percentage of emphasis or test time to be allotted to each.

Exhibit 6: Target Percentages of the TIMSS 2011 Science Assessment Devoted to Content and Cognitive Domains at Fourth and Eighth Grades

Fourth Grade

Content Domains Percentages

Life Science	45%
Physical Science	35%
Earth Science	20%

Eighth Grade

Content Domains Percentages

Biology	35%
Chemistry	20%
Physics	25%
Earth Science	20%

Cognitive Domains Percentages

	Fourth Grade	Eighth Grade
Knowing	40%	35%
Applying	40%	35%
Reasoning	20%	30%

It is important to note that TIMSS does not test the two primary dimensions of achievement in isolation; in fact, and to their great credit, the developers reject the notion, popular among educationists, that cognitive achievements—such as identifying relevant data, designing an experiment, or isolating variables of interest, that is, “scientific inquiry”—can be assessed (or taught) independently of substantive science content. For example:

The TIMSS 2011 Science Framework takes the position that the understandings and abilities required to engage in [scientific inquiry] should not be assessed in isolation. Rather, scientific inquiry should be assessed in the context of one or other of the science content domains and drawing upon the full range of skills specified in the cognitive domains. Accordingly, assessment items addressing aspects of scientific inquiry are included within the two dimensions of the [Framework].

To this end, TIMSS assessment designers pay close attention to which skills (of cognition) are needed to answer satisfactorily which questions (of science content).

Fourth-Grade Content Covered

As described above, the TIMSS content domains for grade four are life science, physical science, and earth science. Each of these is subdivided into a series of topic areas.

For example, the fourth-grade life science domain comprises:

Characteristics and life processes of living things;

Life cycles, reproduction, and heredity;
 Interaction with the environment;
 Ecosystems; and
 Human health.

Each such topic is expanded and represented, in turn, by a series of action statements that imply standards of performance. For example, under “characteristics and life processes” for fourth-grade life science, there are four statements. The first of them is:

Describe the differences between living and nonliving things; identify common characteristics of living things (e.g., in reproduction, growth, basic needs for air, food, water). (grade 4)

Each of the remaining four topics within the life science domain has two or three associated action statements, for a total of thirteen. These action items are what we hereafter call standards, for that is what they are—“demonstrations of knowledge that require a learner to describe, compare, relate X to Y, trace, or associate.

Fourth-grade physical science has three topic areas:

Classification and properties of matter;
 Sources and effects of energy; and
 Forces and motion.

As in the case of life science, each of these expands to a series of standards. Thus for the topic area, “classification and properties of matter,” the first of four standards (action statements) is:

Name three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas) and describe characteristic differences in shape and volume of each state; recognize that matter can be changed from one state to another by heating or cooling and describe these changes in terms of melting, freezing, boiling, evaporation, or condensation. (grade 4)

In total, there are twenty-nine science standards—as we have identified them here—for grade four. These twenty-nine include all twelve items on our “Common Grading Metric” for grade four (see Appendix A: Methods, Criteria, and Grading Metric; State of State Science Standards 2012), with one exception: simple machines. Otherwise, the difference between the two lists lies in specificity and prose, and to its credit the TIMSS version is fuller than our (designedly) minimal one.

Eighth-Grade Content Covered

The TIMSS eighth-grade test framework covers four content domains: biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science (as noted above). Following the usual TIMSS organization, each of these is represented in a series of topic areas. For example, physics has the following five:

Physical states and changes in matter;

Energy transformations, heat, and temperature;
 Light and sound;
 Electricity and magnetism; and
 Forces and motion.

As with the fourth-grade topic areas, each of these is further represented by a series of action statements describing expectations for student performance. For example, the first of four standards under “forces and motion” is:

Describe the motion (uniform and non-uniform) of an object in terms of its position, direction, and speed; describe general types of forces (e.g., weight as a force due to gravity, contact force, buoyant force, friction); predict changes in motion (if any) of an object based on the forces acting on it. (grade 8)

In biology there are seventeen standards; for chemistry, there are ten; for physics, thirteen; and for earth science, ten—for a total of fifty. This is a notably longer list than our own statement of desirable content coverage for eighth grade (see Appendix A: Methods, Criteria, and Grading Metric; State of State Science Standards 2012). But as before, the difference is in the greater specificity and “especially” the focus on cognitive actions of the TIMSS set.

Content Missing

Despite the laudable completeness of these standards, a few omissions are not entirely innocuous.

Lacking in TIMSS eighth-grade earth science is any explicit coverage of plate tectonics beyond the two words “plate movements.” Perhaps the writers intend for the big subject of plate tectonics to be handled adequately under such heads as “erosion,” “volcanic activity,” and “mountain building,” but that is uncertain. Yet the unfolding story of discovery associated with plate tectonics is one of the great tales of modern geologic science, and it is almost the whole mechanistic story of catastrophes such as earthquakes and tsunamis. Moreover the essentials of the story, if not the detailed interactions of theory and observation, are accessible to eighth-grade students. In short, the relevant standard here, at least as written in the Framework, is somewhat deficient in this respect as guidance for eighth-grade curriculum development in earth science. As for physics and space science, we would have liked to see somewhat more attention than is actually given to extrasolar astronomy

Rather more important is the absence of the word “evolution” from these standards. It appears nowhere in the forty-one pages of the Framework’s science chapter. Some topics of evolutionary biology are addressed, and competently so, in such terms as “diversity, adaptation, and natural selection,” “changes of Earth’s life forms over time,” and the need to relate “survival or extinction of species to variation in physical/behavioral characteristics” in a changing environment. These are admirably present and are of the first importance, even at the eighth-grade level. But the word “evolution,” to which they all refer, does not appear in connection with any of them.

It is possible but unlikely that this is no more than a lapse. More likely, TIMSS designers recognize the importance and necessity of the topic but simply omit the name. This way, they avoid objections in countries where anti-evolutionism is common or at least politically correct. Whether or not this is so, the omission itself is not trivial. If modern science is to be taught and learned in the primary and middle grades, all those correct statements about

biotic change over time, about the mutability of species and the mechanisms of change, should be recognized by students under the correct name for the generalization: evolution.

Taken as a whole, however, TIMSS content for fourth- and eighth-graders is creditably inclusive, and the justifications provided for the learning expectations set forth in the Framework are convincing. What might appear to a geology-aware reader as slighting of plate tectonics is a small concern, but the absence of “evolution” is a rather bigger one. Still and all, the TIMSS Science Frameworks earn a six out of seven for content and rigor. (See Appendix A: Methods, Criteria, and Grading Metric; State of State Science Standards 2012.)

Clarity and Specificity

The TIMSS Assessment Frameworks document is well organized; its prose is clear and generally free from jargon. The hierarchical arrangement of subject matter—with broad (and fully recognizable) “domains” at the top, carefully selected “topic areas” in the middle, and well-phrased statements of expectation at the bottom, is logical and transparent. As such, the science sections of this comprehensive document are accessible to all potential users, including curriculum planners, classroom teachers, and the parents of test-takers. While the pages devoted to science are not intended to function as a comprehensive set of science standards, they offer, in effect, usable standards for Kindergarten through grade eight and earn a three out of three for clarity and specificity. (See [Appendix A: Methods, Criteria, and Grading Metric; State of State Science Standards 2012.](#))

Science

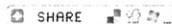
Grade

A-

Clarity and Specificity: 3/3

Content and Rigor: 6/7

Total Score: 9/10



Mitochondrial DNA Clarifies Human Evolution

Max Ingman

article highlights

Recent DNA studies of several populations suggest that modern humans:

- originated in Africa
- appeared in one founding population
- evolved around 170,000 years ago
- migrated to other parts of the world to replace other hominids

May 2001

Mutations in human DNA are used to show relationships and evolutionary history.

"Where do we come from?" This has been one of the fundamental questions asked by humans for thousands of years. Physical anthropologists have been providing an answer for over a hundred years by studying morphological characteristics, such as skull shape, of the fossilised remains of our human and proto-human ancestors.



Homo habilis is a species of the genus *Homo*, that lived from about 2.5 million to 1.6 million years ago.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

For the last 15 years or so, molecular anthropologists have been comparing the DNA of living humans of diverse origins to build evolutionary trees. Mutations occur in our DNA at a regular rate and will often be passed along to our children. It is these differences (polymorphisms) that, on a genotypic level, make us all unique and analysis of these differences will show how closely we are related. However, different approaches used by molecular and physical anthropologists have led to opposing views on how modern humans evolved from our archaic ancestors.

Two main hypotheses

The two main hypotheses agree that *Homo erectus* evolved in Africa and spread to the rest of the world around 1 - 2 million years ago; it is regarding our more recent history where they disagree.

1) Multi-regional evolution

Multiregional view: modern humans evolved from earlier hominids in different parts of the world.

- suggests that modern humans evolved from archaic forms (such as Neanderthal and *Homo erectus*) concurrently in different regions of the world
- supported by physical evidence, such as the continuation of morphological characteristics between archaic and modern humans
- now a minority standpoint

2) Recent African origin

Out of Africa view: modern humans evolved in Africa before colonizing the world.

- proposes that modern humans evolved once in Africa between 100 - 200 thousand years ago
- modern humans subsequently colonised the rest of the world without genetic mixing with archaic forms
- supported by the majority of genetic evidence

Mitochondrial DNA

DNA is present inside the nucleus of every cell of our body but it is the DNA of the cell's mitochondria that has been most commonly used to construct evolutionary trees.

Mitochondrial DNA — maternal DNA — is used to construct evolutionary trees.

- Mitochondria have their own genome of about 16,500 bp that exists outside of the cell nucleus. Each contains 13 protein coding genes, 22 tRNAs and 2 rRNAs.
- They are present in large numbers in each cell, so fewer samples is required.
- They have a higher rate of substitution (mutations where one nucleotide is replaced with another) than nuclear DNA making it easier to resolve differences between closely related individuals.
- They are inherited only from the mother, which allows tracing of a direct

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genetic line.

- They don't recombine. The process of recombination in nuclear DNA (except the Y chromosome) mixes sections of DNA from the mother and the father creating a garbled genetic history.

Focusing on the D-loop

Mitochondrial DNA displays high mutation rates.

Evidence from DNA studies generally supports a recent African origin but these conclusions have been criticised for a lack of statistical support. One possible reason for this is because these studies have focussed mainly on the polymorphisms in a small section of the mitochondrial genome called the D-loop, which comprises around 7% of the mitochondrial genome. The reason for this section's popularity lies in its particularly high mutation rate, meaning that scientists can analyse this relatively short sequence and still resolve differences between closely related sequences. Unfortunately, it is now becoming increasingly clear that this very high mutation rate is actually obscuring the informative information. Three main problems with data from the D-loop section have been identified:

- back mutation - sites that have already undergone substitution are returned to their original state
- parallel substitution - mutations occur at the same site in independent lineages
- rate heterogeneity - there is a large difference in the rate at which some sites undergo mutation when compared to other sites in the same region; data shows evidence of 'hot spots' for mutation

A solution?

Now that the entire genome can be sequenced, we should get a clearer picture of the origins of modern humans.

Although the mitochondrial genome is one of the first genomes to be sequenced in its entirety, it was not until recently that the progression of technology allowed sequences of that length to be obtained with relative ease and a study of any appreciable size using whole genomes was undertaken. This study became an important landmark in the field of population genetics and perhaps will be a precedent for a new field, already coined "population genomics." These researchers (Ingman *et al.*, see references) found that although sequencing the whole genome was considerably more work, it provided some important advantages.

- Although the D-loop was evolving at a much higher rate, the greater length of the complete genome allowed for the analysis of twice as many informative polymorphic sites (sites that show the same polymorphism in at least two sequences).
- The numbers of back- and parallel mutations found outside of the D-loop were practically zero.
- The rate of evolution of the rest of the genome was surprisingly even between different sites, different genes and also between the different gene complexes.

Population genomics

A new study shows that modern humans appeared 171,500 years ago in Africa.

The robust phylogenetic tree reconstructed with this dataset of complete mitochondrial genomes gives strong support to the 'recent African origin' theory. By determining the substitution rate of the genomic sequences, it is possible to derive dates for points on the tree and build a chronology of events in the evolution and migration of our species.

- The most important date, in relation to the competing evolutionary theories, is the time when all the sequences coalesce into one — the 'mitochondrial Eve.'
- From this study, a date of 171,500 years ago was obtained which fits remarkably well with that proposed in the recent African origin hypothesis.
- For us to accept multi-regionality, we would expect a much older date, as it would represent the common ancestor of *Homo erectus* rather than of *Homo sapiens*.

The evolutionary history of aboriginal populations still remains a mystery.

This study is only the first and population genomics is in its infancy. The future will provide more studies with ever-increasing numbers of sequences from yet unanalysed populations and perhaps an interface between genetic data from different loci. For example, a recent study of ancient human remains in Australia integrated genetic data with the information collected by physical anthropology. There are many important questions that remain to be resolved such as how and when the Aborigines arrived in Australia and the evolutionary history and relationships of North and South American Indians.

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Max Ingman, an Australian, is completing his doctoral degree in medical genetics at Uppsala University, Sweden. Recently, he and his colleagues analysed the complete mitochondrial genomes of people selected from diverse geographical, racial, and linguistic backgrounds. It is considered to be the most thorough analysis to date. He continues to work on projects that deal with the evolutionary histories of certain, somewhat enigmatic, populations.
<http://www.uu.se/findperson.php?uid=N99-1523>



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Understanding Evolution

Your one-stop source for information on evolution. Learn the facts in Evolution 101, browse the resource library, read about evolution in the news, or discover a wealth of materials to help educate others about evolution and related concepts—it's all right here! <http://evolution.berkeley.edu>

Human origins: paleoanthropology

The human origins program at the Smithsonian Institution. A site intended to educate about human origins through the field of paleoanthropology.
<http://www.mnh.si.edu/anthro/humanorigins/>

Human origins: archaeology

An archaeology information site with details on the different forms of archaic humans and discussions on relevant topics. Provides a good list of links to more information on anthropology.
<http://archaeologyinfo.com/>

Human origins: genetics

University College London, Centre for Genetic Anthropology site with information on the use of Y-chromosome data in the study of human evolution. Includes a 'Beginners background' page on genetic (molecular) anthropology.
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/tcga/>

Human evolution chart

Click on this interactive chart of human evolution, stretching from 5 million years ago to the present, to learn about different hominid species.
<http://urlm.in/fsgd>

DNA Testing

An Introduction For non-scientists, with illustrations and easy-to-follow text by Donald E. Riley, Ph.D., University of Washington.
<http://www.scientific.org/tutorials/articles/nley/nley.html>

Fossil evidence in 3D

This gallery contains five modern primate crania and five fossil crania which can be rotated 360°. Each cranium is accompanied by a short description of its relevance to human evolution.
<http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/projects/human/>

getinvolved links

The United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation

This site provides information and support to those who are affected by mitochondrial diseases — hereditary disorders, now considered as common as childhood cancers, that affect the cell's ability to produce life-sustaining energy.
<http://www.umdf.org/>

educatorresources



Teaching Resources from the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR)

The Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR) strengthens public trust in research through education and dialogue. Its diverse membership spans academic, industry, non-profit research institutes, health care, and voluntary health organizations. Through membership and extensive education programs, it fosters a shared commitment to the ethical conduct of research and ensures the vitality of the life sciences community.

Advanced Bioinformatics: Genetic Research

This curriculum unit explores how bioinformatics is used to perform genetic research. Students examine DNA sequences from different animal species, investigate the relationship between protein structure and function, and explore evolutionary relationships among eukaryotic organisms. Throughout the unit, students are presented with a number of career options in which the tools of bioinformatics are developed or used.
<http://www.nwabr.org/curriculum/advanced-bioinformatics-genetic-research>

Common Core Standards Will Impact Local Control of Education

by Michael Glowacki, concerned future parent, testifying before the
Wisconsin Assembly Select Committee on Common Core Standards

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for the time to speak to you today.

Together we are exploring how Common Core Standards will reduce the accountability, effectiveness and local control of education. The purpose of education is to create mature, independent and self-sufficient adults because our future freedom and security depend on these qualities in our fellow citizens and neighbors.

As a husband and concerned future parent, I'm speaking against all efforts to implement Common Core and to remove most local control of schools in Wisconsin. Implementing school choice and school report cards don't require Common Core Standards nor data sharing and onerous testing. Before I explain the reasons why, let me share a true story.

When I was in a small rural high school much like many Wisconsin high schools, I saw pictures in the main hallway that amazed me. That school had hanging on the walls every senior class portrait from the 1930's through the last year as composite senior pictures. In the 1930's and 1940's each high school senior looked as mature and proud as if they were graduating from medical school. In the 1950's through the mid 1960's, the high school graduates looked as mature as college graduates. Through the 1970's and 1980's these high school seniors looked their age as you may recall. However high school graduates in the 1990's through last year looked only as old as junior high school students. Seeing these graduating senior photos where you could compare them make you realize that we've been paying attention to the wrong things.

I've described overwhelming proof that the schools have changed in these decades. The education you had in high school is very different from what is available today. I claim that these changes you can see on those high school walls through time came about with the changes in the curriculum and emphasis over the years. Increasing state funding and state control reduced local control and shared responsibility, which are very important in the education of each student.

Three people have shared responsibility for the learning of every student in each grade. The parent, the student and the teacher. Whether it's called Common Core Standards or Outcome Based Education, curriculum changes mean that the parent can't take responsibility because his or her child is learning different things. For example if the father enjoyed history and did well in math, but his children are

learning a different version of history and math, how can the father help his children, teach them responsibility and work together building maturity?

Common Core Standards were developed and produced by trade groups and special interests without parents' or school boards' input. They will teach less more slowly emphasizing high stakes tests, teach different methods and content, and teach different embedded values that harm the family.

Wouldn't this explain why homeschooled children and parochial school students are often more successful because they use traditional values, structures and learning methods that their parents learned? These students learn personal responsibility in the context of values, a family and achievement. Forcing every school to use the same curriculum makes a complete sham of school choice.

Common Core Standards rely heavily on high stakes testing, data gathering, data mining and sharing that data with the state DPI and Federal Dept. of Education to receive funding just like No Child Left Behind. The intent of the tests is to improve accountability. But as I've described and you can observe for yourself, improving accountability has sacrificed responsibility.

The difference between accountability and responsibility is that accountability is measuring inputs and outputs, like in a factory assembly line, to measure resources, results and ineffectively assess human beings. On the other hand responsibility is taking action and self-monitoring of progress toward a goal. Responsibility leads to achievement in education. The proof is hanging on the walls that reducing responsibility and local control while increasing State and Federal funding, control of and interference in schools has created the opposite effect of what some Senators and Representatives and Common Core Standards proponents promise to happen. The end results are obvious to those who have eyes and can see: in California the parents have outsourced the job of parenting for years and just look at the results they got!

I strongly suggest that this committee recommend defeat of SB 286 which is the bill mandating school information systems for parochial and private schools that accept voucher students. Also I recommend the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate eliminate the funding for implementing a longitudinal data system (data mining) and sharing that data with the Federal Government as planned in the budget. Wisconsin citizens are paying closer attention and discovering how these systems and Common Core Standards will violate children's and parents' civil liberties.

I urge you to follow the Wisconsin State Constitution and restore more local control of schools and maintain that Wisconsin school boards should be in control of the curriculum in the schools. I wonder if schools are teaching important Wisconsin history as was done when you and I were in school. Please recommend that Wisconsin avoid implementing Common Core Standards and keep local, independent control of the public and private schools and Wisconsin control of school report cards.



The

Phyllis Schlafly Report



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P.O. BOX 618, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002

JULY 2013

Backlash Against Common Core

Common Core (CC) is the issue that is bringing out hundreds of citizens who never before attended political meetings. Common Core is the attempt of Barack Obama's Department of Education to force all states and schools to adopt national education standards for each grade level that will dictate what all kids learn and don't learn.

Common Core means federal control of school curriculum, *i.e.*, control by Obama Administration leftwing bureaucrats. They plan on having the power to dictate and overrule all decisions by state and local school boards, state legislatures, parents, and even Congress.

It's not only public schools that must obey the fed's dictates. Common Core will control the curriculum of charter schools, private schools, religious schools, Catholic schools, and homeschooling. The control mechanism is the tests (called assessments). Kids must pass the tests in order to get a high school diploma or admittance to college. If they haven't studied a curriculum based on Common Core standards, they won't score well on the tests.

Common Core cannot be described as voluntary. Since CC is so costly to the states (estimated \$15 billion for retraining teachers and purchase of computers for all kids to take the tests), CC is foisted on the locals by a combination of bribes, federal handouts, and as the price for getting a waiver to exempt a state from other obnoxious mandates such as No Child Left Behind.

Don't be under any illusion that Common Core will make kids smarter. The Common Core academic level is lower than what many states use now, and the math standards are so inferior that the only real mathematician on the validation committee refused to sign off on the math standards. He said the CC standards are two years behind international expectations by the 8th grade, and fall further behind in grades 8 to 12. The CC math standards downgrade the years when algebra and geometry are to be taught.

CC advocates claim that the new standards will make students college ready. That depends on how you define college; students will be ready only to enter a two-year nonselective community college.

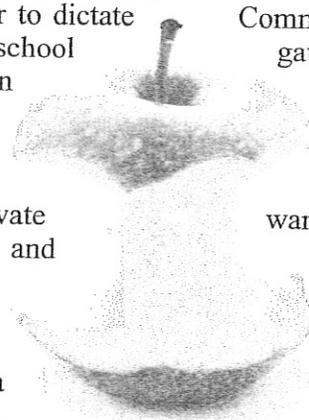
Common Core authorizes government agencies to gather and store all sorts of private information on every schoolchild into a longitudinal database from birth through all levels of schooling, and gives government the right to share and exchange this nosy information with other government and private agencies. This is a violation of federal law and is the type of surveillance and control of individuals that is the mark of a totalitarian government.

Common Core reminds us of how Communist China gathered nosy information on all its schoolchildren, stored it in manila folders called "dangans," and then turned the file over to the kid's employer when he left school. The *New York Times* once published a picture of a giant Chinese warehouse containing hundreds of thousands of these folders. That was in the pre-internet era when information was stored on paper. Now data collection and storage are efficiently managed on computers.

Common Core is encrusted with lies. It is not, as advertised, "state" written; it is a national project created in secret without any input from teachers or state legislatures. It is not "internationally benchmarked"; that never happened.

The CC English standards designate that the assigned readings should be 50% "informational" texts instead of great American and English literature and classics. The result is that CC readings can be very political. The appendix suggests "informational" readings such as a sales talk for government health care and propaganda for global warming (including a push for Agenda 21). Some of the fiction suggested is worthless and even pornographic. CC advocates protest that the standards include some American "classics" such as *The Grapes of Wrath*. Citing that leftwing novel as an example of great literature shows how pathetic the English standards are.

CC advocates admit the standards cannot be changed or errors corrected because they are already printed and copyrighted. We should take a bit of advice from our neighbor to the north. Canada has no national standards (all standards are adopted locally) and does not even have any national Department of Education.



Science Standards Rate a "C"

The new science standards are called "Next Generation Science Standards." They were examined by nine scientists and mathematicians for content, rigor and clarity, after which the Thomas B. Fordham Institute gave them a grade of "C." The criticisms advanced by these experts referred to the "ceiling on the content and skills that will be measured at each grade," the excluding of content that more advanced students can learn, the failure "to include essential math content that is critical to science learning" in physics and chemistry, and the "confusing" wording of the standards.

Another problem found by Fordham reviewers is the focus on students "performing" rather than learning a base of knowledge and the storehouse of information that students must acquire in order to engage in scientific reasoning.

Proponents of evolution and manmade climate change are ecstatic about the new Common Core science standards. *Education Week* reports: "The standards make clear that evolution is fundamental to understanding the life sciences."

It is misleading to claim that CC standards will make students "college-ready." They will not be ready to major in STEM subjects at a four-year university.

Indiana Leads the Way

The battle against Common Core began with two mothers, Heather Crossin and Erin Tuttle, who became alarmed when their sixth grade children brought home their math textbooks. Like good parents, they inspected the books and immediately realized they were inferior to Indiana's former textbooks and were based on Common Core standards. They alerted other parents, their state Senators, Eagle Forum, and Tea Party groups.

Common Core became a big issue in the 2012 elections. The State Superintendent of Schools, Tony Bennett, a Republican elected in a very Republican state, was a big supporter of Common Core. Bennett's reelection was expected to be easy. The grassroots supported an anti-CC Democrat against him, made Common Core the big issue, and defeated Bennett, even though the Democrat, Glenda Ritz, was outspent 5 to 1.

Then Senator Scott Schneider sponsored an anti-Common Core bill, the Indiana State Legislature passed it, and it was signed into law by Governor Mike Pence.

Senator Grassley Supports Parents

Always a friend of parents' rights, Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) is leading an effort to ask Senate appropriators to restore state-level decision-making about academic content in public schools in order to counter the way federal

incentives have interfered to force states to adopt the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Grassley said the Common Core program was initially billed as a voluntary effort, and that current federal law makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education may not be involved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of state assessments. Grassley explained:

The reality is that the U.S. Department of Education has made adoption of standards matching those in Common Core a requirement for getting waivers and funds. This violates the structure of our education system, where academic content decisions are made at the state level giving parents a direct line of accountability to those making the decisions. The federal government should not be allowed to coerce state education decision makers. . . .

We ask that the Fiscal Year 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill include language to restore state decision-making and accountability with respect to state academic content standards. The decision about what students should be taught and when it should be taught has enormous consequences for our children. Therefore, parents ought to have a straight line of accountability to those who are making such decisions. State legislatures, which are directly accountable to the citizens of their states, are the appropriate place for those decisions to be made, free from any pressure from the U.S. Department of Education.

While the Common Core State Standards Initiative was initially billed as a voluntary effort between states, federal incentives have clouded the picture. Current federal law makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education may not be involved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of state assessments. Nevertheless, the selection criteria designed by the U.S. Department of Education for the Race to the Top Program provided that for a state to have any chance to compete for funding, it must commit to adopting a "common set of K-12 standards" matching the description of the Common Core. The U.S. Department of Education also made adoption of "college- and career-ready standards" meeting the description of the Common Core a condition to receive a state waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Senator Grassley asked other Senators to join him in making sure that federal funds are not used by the Secretary of Education —

(1) to directly develop, implement or evaluate multi-

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incentives have interfered to force states to adopt the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Grassley said the Common Core program was initially billed as a voluntary effort, and that current federal law makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education may not be involved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of state assessments. Grassley explained:

The reality is that the U.S. Department of Education has made adoption of standards matching those in Common Core a requirement for getting waivers and funds. This violates the structure of our education system, where academic content decisions are made at the state level giving parents a direct line of accountability to those making the decisions. The federal government should not be allowed to coerce state education decision makers. . . .

We ask that the Fiscal Year 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill include language to restore state decision-making and accountability with respect to state academic content standards. The decision about what students should be taught and when it should be taught has enormous consequences for our children. Therefore, parents ought to have a straight line of accountability to those who are making such decisions. State legislatures, which are directly accountable to the citizens of their states, are the appropriate place for those decisions to be made, free from any pressure from the U.S. Department of Education.

While the Common Core State Standards Initiative was initially billed as a voluntary effort between states, federal incentives have clouded the picture. Current federal law makes clear that the U.S. Department of Education may not be involved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of state assessments. Nevertheless, the selection criteria designed by the U.S. Department of Education for the Race to the Top Program provided that for a state to have any chance to compete for funding, it must commit to adopting a "common set of K-12 standards" matching the description of the Common Core. The U.S. Department of Education also made adoption of "college- and career-ready standards" meeting the description of the Common Core a condition to receive a state waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Senator Grassley asked other Senators to join him in making sure that federal funds are not used by the Secretary of Education —

(1) to directly develop, implement or evaluate multi-

State or other specified standards (defined in this section as any set of academic content standards common to multiple States, including the Common Core State Standards developed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers, or any other specified set or type of academic content standards selected by the Secretary) or assessments aligned with such standards;

(2) to award any grant, contract, or cooperative agreement that requires or specifically authorizes the development, implementation, or evaluation of multi-State or other specified standards, or assessments aligned with such standards.

There may be other goals behind Common Core. The outgoing president of the Missouri branch of the National Education Association (NEA) gave an exit interview about her eagerness to implement Common Core. She said CC would “prepare our kids for a global community, a global society. These are going to exactly take us there.”

Resolution Passed by the Republican National Committee

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; 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; and

Whereas, even though Federal Law prohibits the federalizing of curriculum, 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

broad education choices to parents and children at the State and local level,” which is best based on a free market 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 rejects the collection 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; 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.



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October 3, 2013

To: Rep. Jeremy Thiesfeldt, Chair
Members, Select Committee on Common Core Standards

From: Lisa Pugh, Disability Rights Wisconsin
Beth Swedeen, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Re: Review and Recommendations on Common Core Standards Implementation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on Wisconsin’s implementation of the Common Core Standards (CCS). In helping to further this committee’s goals, we would like to give some insights into the potential results of Common Core implementation for students with disabilities in Wisconsin, as well as recommendations on the future of the implementation.

First of all, we recognize an extreme improvement in the rigor of the Common Core standards over Wisconsin’s previous Model Academic Standards which were extremely general. Typically students with disabilities suffer from low expectations and the Model Academic Standards did not incent high expectations. Because the Common Core standards and their accompanying assessments have been designed with students with disabilities in mind at the forefront, Disability Rights Wisconsin believes they create a much higher bar for the academic achievement of students with disabilities by increasing their exposure to essential grade level curriculum. Subsequently, when students with disabilities are educated in the general education classroom alongside their peers research tells us postsecondary outcomes (employment and college access) improve.

It is particularly important for Wisconsin to focus on higher standards for students with disabilities based upon current data. According to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI):

- In 2011, just 6% of 8th graders with disabilities scored proficient on the general assessment in reading compared to 33% of their peers without disabilities.¹
- In high school math, only 8% of students with disabilities were proficient compared to 44% of their peers without disabilities.²
- Nearly half of all students with intellectual disabilities spend more than 40% of their school day outside the regular classroom where the majority of grade level content is taught.

Raising standards, as long as appropriate training and technology access is simultaneously provided, will provide support for educators to ensure students with disabilities have access to rigorous college and career ready content and promote access to content through multiple means that support diverse learning styles. Current research tells us that 90% of all students with disabilities (excluding only the small percentage with significant cognitive limitations) can achieve proficiency in grade-level content when given a combination of appropriate supports and high expectations. Wisconsin should aim for this goal. In addition, the Common Core is the Common Core Essential Elements which are directly tied to the CCS for students with the most significant disabilities, are expected to improve outcomes for our children who

¹ U.S. Department of Education; Office of Special Education Programs; 2013 SPP/APR and State Determination Letters (Grant Year 2011-2012 – Issued July 1, 2013).

² Ibid.

often rely on public systems into their adult lives. Better postsecondary outcomes for this population means less reliance on public dollars over a lifetime. We believe the CCS can benefit students with disabilities by:

Fostering an environment of high expectations for all students. High expectations drives achievement. The CCS challenges students with disabilities to achieve the equivalent standards of their peers, thereby discarding the discouraging message communicated by separate, lower expectations.

Providing access to curriculum that has proven beneficial for college and career preparation. The CCS grants equal access to rigorous academic content through instruction by highly trained instructors who practice research-based, individualized education. Inclusion of and the necessary supports for students with disabilities makes this curriculum accessible.

Individualizing instruction. The CCS is designed to assist teachers in identifying and addressing a student's area of need. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) aligns goals of the both the Standards and student by adjusting materials or procedures, and not the standards themselves.

Incorporating supports for learning. Even for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities, the CCS provides need-based supports and accommodations to ensure every child has access to the same rigor of curriculum. Material is presented in multiple ways, adjusting for different modes of learning.

Promoting inclusion. The design of the CCS circumvents traditional barriers between special needs education and the general education population. Research has shown how inclusion leads to better postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. Inclusion increases academic motivation, achievement, and the overall self-confidence of students with disabilities. Teachers also report fewer incidences of behavioral problems resulting in office referrals. By fostering a culture of inclusion, the CCS design enriches the educational experience of all students.

Promoting Universal Design for Learning. UDL is an embedded concept within the Common Core and holds great benefits for all students, including those with disabilities, as it expands the type of instruction that can reach learners who are "on the margins" and supports educators to differentiate content.

Recommendations and Questions

As Wisconsin continues to implement the Common Core, we request that policymakers consider these questions:

- What training in CCS will general education teachers receive in order to support the learning of students with disabilities in their classrooms?
- How will special education teachers be trained in the new standards?
- Will Wisconsin promote and fully support the use of standards-based IEPs?
- How can Wisconsin boost their investment in UDL to allow students with disabilities to access rigorous academic standards?
- How can Wisconsin ensure more proactive use of technology – including training and support for educators – to ensure access and engagement for diverse learners?
- How can we ensure that we are supporting parents and educators to fully discuss the Common Core during IEP meetings – leading to the inclusion of annual goals that focus on the supports the student needs to build the knowledge and skills necessary for college and career.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input. Please feel free to contact our office with additional questions.

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September 29, 2013

Dear Editor,

Does $2 + 2 = 5$? Is a C grade in science satisfactory? Would you like the classics in english removed and replaced with current events? How about two years behind in math for algebra and geometry? This my friends is **Common Core** which will be **implement next year** in our school district. This letter is only my opinion.

The Oconomowoc Area School **Board meeting** is **Tuesday, October 15th 7:00 pm** at High School (Little Theater) 641 E. Forest St. The board members are our locally elected officials that care deeply about our children by providing quality education. But they have been forced away from local control by Common Core **created by the federal gov't**. The board can **OPT out** according to Karen Schroeder because of statutory authority. **See EAGnews.org. #3**

To speak at the meeting you must fill out a card **before the meeting** with the following: your name, address, subject and hand to a staffer. Here are some articles by educational experts and also quote by Governor Scott Walker to ponder:

1. Governor Scott Walker EAGnews.org by Steve Gunn.
Gov. Scott Walker says, "Wis could come up with better standards than Common Core"
2. The Phyllis Schlafly Report Vol. 46, No. 12, July 2013 www.eagleforum.org
Backlash Against Common Core
- # 3. **Karen Schroeder EAGnews.org**, School districts in 'local control like Wis can dump Common Core standards without penalties'

Are the following **true** or **false** from what I've read and heard about Common Core?

- * **Lowers** academic level in math standards by two years
- * English standards are to 50% informational. The **classics replaced** with fiction even pornographic material
- * **Authorizes gov't agencies** to gather, share & store all sort of **private info** on every school child from birth though all levels of school
- * Teachers are forced teach to the test.

Common Core says, " $2 + 2 = 5$ is fine" because the child has the general concept of math. **Please come and protect our children** from inferior standards set up by the federal gov't. Lets pack the **Board Meeting on Oct 15th** at the High School (Little Theater). Do you want Common Core education by the federal gov't or **local control** for curriculum that sets higher standards for every child to succeed?

Thank-you

Nancy West

Pamela L. Davenport

Thank you Mr.

I would just like to say that I have 4, now adult children, all of whom went through the Madison Public School system.

One of my sons was an LD student, when he reached the 3rd grade level, he had to transfer to a different elementary school than the one my other children attended because he was unable to learn reading skills at his school, therefore, needed "special education".

My youngest son on the other hand, excelled in school, and as an 8th grader, he was taxied along with 4 other students from his middle school to the high school every day to take advanced math.

From what my research tells me is that with Common Core, EVERY student will be taught the exact same lesson in every class no matter what level each child is at. If they are a slow learner, well, there will be no child left behind, so what does this leave for the advanced learner if they are proceeding at the same speed and lesson as the child unable to keep up? Example: Do you believe that every 9 yr old is of the same learning ability as every other 9 yr. old? I can tell you from experience in having 4 children that they definitely are all taught at a different style and learning level. If my son was unable to excel when he was in the 8th grade, he would not have had the same opportunities afforded him as he went through high school and onto owning his own business.

If we accept this Common Core cookie cutter teaching for our children, I believe there will be MANY children left behind, as the children that ARE able to excel in school will now be stymied in their standard education not to say where that will leave them when they want to attend college.

By cookie cutter teaching I mean... i.e. if my child were in 3rd grade and we moved to another state, they would be teaching the exact same lesson on the exact same day in every school in every state.

I am against this Common Core Standard and am afraid if this goes through what will be in store for my future grandchildren.

Pamela Davenport