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Wisconsin wins \$22.7 million in Race to the Top funds

By [Erin Richards](#) of the Journal Sentinel
Dec. 6, 2012

After losing previous rounds of federal Race to the Top grant competitions, Wisconsin won a slice of funding Thursday: a \$22.7 million grant that will help expand and improve services for young children in day care centers, preschools and kindergarten classrooms.

Wisconsin joined Colorado, Illinois, New Mexico and Oregon in sharing the \$133 million Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, the U.S. Department of Education announced Thursday.

Wisconsin's grant will be spent over four years on strengthening and expanding the YoungStar child care rating system and also accelerating work on a data system that would track kids in early childhood and target more disadvantaged children for services.

A main goal is to help close the "readiness" gap between children who are white and from middle- to upper-income families and those who are of color and/or from low-income households. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds often enter the K-12 system behind their more affluent peers in terms of social development and academic exposure.

"Improving the quality of early childhood development will pay dividends for all Wisconsin citizens and future generations and ensure children are better prepared to succeed in school and in life," Department of Children and Families Secretary Eloise Anderson said in a statement Thursday.

The awards announced Thursday represent the latest competition among states for Race to the Top dollars.

The \$4.35 billion federal education grant competition was launched in 2009 by the Obama administration and initially was fueled by stimulus dollars. Wisconsin's applications for the most lucrative rounds of the competition were not selected for funding.

The state's first application last year for the early learning grant was also denied, and nine other states won funding to improve and expand quality early-learning programs. This year, the Department of Education asked the next five highest-scoring state applicants, including Wisconsin, to resubmit their requests with modifications to use half the money initially requested.

The Wisconsin grant will bring together three state agencies - the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health Services - to build an early-childhood data tracking system. That system will help align services and standards across programs such as YoungStar and Head Start; a federal program to improve school readiness of low-income children; and

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4-year-old kindergarten.

Tracking outcomes for those children could help highlight areas for improvement and also identify more high-risk infants, toddlers and preschoolers for services.

"High quality early learning opportunities are key to preparing all students for school success and reducing achievement gaps before they start," Tony Evers, state superintendent of public instruction, said in a statement Thursday.

The details of Wisconsin's successful Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application can be read on [the Department of Children and Families website](#).

Another [Race to the Top funding stream](#) has asked for individual districts to submit plans for improvement, and a [network of rural schools](#) in Wisconsin is among the finalists for funding.

The Race to the Top district-level grants will be announced before the end of the year.

Find this article at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/education/wisconsin-wins-227-million-in-race-to-the-top-funds-am7uc2a-182395501.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

The History of Assessments in Wisconsin

Year	Vendor	Test	Grade Levels	Requirements/Policy
1976-84	CTB	Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) and Objective References Tests	4, 5, 8, 11, 12	Participation in the CTBS Voluntary. Districts could develop their own examination with DPI approval
1984-87	WCER		4, 8, 11	
1987-89	Harcourt	Wisconsin Achievement Test	Grades 8 & 10	WI Legislature requires districts to administer "Knowledge and Concepts" Examinations. The earliest versions of the WKCE were commercial "shelf tests".
1989-92				
1992-93	Harcourt	ACT was pilot for WKCE	Grades 8 & 10 Voluntary Participation	WI Legislature requires districts to administer "Knowledge and Concepts" Examinations in the 8th and 10th grades.
1993-94				
1994-95	Harcourt	WKCE Commercial "test shelf" SAT-8 Series	Grades 8 & 10 Required	WI Legislature adds requirement for districts to administer "Knowledge and Concepts" Examinations in the 4th grade.
1995-96				
1996-97	Harcourt	WKCE TerraNova series	Grade 4 Voluntary Participation, 8 & 10 Required	WI Legislature requires districts to administer "Knowledge and Concepts" Examinations in the 8th and 10th grades.
1997-98				
1998-99	Harcourt	WI began to supplement the Terra Nova assessments in Reading, Mathematics, and Science with WI-customized items following the adoption of the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards	Grades 4, 8 & 10 Required	WI Legislature adds requirement for districts to administer "Knowledge and Concepts" Examinations in the 4th grade.
1998-2000				
2000-01	CTB/McGraw Hill	WI added more items in grades 4 and 8 following a second alignment study between state content standards and the WKCE	Grades 4, 8 & 10 Required	NCLB
2001-02				
2002-03	CTB/McGraw Hill	3rd Grade Wisconsin Reading Comprehension Test (WRCT)	Grades 3-8, & 10 Required	Content specifications for the WKCE Wisconsin Assessment Frameworks extended the Model Academic Standards in Reading, Mathematics, and Science from grades 4, 8, and 10 to each of the assessed grades (3-8, and 10).
2003-04				
2004-05	CTB/McGraw Hill	WKCE Reading and Mathematics Assessments in grades 3-8 became completely Wisconsin-customized (no TerraNova items). This WKCE reading test replaced the WRCT.	Grades 3-8, & 10 Required	Content specifications for the WKCE Wisconsin Assessment Frameworks extended the Model Academic Standards in Reading, Mathematics, and Science from grades 4, 8, and 10 to each of the assessed grades (3-8, and 10).
2005-06				
2006-07	CTB/McGraw Hill	Wisconsin Concepts and Knowledge Examinations (WKCE) & Wisconsin Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities (WAA-SwD)	Grades 3-8, & 10 Required	Content specifications for the WKCE Wisconsin Assessment Frameworks extended the Model Academic Standards in Reading, Mathematics, and Science from grades 4, 8, and 10 to each of the assessed grades (3-8, and 10).
2007-08				

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Table 2: Estimated testing times for Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments

Test Type	Grades	CAT	Perf Task Only	Total	In-Class Activity	Total
English Language Arts/Literacy	3-5	1:30	2:00	3:30	:30	4:00
	6-8	1:30	2:00	3:30	:30	4:00
	11	2:00	2:00	4:00	:30	4:30
Mathematics	3-5	1:30	1:00	2:30	:30	3:00
	6-8	2:00	1:00	3:00	:30	3:30
	11	2:00	1:30	3:30	:30	4:00
COMBINED	3-5	3:00	3:00	6:00	1:00	7:00
	6-8	3:30	3:00	6:30	1:00	7:30
	11	4:00	3:30	7:30	1:00	8:30

Times are estimates of test length for most students. Smarter Balanced assessments are designed as untimed tests; some students may need and should be afforded more time than shown in this table.

Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) Operational Test Administration Timing

Reading

Grade	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Total
3	40	40	40	120
4	40	40	40	120
5	40	40	40	120
6	40	40	40	120
7	40	40	40	120
8	40	40	40	120
10	40	40	40	120

Note: Timing does not include time for test administration tasks and breaks. Add approximately 10-15 minutes each day to distribute materials, read directions, and collect materials to estimate total time needed. Add time for breaks between sessions if more than one session is administered on the same day.

Mathematics

Grade	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Total
3	25	30	30	85
4	25	30	30	85
5	25	35	30	90

Grade	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Total
6	30	25	25	25	105
7	30	25	25	25	105
8	30	25	25	25	105
10	30	25	25	25	105

Note: Timing does not include time for test administration tasks and breaks. Add approximately 10-15 minutes each day to distribute materials, read directions, and collect materials to estimate total time needed. Add time for breaks between sessions if more than one session is administered on the same day.

Science

Grade	Session 1	Session 2	Total
4	40	n/a	40
8	40	n/a	40
10	25	25	50

Note: Timing does not include time for test administration tasks and breaks. Add approximately 10-15 minutes each day to distribute materials, read directions, and collect materials to estimate total time needed.

Social Studies

Grade	Session 1	Session 2	Total
4	40	n/a	40
8	40	n/a	40
10	25	25	50

Note: Timing does not include time for test administration tasks and breaks. Add approximately 10-15 minutes each day to distribute materials, read directions, and collect materials to estimate total time needed.

Language Arts & Writing

Grade	Language Arts	Writing	Total
4	30	30	60
8	30	30	60
10	30	30	60

Total Testing Times by Grade Levels

Grade	Reading	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies	LA/ Writing	Total Mins
3	120	85				205 (3 hr. 25 min)
4	120	85	40	40	60	345 (5 hr. 45 min.)
5	120	90				210 (3 hr. 30 min.)
6	120	105				225 (3hr. 45 min.)
7	120	105				225 (3hr. 45 min.)
8	120	105	40	40	60	365 (6 hr. 5 min.)
10	120	105	50	50	60	385 (6 hr. 25 min.)

Seattle protest may lead Wisconsin schools into re-evaluating student tests

Feb. 16, 2013

A group of teachers at a high school in Seattle set off an interesting storm recently: They announced they would refuse to give their students tests known as MAP that are used extensively in their district. Among other things, they criticized the tests themselves, how much time the tests take and what the overall testing regimen at their school does to the quality of education.

The teachers have generated support for their protest across the country, including in Milwaukee, where the executive board of the Milwaukee teachers union endorsed their stand. Bob Peterson, president of the union, praised the teachers "for standing up to this nation's obsession with standardized testing."

I respect both sides of the great debate about the role of standardized testing in schools. Testing is a huge force in American schooling these days. It can be used effectively for improvement. It also can disrupt the pursuit of quality and become excessive.

What first caught my eye about the Seattle protest was the focus on MAP. I think of MAP as Wisconsin's unofficial standardized testing program. But I doubt many people outside of school staffs even know about it.

Wisconsin's official testing program, known as the WKCE, is given once a year in the fall. It is given on paper and the results aren't known for months. Almost everybody hates the WKCE. The results don't have much use to teachers or school leaders, but those results are the most widely used measure to tell the public how schools, school districts, and specific groups of kids are doing. The WKCE is scheduled to be replaced in two years by a new test being developed by a multistate consortium.

MAP stands for Measures of Academic Progress and it is a product of the Northwest Evaluation Association, a nonprofit based in Portland, Ore. Founded in the 1970s, the organization offers tests from kindergarten through high school, primarily in reading and language arts and in math, that are graded on the same scale across every grade.

MAP is very different from the WKCE. It is given by computer, it is given three times a year (in most schools), and results are known immediately. I've sat in on teacher meetings where MAP results were being used well to diagnose students' progress and prod good discussion of what teachers could do to seek better results.

Some school districts (West Allis-West Milwaukee is one) are using MAP results as part of evaluating teachers. Milwaukee Public Schools, which began using MAP several years ago, isn't doing that, but it is using overall MAP results as an important component of judging whether a school is meeting its goals.

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MAP is an "adaptive" test - that is, the computer program modifies each test based on how a child answers each question. Get a question right and the next question is harder. Get a question wrong and the next one is easier. This allows the results to pinpoint more exactly how a child is doing and aims to have every student challenged - the best don't breeze through, the worst don't give up when they're entirely lost.

MAP tests are generally given three times a year, which is one of the things supporters like and critics hate. On the one hand, you get data frequently and can make mid-course corrections. On the other hand, it means more times in the year when school life is disrupted.

A MAP spokeswoman said in December there were 287 "partners" in Wisconsin, ranging from MPS down to individual private schools. Many suburban districts use MAP, as do many Catholic and other private schools and charter schools.

At a lot of schools in southeastern Wisconsin, there is enthusiasm for using MAP and it is seen as a good way to judge how kids are doing and to determine what to focus on in helping them.

But, as in Seattle - minus any organized protests, at least so far - there are also many teachers here who think the results basically tell teachers what they know already, at the price of interfering with actual education. The negatives outweigh the positives, as one teacher told me last week. Peterson said he is not opposed to standardized tests overall, but thinks the overall testing regimen in public schools is too much, narrowing the curriculum and dehumanizing teaching.

Role of testing grows

Particularly since the passage of the No Child Left Behind federal education law 11 years ago, the role of testing in American schools has grown.

When David Driscoll spoke at a conference at Marquette Law School a year ago, he said he thought there was too much testing going on in many states. Who's Driscoll? Chair of the National Assessment Governing Board, which runs NAEP, the closest thing to a national testing program. Driscoll said we probably need fewer but better tests.

Overall, testing has done a lot to focus attention on the urgent need to achieve better overall outcomes for children, especially low income and minority kids. It has added fuel to efforts to deal with underperformance. And when used well, test data can provide valuable guidance at all levels of schooling.

But the best teaching I've witnessed was almost always in classes where testing and scores weren't the focus, but prodding thinking and intellectual exploration were. The thought that emphasizing testing can de-emphasize that kind of teaching has to be taken seriously.

The Seattle superintendent reacted to the MAP protest by creating a task force to study testing policies. Peterson suggested a task force would be a good idea in Milwaukee.

Testing isn't going away. It shouldn't. But a thoughtful effort to sort out what is helpful and what is not has appeal. Especially as Wisconsin and almost every other state move toward more

sophisticated testing systems, I give the Seattle teachers credit for prodding people to give a fresh look at where the balance on testing should be set.

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TESTIMONY

The Impact of Federal Involvement in America's Classrooms

By *Andrew J. Coulson*

February 10, 2011



**Committee on Education & the Workforce
United States House of Representatives**

Chairman Kline, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to speak with you today. My name is Andrew Coulson and I direct the Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute, a nonprofit, non-partisan public policy research organization. My comments are my own, and do not represent any position of the Institute.

For over half a century, a succession of Congresses and presidents has sought to do two things for American elementary and secondary education: raise overall achievement, and narrow the gaps between high- and low-income students as well as between minority and white students. The federal government has spent roughly \$2 trillion on these efforts since 1965, adjusting for inflation.¹

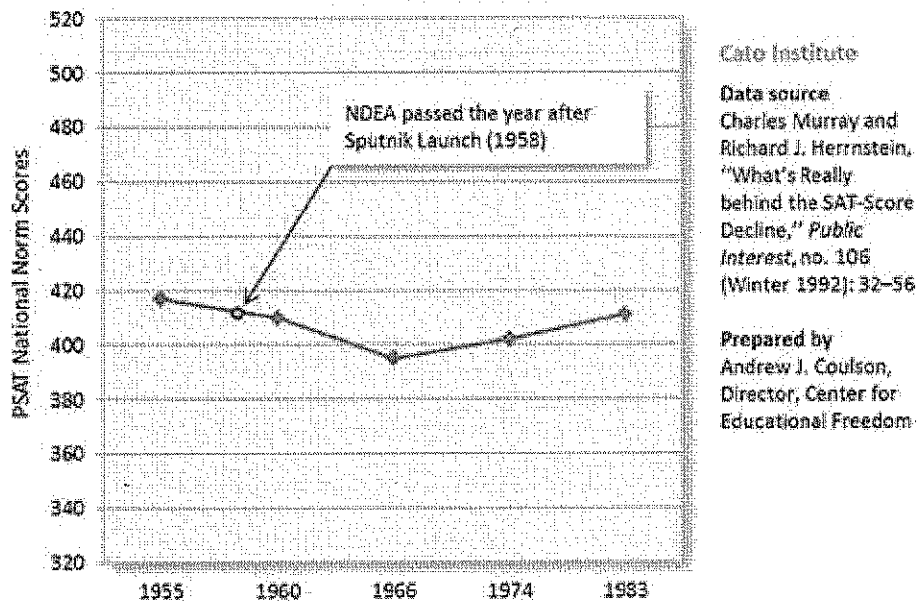
In the next few minutes I will summarize the results of these efforts and their implications for federal education policy.

Congress' first attempt to improve the quality of instruction in the nation's schools was

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the National Defense Education Act of 1958, a direct response to the Soviet launch of the satellite Sputnik. It was intended to raise mathematics and science achievement. There are no data on science achievement during this period to my knowledge, but we do have nationally representative trend data for mathematics performance at the end of high school, which I present in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Math Scores, National Norm PSAT Studies (11th graders), 1955-83

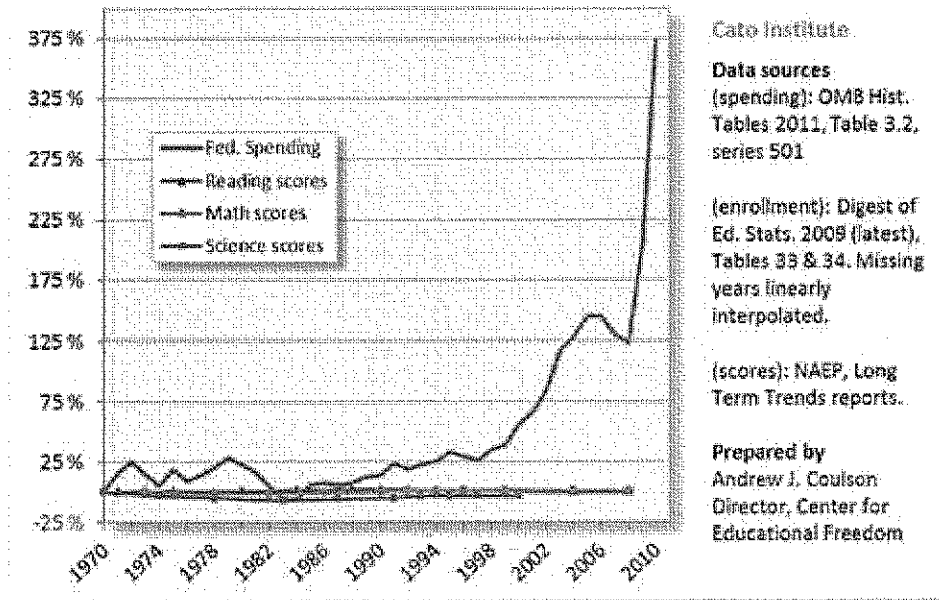


As can be seen from the chart, math scores declined slightly during the latter half of the 1950s, and this decline accelerated from 1960 to 1966, after the NDEA was passed. Scores had still not recovered to their 1955 high point three decades later.

While the up-trend between 1966 and 1983 looks promising, it was not sustained. Figure 2 charts the percent change in Math, Science, and Reading scores from the 1970s to the present, along with the percent change in real federal education spending per pupil.

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Figure 2: Inflation-Adjusted Federal K-12 Spending Per Pupil and Achievement of 17-Year-Olds, % Change since 1970



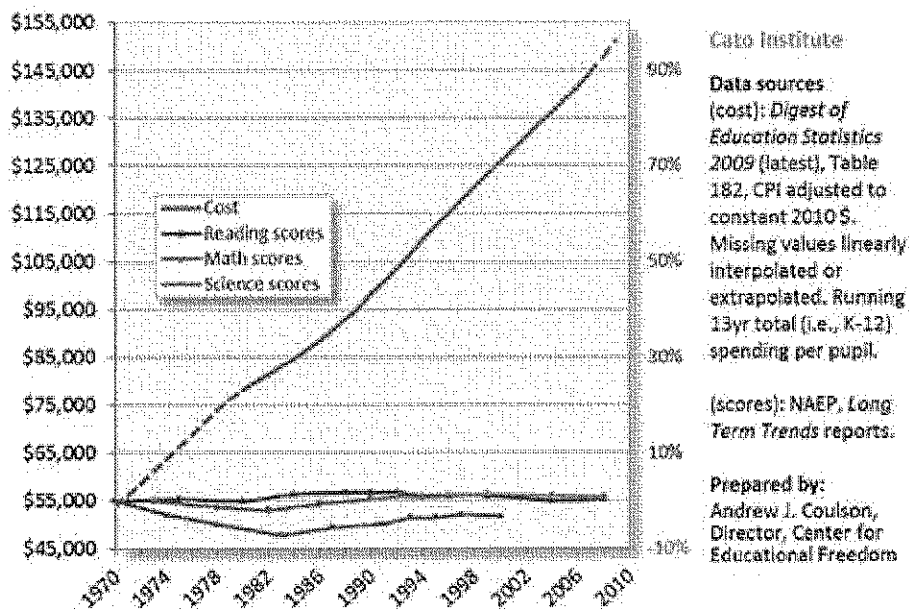
Math and Reading scores at the end of high school are unchanged over the past forty years, while Science scores suffered a slight decline through the year 1999, the last time that test was administered. Data from another nationally representative test series show a continuing decline in 12th grade Science between 1996 and 2005, the last year for which we have trend data.²

Presented with stagnant or declining performance in the face of a meteoric rise in federal spending per pupil, it is reasonable to ask: what happened to *total* spending? If state and local expenditures fell to such an extent that they offset federal increases, that might explain the profound disconnect revealed in Figure 2.

To answer that question, I present Figure 3, showing how the total cost of an entire k-through-12 public school education has changed over time.

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Figure 3. Inflation-Adjusted Cost of a complete K-12 Public Education, and Percent Change in Achievement of 17-Year-Olds, since 1970



We spent over \$151,000 per student sending the graduating class of 2009 through public schools. That is nearly three times as much as we spent on the graduating class of 1970, adjusting for inflation. Despite that massive real spending increase, overall achievement has stagnated or declined, depending on the subject.

But what of the federal government's other educational goal: narrowing the achievement gaps by income and minority status? Test score breakdowns by family income are not available, but we do have something close: a breakdown by parents' level of education. This allows us to compare the children of high school dropouts to those of college graduates. In Reading and Science, the gap between these students has not narrowed in 40 years. In Math it has narrowed by barely one percent of the test score scale.³ So, here again, federal appropriations and the programs they have funded have failed to achieve their goals.

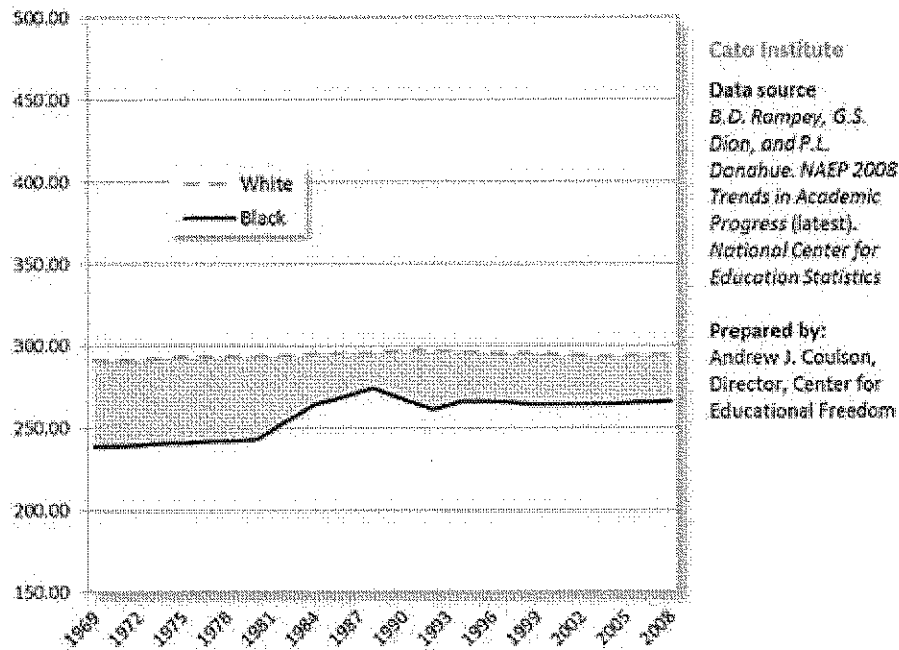
That leaves us with one last federal policy goal to examine: Shrinking the gaps between minority and white students. In science, these gaps, too, are unchanged,⁴ while they have narrowed in Reading and Mathematics. But a key question remains: were federal programs responsible for this isolated gap narrowing?

If so, the gap narrowing that did occur should track federal legislation and spending: starting gradually and then accelerating rapidly during the past two decades. To see if

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that is indeed the pattern, Figure 4 charts changes in the black/white Reading gap (which is one of the larger majority/minority gap reductions, with a fairly typical time trend).

Figure 4. Black/White Reading Score Gap,
NAEP Long-Term Trends, 17-Year-Olds, 1971–2008



Comparing Figure 4 with the federal spending per pupil trend shown in Figure 2, there seems to be little support for the hypothesis that federal efforts have narrowed the black/white reading gap. The gap was essentially unchanged for the first 15 years after the passage of the ESEA and Head Start. Then, in the absence of any dramatic change in federal policy or spending, the gap suddenly narrowed between 1980 and 1988. Since 1988, the gap has actually *widened* slightly, despite a dramatic rise in federal spending over that period. The patterns for both math and reading for both black and Hispanic students tell similar stories.⁵

To sum up, we have little to show for the \$2 trillion in federal education spending of the past half century. In the face of concerted and unflinching efforts by Congress and the states, public schooling has suffered a massive productivity collapse — it now costs three times as much to provide essentially the same education as we provided in 1970.

Grim as that picture may seem, it fails to capture the full measure of the problem. Because as productivity was *falling* relentlessly in education, it was *rising* everywhere

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else. A pound of grocery store coffee is not merely as affordable as it was in 1970 — it hasn't just held its ground — it is *cheaper* in real dollars. Indeed virtually every product and service has gotten better, or more affordable, or both over the past two generations.

Seen in that proper context, we would have to be disappointed with our nation's lack of educational improvement even if federal spending had not increased at all. The fact that outcomes have remained flat or declined while spending skyrocketed is a disaster unparalleled in any other field. The only thing it appears to have accomplished is to apply the brakes to the nation's economic growth, by taxing trillions of dollars out of the productive sector of the economy and spending it on ineffective programs.

But amidst this bleak overall record, there is one federal education program that has been proven to both improve educational outcomes and dramatically lower costs. That is the Washington, DC Opportunity Scholarships Program. Research conducted by the Department of Education finds that students attending private schools thanks to this program have equal or better academic performance than their peers in the local public schools, and have significantly higher graduation rates. This, and very high levels of parental satisfaction, come at an average per pupil cost of around \$7,000. By contrast, per pupil spending on k-12 public education in the nation's capital was roughly \$28,000 during the 2008-09 school year.⁶

The OSP program is thus producing better results at a quarter the cost.

DC, of course, is a special case. The federal government is not empowered by the Constitution to create such a program on a national level. Indeed the Constitution delegates to the federal government no national education policy powers, reserving them, under the 10th Amendment, to the states and the people. Clearly, this limit has not been observed for generations, but its wisdom is by now inescapable. We have decades of evidence of the inability of our national education programs to fulfill their worthy intentions.

Nevertheless, Congress could contribute greatly to the spread of educational excellence around the nation by preserving and growing the Opportunity Scholarships Program as an example of what is possible and by phasing out its vast array of ineffective



programs. This would ultimately allow for a permanent annual tax cut on the order of seventy billion dollars, and would bolster interest in the many state level private school choice programs that have also been improving outcomes while lowering costs. Any move in this direction would be of lasting value to American families and the American economy.

1. Calculated by the author from Table no. 373 of the 2009 edition (latest available) of the *Digest of Education Statistics*, linearly interpolating data gaps prior to 1985 and linearly extrapolating the 2010 value from the preceding ten years of data. The resulting figure is: \$2,070,963,000,000, in constant 2009 dollars.

2. National Center for Education Statistics, *The Nation's Report Card: Science 2009*, (NCES 2011-451), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, 2011. http://nationsreportcard.gov/science_2009/ [The "Nation's Report Card" is a separate set of nationally representative tests from the "Long Term Trends" set, but both are part of the "National Assessment of Educational Progress."]

3. Andrew J. Coulson, "K-12 Education," chapter in David Boaz (ed.), *The Cato Handbook for Policymakers, 7th edition* (Washington, DC: Cato Institute, 2009). <http://www.cato.org/pubs/handbook/hb111/hb111-20.pdf>

4. Jay R. Campbell, Catherine M. Hombo, and John Mazzeo, *NAEP 1999 Trends in Academic Progress: Three Decades of Student Performance* (Washington: U.S. Department of Education, 2000), p. 37.

5. Andrew J. Coulson, "K-12 Education," *The Cato Handbook for Policymakers, 7th edition*.

6. The figures in the range of \$15,000 for DC per pupil spending that are commonly reported in the press are several years out of date, do not take into account falling DCPS enrollment in the face of rising total spending in the years since they were published, and usually exclude major expenditure categories such as capital spending. The \$28,000 figure is the author's own calculation from the published FY2008-09 budget documents of the District of Columbia, and the spreadsheet in which those calculations were conducted, including source citations, is available here:

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<http://www.cato-at-liberty.org/wp-content/uploads/Coulson-DC-Ed-Spending-FY2009-Budget.xls>



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States Respond to Common Core Science Standards

April 22, 2013

Joy Pullmann



States have begun to take sides on the new Common Core science standards released last week. The standards shift students toward engineering, away from traditional biology, chemistry, and physics disciplines, and they tell children starting in kindergarten that humans have caused dangerous global warming.

“This is a very big victory for the other side,” said Craig Rucker, executive director of the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, a nonprofit that promotes free-market environmental stewardship. “If you start inculcating these ideas into the young, they will view this as a statement of faith, and it becomes very difficult to convince them otherwise—which is why the proponents of climate change are doing it.”

Despite this political hot potato, some analysts say they expect 40 or more states to switch to the standards, which are designed to correspond to Common Core math and English standards 45 states have adopted.

Utah and Texas education leaders have said their states will not adopt the standards, but states such as Kansas, Michigan, and California are holding hearings on them soon. The state boards of education in Maine and Kentucky have said they plan to vote on the standards by June. Pennsylvania and Florida officials [told FoxNews.com](#) they had no meetings scheduled to review the standards, while Illinois and Tennessee leaders said it’s likely their states will switch to the new standards soon.

No Debate

The Next Generation Science Standards, as they’re called, were coordinated by Achieve Inc., which also coordinated Common Core English and math. Achieve worked with approximately 13 federal agencies, including NASA, the Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Department of the Interior, said Frank Niepold, co-chair of the Climate Education Interagency Working Group at the U.S. Global Change Research Program.

“Federal agencies are committed to lifting as much of this as we can in partnership with the states,” he said.

On a conference call in April, Niepold celebrated the standards for their potential to force the nation’s schools to teach his view of climate change.

“Our hope is that teachers will not see this as a political issue and a political debate,” said Mario Molina, deputy director of the Alliance for Climate Education, on the same call. “This is the science. It is not a debate. This is [students’] right, to be taught the science that is agreed upon worldwide without the veil of politics or debate.”

Although some teachers are currently “worried about the sensitivities of the parents and community” regarding climate change, said Don Boesch, principal investigator for the Maryland and Delaware Climate Change Education, Assessment, and Research program, “shifting the textbooks” and standards would provide teachers the support they need to stand up to disgruntled parents, students, and taxpayers.

Goal: Political Power

The false claim that the climate debate is settled has been pushed ever since climate became a hot political topic in the 1990s, Rucker said.

“The only place you usually see 98 percent of anyone agreeing is a place like Venezuela or the former Soviet Union,” Rucker said. “People do not agree on climate science. You have a large number of different opinions as to what man’s contribution is, how much is a result of natural variability, and so forth. The claims they’re making are preposterous. Of course there’s a debate.”

Rucker says it’s common for global warming alarmists to say that even if global warming is not a problem, the big-government solutions they propose are necessary worldwide anyway. If children are taught to think this way, he said, when they start voting they are likely to favor big-government politicians—and schools should not push students towards particular politics, he said.

Good for Science?

Climate change is a good topic to prioritize in education because it brings together various fields of science, Niepold said.

Heather Mac Donald disagrees. She is a fellow at the Manhattan Institute who says she’s “not a climate skeptic.”

“The most critical need for students is to understand basic science, and we are so far from achieving that goal that I think it’s a distraction to start immersing students in the extraordinary complexities of climate science,” she said. “It is following the fad for interdisciplinary work, and the people who promote that forget they went through the disciplines themselves and that those disciplines represent real bodies of knowledge. We have to be absolutely certain that students understand the rudiments.”

Sixty-eight percent of U.S. eighth graders scored below “proficient” in science on the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress, the most respected nationwide test, in 2011.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute reviewers of the science standards’ most recent draft agreed with Mac Donald.

“[R]ecommended ‘practices’ dominate [the standards], and basic science knowledge—which should be the ultimate goal of science education—becomes secondary,” they wrote. They also criticized the loss of crucial science content, such as acids and bases in chemistry, and flat-out inaccuracies.

“The passion for ‘critical thinking skills’ grows out of this know-nothing response that somehow learning facts is demeaning and is something that students don’t enjoy,” Mac Donald said. “It sells knowledge short to think that being able to master a body of knowledge and understand photosynthesis or DNA replication, that that’s not a challenge and exciting for students.”

Image by [Jeremy Wilburn](#).

Related Podcast:

[James Taylor: Another \\$19 Million to Promote Global Warming in Schools](#)

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Programs

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- Web Survey

Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems

July 2009

[PDF \(231 KB\)](#)

[en Español](#)

FY 2009 funding:
\$65 million

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act:
\$250 million

Grantees:
States

Type of Grant:
Competitive



PURPOSE:

The program provides grants to states to design, develop, and implement statewide P-20 longitudinal data systems to capture, analyze, and use student data from preschool to high school, college, and the workforce.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

Since it started in fiscal year 2005, the program has awarded grants worth \$265 million to 41 states and the District of Columbia. The Recovery Act competition requires that the data systems have the capacity to link preschool, K-12, and postsecondary education as well as workforce data. To receive State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, a state must provide an assurance that it will establish a longitudinal data system that includes the 12 elements described in the America COMPETES Act, and any data system developed with Statewide longitudinal data system funds must include at least these 12 elements. The elements are:

1. An unique identifier for every student that does not permit a student to be individually identified (except as permitted by federal and state law);
2. The school enrollment history, demographic characteristics, and program participation record of every student;
3. Information on when a student enrolls, transfers, drops out, or graduates from a school;
4. Students scores on tests required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act;
5. Information on students who are not tested, by grade and subject;
6. Students scores on tests measuring whether they're ready for college;
7. A way to identify teachers and to match teachers to their students;
8. Information from students' transcripts, specifically courses taken and grades earned;
9. Data on students' success in college, including whether they enrolled in remedial courses;
10. Data on whether K-12 students are prepared to succeed in college;
11. A system of auditing data for quality, validity, and reliability; and
12. The ability to share data from preschool through postsecondary education data systems.

With such comprehensive data systems, states will be able to monitor their reforms and make specific changes to advance them. These data systems will capture data on students from one grade to the next, measuring whether they are on track to graduate and telling K-12 schools whether they are preparing their students to succeed in college and the workforce. The data systems also can help identify teachers who are succeeding so states can reward them, and find teachers who are struggling and help them improve.

A request for applications is being published in the Federal Register and will be available on www.ed.gov.

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Judge Tosses Challenge to FERPA Rules on Student ID Numbers

By [Mark Walsh](#) on September 30, 2013 8:06 AM

A federal judge has thrown out a lawsuit challenging 2011 regulations for the main federal education privacy law that added student identification numbers to the "directory" of information that may be disclosed by schools and colleges.

The Electronic Privacy Information Center and four individuals sued the U.S. Department of Education over the latest rules for the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, or FERPA.

But Judge Amy Berman Jackson of U.S. District Court in Washington issued summary judgment for the Education Department, ruling that the plaintiffs have not suffered any real legal injuries stemming from the regulations and thus they lack legal standing to bring their suit.

"The individual plaintiffs have alleged nothing more than a hypothetical possibility of some vague harm, and that harm does not even flow from the challenged regulations," Judge Jackson said in her Sept. 26 decision in *Electronic Privacy Information Center v. U.S. Department of Education*. "And the organizational plaintiff, EPIC, complains simply that the new rules have prompted it to engage in the very sort of advocacy that is its raison d'etre."

FERPA governs the disclosure of student records by educational institutions receiving federal funds. Most records generally may not be disclosed without a parent's consent, or the consent of an adult student.

Schools and colleges, however, may disclose directory information without consent, including a student's name, address, participation in sports and activities, dates of attendance, and degrees awarded, among other categories.

The 2011 regulations added student ID numbers or unique personal identifiers to the list of directory information, including those displayed on student ID badges, as long as such numbers cannot be used to access the student's other educational records without a password or PIN.

The rules also slightly changed some definitions in the law in a way that EPIC said would "expose troves of sensitive, non-academic data" and "insufficiently safeguard students from the risk of re-identification," or allowing someone to use a student ID number from a card to access more detailed records, the organization said.

The EPIC suit said the Education Department lacked authority under FERPA to adopt the regulations it did and thus violated the Administrative Procedure Act.

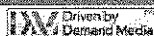
"Unlike other directory information such as name and major field of study, student ID numbers used in conjunction with other readily available directory information provide access to education records in violation of the FERPA," the privacy group said in **one court filing**. "Publicly available unique student identifiers expose personal information that places at risk the privacy of students, the precise concern of Congress in enacting the statute."

Judge Jackson said in her opinion that "this case begins and ends with plaintiffs' constitutional standing to bring their claims."

The judge suggested that the only plaintiff who came close to having standing to challenge the regulations was Pablo Garcia Molina, a doctoral student at Georgetown University (who also happened to be an administrator there.)

"Plaintiffs have not shown that disclosure of Molina's Georgetown University ID number on a badge makes it substantially more probable that he will be the victim of identity theft," the judge said.

Tags: [privacy](#)



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November 26, 2013

HUFF
POST POLITICS

A Brief Audit of Bill Gates' Common Core Spending

Posted: 08/29/2013 5:51 pm

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This is a post about Bill Gates and his money, a brief audit of his Common Core (CCSS) purchases. Before I delve into Gates accounting, allow me to set the stage with a bit of CCSS background.

It is important to those promoting CCSS that the public believes the idea that CCSS is "state-led." The CCSS website reports as much and names two organizations as "coordinating" the "state-led" CCSS: The National Governors Association (NGA), and the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Interestingly, the CCSS website makes no mention of CCSS "architect" David Coleman:

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a state-led effort coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). **The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers**, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. [Emphasis added.]
Nevertheless, if one reviews this 2009 NGA news release on those principally involved in CCSS development, one views a listing of 29 individuals associated with Student Achievement Partners, ACT, College Board, and Achieve. In truth, only 2 out of 29 members are not affiliated with an education company.
CCSS as "state-led" is fiction. Though NGA reports 29 individuals as involved with CCSS creation, it looks to be even fewer:

NGA first directly involved governors in nationalizing education standards in June 2008, when it co-hosted an education forum with the Hunt Institute, a project of former North Carolina Gov. James Hunt Jr. In December 2008, NGA, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and Achieve Inc. released a report calling for national standards. The report recommended "a strong state-federal partnership" to accomplish this goal.

Those three nonprofits answered their own call the next few months, **deciding to commission Common Core**. NGA and Hunt's press releases during that time, and a paper describing NGA's Common Core process by former NGA education director Dane Linn, **provide no endorsement of such activity from more than a handful of elected officials**. [Emphasis added.]

Also involved in creation of CCSS is Student Achievement Partners, the company David Coleman started in 2007 in order to produce national standards. Student Achievement Partners has no work other than CCSS.

Now to Bill Gates and his money.

The four principal organizations associated with CCSS- NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, and Student Achievement Partners- have accepted millions from Bill Gates. In fact, prior to CCSS "completion" in June 2009, Gates had paid millions to NGA, CCSSO, and Achieve. And the millions continued to flow following CCSS completion.

Prior to June 2009, NGA received \$23.6 million from the Gates Foundation from 2002 through 2008. \$19.7 million was for the highly-disruptive "high school redesign" (i.e., "small schools") project, one that Gates abandoned.

After June 2009, NGA received an additional \$2.1 million from Gates, the largest payout coming in February 2011,

...to work with state policymakers on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, with special attention to effective resource reallocation to ensure complete execution, **as well as rethinking state policies on teacher effectiveness**. Amount: \$1,598,477 [Emphasis added.]

Years ago, Gates paid NGA to "rethink policies on teacher effectiveness."

One man, lots of money, nationally shaping a profession to which he has never belonged.

As for CCSSO: The Gates amounts are even higher than for NGA. Prior to June 2009, the Gates Foundation gave \$47.1 million to CCSSO (from 2002 to 2007), with the largest amount focused on data "access" and "data driven decisions":

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March 2007 Purpose: to support Phase II of the National Education Data Partnership seeking to promote transparency and **accessibility of education data** and improve public education through data-driven decision making Amount: \$21,642,317 [Emphasis added.]

Following CCSS completion in June 2009, Gates funded CCSSO an additional \$31.9 million, with the largest grants earmarked for CCSS implementation and assessment, and data acquisition and control:

July 2013 Purpose: to CCSSO, on behalf of the PARCC and SBAC consortia to support the development of high quality **assessments to measure the Common Core State Standards** Amount: \$4,000,000

November 2012

Purpose: to support the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in helping States' to **build their data inoperability capability and IT leadership capacity** Amount: \$1,277,648

October 2012

Purpose: to **support strategic planning for the sustainability of the Common Core State Standards** and the **two multi-state assessment consortia** tasked with designing assessments aligned with those standards
Amount: \$1,100,000

June 2011

Purpose: **to support the Common Core State Standards work** Amount: \$9,388,911

November 2009

Purpose: **to partner with federal, state, public, and private interests to develop common, open, longitudinal data standards** Amount: \$3,185,750

July 2009

Purpose: to increase the leadership capacity of chiefs by focusing on **standards and assessments, data systems**, educator development and determining a new system of supports for student learning
Amount: \$9,961,842 [Emphasis added.]

Gates money also flowed to Achieve, Inc.; prior to June 2009. Achieve received \$23.5 million in Gates funding. Another \$13.2 million followed after CCSS creation, with \$9.3 million devoted to "building strategic alliances" for CCSS promotion:

June 2012

Purpose: to strengthen and expand the ADP Network, provide more support to states for CCSS implementation, **and build strategic national and statewide alliances by engaging directly with key stakeholders** Amount: \$9,297,699 [Emphasis added.]
CCSS is not "state led." It is "Gates led."

How foolish it is to believe that the man with the checkbook is not calling the CCSS shots.

The "nonprofit" Student Achievement Partners, founded by CCSS "architect" David Coleman, also benefits handsomely via Gates. All that Student Achievement Partners does is CCSS, and for that, in June 2012, Gates granted Coleman's company \$6.5 million.

In total, the four organizations primarily responsible for CCSS- NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, and Student Achievement Partners- have taken \$147.9 million from Bill Gates.

Common Core Gates Standards.

Let us now consider major education organizations and think tanks that have accepted Gates money **for the express purpose of advancing CCSS:**

American Enterprise Institute: \$1,068,788.

American Federation of Teachers: \$5,400,000.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: \$3,269,428.

Council of Great City Schools: \$5,010,988.

Education Trust: \$2,039,526.

National Congress of Parents and Teachers: \$499,962.

National Education Association: \$3,982,597.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute: \$1,961,116. (For most of the organizations above, Gates has funded other reform-related efforts, including those related to charter schools, small schools, teacher evaluation, and data systems. My comprehensive listing of Gates grants for the organizations above [and then some] can be found here: [Gates Foundation Grants to Select Education and Policy Groups](#))

From the list of organizations above, I would like to highlight a few particular Gates purchases. First is this one, paid to the Fordham Institute:

Date: January 2011 Purpose: **to track state progress towards implementation of standards and to understand how**

what students read changes in response to the standards Amount: \$1,002,000 [Purpose emphasis added.]
Even though CCSS was never piloted, Gates and Fordham want to watch state "progress" in implementing CCSS, and they even want to know how the untested CCSS shifts the curriculum -- even though reformers are quick to parrot that CCSS is "not a curriculum." This "tracking" tacitly acknowledges CCSS is meant to drive curriculum.
Next is this Gates purchase of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI):

Date: June 2012 Purpose: **to support their education policy work** in four distinct areas: Exploring the Challenges of Common Core, Future of American Education Working Groups, Innovations in Financial Aid, and Bridging K-12 and Higher Ed with Technology Amount: \$1,068,788 [Purpose emphasis added.]
Gates is paying AEI to promote educational policy that bolsters CCSS. And Gates is getting his money's worth from AEI "scholar" Frederick Hess, who offers these two articles advising "Common Core'ites."
Third is the Gates purchase of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT):

Date: June 2012 Purpose: to support the AFT Innovation Fund **and work on teacher development and Common Core State Standards** [Purpose emphasis added.] Amount: \$4,400,000
Even though AFT was not invited to the CCSS table until the "standards" had already been drafted by the CCSS Inner Circle noted above, and even though CCSS has not been piloted, AFT only called for a testing moratorium and not for a cease-and-desist of CCSS altogether. It appears that accepting \$4.4 million in order to "work on teacher development and Common Core Standards" precludes "just saying no" to what amounts to the CCSS Colossal Education Experiment.
Fourth is the Gates purchase of the National Education Association (NEA). In July 2013, NEA officially endorsed CCSS, and in July 2013, Gates paid NEA for its support in the form of two grants totaling \$6.3 million:

Date: July 2013 Purpose: to support the capacity of state NEA affiliates to advance teaching and learning issues and student success in collaboration with local affiliates Amount: \$2,426,500

Date: July 2013
Purpose: to support a cohort of National Education Association Master Teachers **in the development of Common Core-aligned lessons in K-5 mathematics and K-12 English Language Arts** Amount: \$3,882,600 [Purpose emphasis added.]

NEA was not at the CCSS birthing table with NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, and David Coleman's Student Achievement Partners. However, after the establishment of CCSS without teachers, now Gates is willing to pay a teachers union to create curricula that in the end do not really matter since the CCSS power is in the assessments that are completely out of NEA's control.

I have saved my favorite CCSS-Gates purchase for last, this one to the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS):

Date: June 2011 Purpose: **to promote and coordinate successful implementation of the new common core standards in major urban public school systems nationwide** Amount: \$4,910,988

Date: March 2010
Purpose: to support the **development of a cross-sector proposal to pilot test the new common core standards in a set of selected cities**
Amount: \$100,000 [Purpose emphasis added.]

It seems that Gates paid CGCS \$100,000 to propose a pilot study of CCSS in 2010 (not to conduct a pilot study- just to draft the idea for a pilot). Fifteen months later, there is no mention of a "proposal" much less a pilot study materializing; instead, Gates pays CGCS to "just go ahead" and "coordinate successful implementation" of the untested CCSS.

So much Gates cash, and so many hands willing to accept it.

Bill Gates likes Common Core. So, he is purchasing it. In doing so, Gates demonstrates (sadly so) that when one has enough money, one can purchase fundamentally democratic institutions.

I do not have billions to counter Gates. What I do have is this blog and the ability to expose the purchase.

I might be without cash, but I am not without power.

Can Bill Gates buy a foundational democratic institution? Will America allow it? The fate of CCSS will provide crucial answers to those looming questions.

Originally posted 08-27-13 at deutsch29.wordpress.com

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Privacy concerns grow over Gates-funded student database

By Valerie Strauss, Updated: June 9 at 11:22 am

Privacy concerns are growing among parents, educators and some state officials about a Gates Foundation-funded [project](#) that is storing an unprecedented amount of personal information about millions of students in a \$100 million database that cannot guarantee complete security.

As a result of the concerns, some states that had initially signed up to participate in a pilot program with the database — operated by a new nonprofit called inBloom, Inc., — are pulling back, including Louisiana. Others states originally listed on the inBloom Web site as project partners told Reuters they hadn't fully committed, and one, Georgia, asked to be [removed from the site](#). By Reuters' reckoning, of the nine states originally listed as participating, only three are actively involved — New York, Illinois and Colorado. In New York, parents and educators are protesting the state's involvement, and there has been legislation introduced in the to pull back.

The database, funded largely with money from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was launched in March at the SXSWedu conference in Texas.

Supporters say that states already collect the information and that collecting it one place makes it easier for teachers to "plumb" data about their students and target software to improve their academic performance. Parents, they say, could see what schools have collected about their children. They say that it is not a national database but a "a secure data service to help school districts manage the information needed for learning, and to support local educational goals." The inBloom Web site says that the data cannot be shared with any outside parties without permission from the participating state or school district.

Opponents say that the amount of information is unprecedented — including, for example, learning disabilities, health records, teacher assessments of a student's character — and that having it in a single place makes it easier to exploit. Parents, they say, were never asked for permission by districts or states to share their child's data, and inBloom doesn't guarantee total security of the information. The nonprofit Electronic Privacy

Information Center has sued the U.S. Education Department over the database, calling it a serious threat to student privacy. (You can read about the [lawsuit here](#), and a response from [inBloom here](#). ✓

On the issue of security, the inBloom [Web site says](#):

We understand how important every child's privacy is, and that's why data security is such a high priority for inBloom. We worked with our pilot states and districts and a panel of student privacy and security experts to create the policy that governs our handling of sensitive data. While in this day and age no security protections can be 100% guaranteed, inBloom has greatly improved student data protection beyond the measures currently used by most school systems. We are meeting the highest industry standards and are exceeding federal requirements.

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten recently [released this statement](#) about the issue, noting that the organization has sent letters to inBloom funders seeking "clarification" of many of these concerns.

Any potential inBloom has to improve and personalize learning is being overshadowed by a growing lack of public trust in its early communications and operations, and genuine concerns about the security, privacy, sharing and exploitation of data. The AFT raised many of these issues originally, and we, along with parents and teachers, continue to have many concerns about the privacy and security of student and teacher data. We have sent a letter to the funders of inBloom seeking clarification.

These privacy and security concerns go well beyond inBloom. With a growing marketplace emerging for data collection, storage, analysis and monetization—both for good and for ill—we must be more vigilant than ever about the privacy and security rights of students, teachers and the American people. The rights and responsibilities of parents, students, teachers and school officials in protecting sensitive data, and in determining how others can use that data, must be transparent and well-regulated, and city, state and federal officials have key roles to play."

Louisiana Education Superintendent John White recently pulled back on the state's involvement with the database after parents raised concerns about the amount and type of information being collected, according to [this story in the News Star](#).

One of the concerns of parents in Louisiana and other states is the use of student Social Security numbers to label files in the database. This is now being changed, with randomized numbers being assigned to each student file, although, the Reuters story by Stephanie Simon reported that "inBloom spokesman Adam Gaber refused to say whether Social Security numbers might be included elsewhere – not as a label but as a basic data point, along with ethnicity, address, parents' names and other personal information routinely collected by public schools."

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WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Terry C. Anderson, Director
Laura D. Rose, Deputy Director

TO: REPRESENTATIVE DEAN KNUDSON

FROM: Anne Sappenfield, Senior Staff Attorney

RE: Use of Blood Pressure Cuffs, Pressure Sensors, and Posture Chairs Under the Common Core State Standards

DATE: October 16, 2013

You have asked whether the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) require or authorize schools to use blood pressure cuffs, pressure sensors, or posture chairs as part of instruction or assessment of pupils or to collect student data. You have also asked if any schools in Wisconsin have implemented such practices and whether such practices would raise legal concerns. The CCSS does not require or authorize the use of blood pressure cuffs, pressure sensors, or posture chairs as part of instruction or assessment of pupils or to collect student data. I am not aware of any Wisconsin schools using such practices as part of instruction or assessment or to collect student data.

BACKGROUND ON THE CCSS

The CCSS set benchmarks for student knowledge and skills for each grade level from Kindergarten through 12th grade. They do not set forth how the standards are met or the way students are assessed to determine if they have met the benchmarks. As an example, one of the 6th grade English language arts standards is to write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. As part of this standard, a student is expected to:

- Introduce claims and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
- Support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claims and reasons.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.

- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.

One of the 6th grade CCSS for mathematics is as follows:

Find the area of right triangles, other triangles, special quadrilaterals, and polygons by composing into rectangles or decomposing into triangles and other shapes; apply these techniques in the context of solving real-world and mathematical problems.

DISCUSSION

School districts are not specifically authorized to use blood pressure cuffs or posture chairs unless indicated by a medical or therapeutic need. For a child with a disability, use of such practices would be set forth in the student's individualized education program. [s. 115.787, Stats.] In addition, there is no specific authorization to use pressure sensors. However, there is no specific prohibition on these practices.

If a school board were to implement such a practice, there are some legal considerations.

First, certain of these practices may involve physical restraint of a student. Under current law, a student may be physically restrained only if all of the following conditions are met:

- The pupil's behavior presents a clear, present, and imminent risk to the physical safety of the pupil or others and it is the least restrictive intervention feasible.
- There are no medical contraindications to its use.
- The degree of force used and the duration of the physical restraint do not exceed the degree and duration that are reasonable and necessary to resolve the clear, present, and imminent risk to the physical safety of the pupil or others.
- None of the following maneuvers or techniques are used:
 - Those that do not give adequate attention and care to protecting the pupil's head.
 - Those that cause chest compression by placing pressure or weight on the pupil's chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, or abdomen.
 - Those that place pressure or weight on the pupil's neck or throat, on an artery, or on the back of the pupil's head or neck, or that otherwise obstruct the pupil's circulation or breathing.
- It does not constitute corporal punishment, as defined under current law.

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- The school employee does not use a mechanical or chemical restraint on the pupil. The statute specifies that the use of supportive equipment to properly align a pupil's body, assist a pupil to maintain balance, or assist a pupil's mobility, under the direction and oversight of appropriate medical or therapeutic staff, does not constitute the use of a mechanical restraint.

[s. 118.305 (3), Stats.]

Second, a school district would have to carefully consider the disclosure of any data collected from monitoring blood pressure or other vital signs. Under state and federal laws, student information is confidential and may be disclosed only as permitted under those laws. [s. 118.125, Stats., and 34 C.F.R. Part 99.] If a health care professional is involved in any of these practices, any records would also be considered confidential health care records. [s. 146.82, Stats.]

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at the Legislative Council staff offices.

AS:ksm



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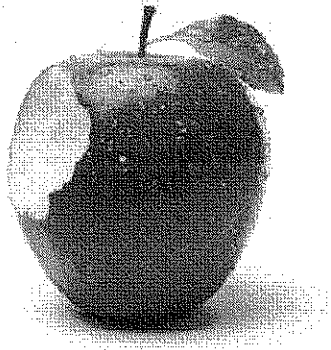
Core Question: Does Copyright Mean States Can't Change The Common Core?

AUGUST 19, 2013 | 1:26 PM

BY ELLE MOXLEY

StateImpact is answering reader-submitted questions about the Common Core, a new set of expectations for what students should know and be able to do in math and English at each grade level. Indiana is one of 45 states that have fully adopted the Common Core.

Today, we're answering a question that came up in testimony during last week's statehouse hearings on the new academic standards:



The National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers hold the copyright on the Common Core State Standards. Does that mean states can't change the Common Core?

What questions do you have about the Common Core, the nationally-crafted academic standards adopted by Indiana and 44 other states?

Indiana teachers have been using the new standards since the State Board of Education voted to adopt Common Core in 2010. But lawmakers voted this spring to pause rollout until a legislative panel can study the Common Core and make a recommendation on standards. That's giving both proponents and opponents of the Common Core a chance to make their case for which academic standards the state should adopt next.

THE SHORT ANSWER

In a word, yes — states can make changes to the Common Core. That's according to a spokesman for Achieve, the education non-profit that helped develop the Common Core.

"States can do whatever they want and always have been able to," writes Chad Colby in an email to StateImpact. "There is no limit to what changes, additions or subtractions a state wants to make."

Colby says as a rule of thumb, states are encouraged to add no more than 15 percent to the standards. Otherwise, he says it would negate the "commonness" of the standards.

As for the copyright, the Common Core State Standards are held under a public license that gives states who fully adopt the standards broad permission to use and

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reprint them. Colby says the main reason for copyrighting the standards was to protect the rights of the states who developed them. He says it also helps protects against charges that the federal government had a hand in writing the Common Core.

"The copyright proves that the federal government does not own nor control the standards," writes Colby.

THE LONG ANSWER

But critics of the Common Core say the copyright limits the changes Indiana policymakers might make to change or improve the standards.

Indianapolis parent Erin Tuttle is co-founder of the group Hoosiers Against the Common Core. She helped lead the statehouse push to require a more formal review of the standards. She says the chief problem with nationally-crafted academic standards is that **Indiana can't change them.**

"You cannot change one word of the Common Core standards," says Tuttle. "You can only add 15 percent. That is different than in the past, where if a standard was problematic, we could change it. Now we can't do that. Our standards are adopted verbatim. They are copyrighted. There are licensing and uses requirements as part of that adoption."

Colby says that's not quite right — states can make subtractions and changes. But they do so at their own peril, as common assessments being developed by **two national consortia** test the Common Core as it's written.

What's more likely is states could change *when* a standard is taught. For example, a third grader that had already mastered all of the Common Core's grade-level expectations could begin learning fourth grade content.

In other words, shifting standards a grade earlier presents no problems, says Colby. However, delaying the teaching of a standard to a later grade could hurt the student's progression towards college- and career-readiness.

That's why most states have only added to the Common Core. According to a **2012 Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning report**, states can make changes only after the standards are adopted verbatim. McREL counted 11 states that took advantage of the 15 percent rule. Indiana wasn't one of them.

Proponents of the Common Core often cite Massachusetts as an example as Indiana debates which standards to adopt next. Both states were known for their **historically high academic standards**, but when Massachusetts adopted the Common Core, state education officials added 13 standards for K-8 students and nine standards for high school students.

But there's at least one reason why states might not want to adopt additional standards in math or English language arts, says Colby.

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"Remember, one of the reasons the states developed the Common Core was that many old sets of standards had too many standards for teachers and students to cover in a year," says Colby. "The argument is that adding more would get you right back to the problem the states were trying to correct."

Still, he says there's nothing stopping states from making additional changes or modifications: No one is enforcing the 15 percent rule.

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