



Who's Behind the Common Core Curriculum?

Like so many education reform initiatives that seem to arise out of nowhere, the Common Core State Standards is another of these sweeping phantom movements that have gotten their impetus from a cadre of invisible human beings endowed with inordinate power to impose their ideas on everybody.

For example, the idea of collecting intimate personal data on public school students and teachers seems to have arisen spontaneously in the bowels of the National Center for Education Statistics in Washington. It required a small army of education psychologists to put together the data handbooks, which are periodically expanded to include more personal information.

Nobody knows who exactly authorized the creation of such a dossier on every student and teacher in American public schools, but the program exists and is being paid for by the taxpayer. And strange as it may seem, it arose seemingly out of nowhere, like a vampire, to suck the freedom out of the American people. Unlike Santa's elves who work behind the scenes to bring happiness to children, these subterranean phantoms work overtime to find ways of making American children miserable.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is another such vampire calculated not only to suck the freedom out of the American people, but also to suck out the brains of their children. And all of this is planned in the dark, away from the prying eyes of parents and writers like me. Ask any educator: "Who is the author of the Common Core Standards?" and they will not be able to tell you.

So I decided to look into the origin of the CCSS. It is said that it originated with the National Governors Association (NGA). When and where? At what meeting? At whose behest? The NGA's Mission Statement says on its website:

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

Sounds wonderful. But why do we need it? Why are we re-inventing the wheel? Didn't our public schools provide a decent education for the "greatest generation" when they were in school? That generation not only learned enough to win World War II but also enough to create the scientific foundation of our high-tech society. The only reason why we need the CCSS is because all of these graduate educationists need something to do to justify their degrees and the salaries that go with them. And of course the new curriculum will cost billions of dollars which will enable these vampires to live in the style to which they've become accustomed. By the way, if you object to my referring to these people as vampires, feel free to use your own designations.

The CCSS adds nothing to what we know about how to teach reading. It adds nothing to how we teach arithmetic and mathematics. It adds nothing to how we teach history, geography, and the "social studies." In short, it is a fraud to get the American taxpayer to shell out big bucks for something that we already know how to do. Yes, science has greatly expanded, but it also expanded from 1850 to 1950 and didn't require a different methodology from the scientific method developed by the great scientists of the past. We may have better equipment which students of science must learn to operate, but the scientific method has not changed.



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And of course, the CCSS were made to be as complicated as possible so that no parent or normal human being could understand them. For example, there is something called “Common Core State Standards Official Identifiers and XML Representation.” It states:

As states, territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity move from widespread adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to implementation, there is a need to appropriately identify and link assets using a shared system of identifiers and a common XML representation. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), working closely with the standards authors, have released an official, viable approach for publishing identifiers and XML designation to represent the standards, consistent with their adopted format, as outlined below.

So now we know that there is such a body as “the standards authors,” who work closely with such bureaucratic organizations as the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. And to make sure that the Standards are being correctly implemented, we read the following in typical vampire language:

De-referenceable Uniform Resource Identifier (URIs) at the corestandards.org domain, e.g. <http://corestandards.org/2010/math/content/6/EE/1> or <http://corestandards.org/2010/math/practice/MP7>. Matching the published identifiers, these dereferenceable URIs allow individuals and technology systems to validate the content of a standard by viewing the web page at the identifier’s uniform resource locator (URL). The NGA Center and CCSSO strongly recommend that www.corestandards.org remain the address of record for referring to standards.

What kind of human beings not only write such gobbledegook but also know what it means? And these educationists are among the well-paid elite who know how to make everything so complicated that only they are capable of understanding their own complexity. Here’s more:

Globally unique identifiers (GUIDs), e.g. A7D3275BC52147618D6CFEE43FB1A47E. These allow, when needed, to refer to standards in both disciplines in a common format without removing the differences in the published identifiers. GUIDs are unwieldy for human use, but they are necessarily complex to guarantee uniqueness, an important characteristic for databases, and are intended for use by computer systems. There is no need for educators to decode GUIDs.

Did you read that line, “GUIDS are unwieldy for human use, but they are necessarily complex to guarantee uniqueness”? These people are masters at creating complexity for its own sake. The more complex, the more difficult it is for normal human beings to know what in blazes they are talking about.

What is the National Governors Association for Best Practices? Here is what their website says:

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) develops innovative solutions to today’s most pressing public policy challenges and is the only research and development firm that directly serves the nation’s governors....

The mission of NGA Office of Federal Relations is to ensure governors’ views are represented in the shaping of federal policy. Policy positions, reflecting governors’ principles on priority issues, guide the association’s work to influence federal laws and regulations.

The initiative for the Common Core State Standards seems to have arisen from a speech NGA Chairman Governor Paul Patton, Democrat, of Kentucky gave at the NGA meeting on June 12, 2002, in which he



said:

Governors are constantly searching for solutions that will help all schools succeed, but some schools require more help than others. The long-term goal for states is to improve overall system performance while closing persistent gaps in achievement between minority and non-minority students. Fortunately, there are places to look for guidance. Although some schools continue to struggle, some have responded successfully to state reform efforts and others have gone far in improving student performance and closing the achievement gap. Current research also suggests there are ways state policies can effectively stimulate and support school improvement.

How that was translated into the need for Common Core State Standards, is not very clear. The Executive Director of the NGA is Dan Crippen, a Washington policy bureaucrat who was director of the Congressional Budget Office from 1999 to 2002. The Director of the NGA Center for Best Practices is David Moore, formerly of the Congressional Budget Office. The Director of the Education Division is Richard Laine. His profile states:

Laine directs research, policy analysis, technical assistance and resource development for the Education Division in the areas of early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary education. The Education Division is working on a number of key policy issues relevant to governors' efforts to develop and support the implementation of policy, including: birth to 3rd grade access, readiness and quality; the Common Core State Standards, STEM and related assessments; teacher and leader effectiveness; turning around low-performing schools; high school redesign; competency-based learning; charter schools; and postsecondary (higher education & workforce training) access, success & affordability. The Division is also working on policy issues related to bridging the system divides between the early childhood, K-12 and postsecondary systems.

Well now we know who's in charge of the Common Core State Standards. What is Mr. Laine's background?

Previous Positions: Director of Education, The Wallace Foundation; Director of Education Policy and Initiatives, Illinois Business Roundtable; Associate Superintendent for Policy, Planning and Resource Management, Illinois State Board of Education; Executive Director, Coalition for Educational Rights; Executive Secretary, Committee for Educational Rights; School Finance Analyst, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance; Associate Director, California Democratic Congressional Delegation.

Education: M.P.P., M.B.A. and Certificate of Advanced Study in Education Administration and Public Policy, University of Chicago; B.A., University of California — Santa Barbara.

Obviously, Mr. Laine is one of those invisible bureaucrats who create policies for the governors, few of whom ever read them. He was Associate Director of California's Democratic Congressional Delegation, which includes some of the worst left-wing members of Congress. He's also in charge of "birth to 3rd grade access," which the National Education Association strongly favors. Among Mr. Laine's staff is Albert Wat, whose expertise is Early Childhood Education. His profile states:

Wat provides state policymakers with analyses and information on promising practices and the latest research in early childhood education policy, from birth through third grade. His work focuses on preschool education systems and alignment of early childhood and early elementary practices and policies, including standards, assessments and data systems.

Previous Positions: Research Manager, Senior Research Associate and State Policy Analyst, The



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Pew Charitable Trusts, Pew Center on the States, Pre-K Now.

Education: Master of Arts in Education Policy Studies, The George Washington University; Nonprofit Management Executive Certificate, Georgetown University; Master of Arts in Education, with focus in Social Sciences in Education and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, with Distinction, Stanford University.

Like so many Washington policy wonks, Mr. Wat has to justify his bureaucratic position by thinking up new ways to create costly education reform that no freedom-loving citizen wants. Note his and Mr. Laine's interest in "birth to 3rd grade" education, an area traditionally left up to parents. But then the totalitarian mind wants control over everything and everybody.

In other words, the Common Core State Standards have no more legitimacy than the plans of your local village idiot to reform education. They are the thought emanations of those who have nothing better to do. Yet, they will cost the American taxpayer billions of dollars and make American public education more confusing than ever.



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