



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on May 9, 2014

Chicago Teachers Union Joins War on Common Core

Blasting the [Obama administration-pushed national education standards](#) as “deeply flawed,” the powerful Chicago Teachers Union this week became the [latest heavyweight organization](#) to join the [bipartisan war](#) on [Common Core](#). In its [resolution against the controversial nationalization of K-12 schooling](#), adopted on May 7, the union noted that children and education were being harmed by the “overreaching” federal meddling. As such, the CTU vowed to lobby state officials until the use of Common Core is entirely “eliminated” across the state of Illinois. Labor leaders say other unions may be on the verge of doing the same.



In a statement posted on its website, the Chicago union, which represents some 30,000 teachers and educators in Obama’s home base, said the federally funded Common Core testing regime disrupts student learning. Preparing for the assessments and administering them also consumes “tremendous amounts of time and resources,” the group said. In response, the union vowed to “work to organize other members and affiliates to increase opposition to the law that increases the expansion of nationwide controls over educational issues.”

Echoing concerns from teachers and parents from across America and the [entire political spectrum](#), CTU President Karen Lewis also lambasted the administration’s meddling in state and local education issues. “I agree with educators and parents from across the country, the Common Core mandate represents an overreach of federal power into personal privacy as well as into state educational autonomy,” said Lewis, who is also a nationally board certified teacher. The criticism is especially devastating coming from Chicago, where a former top-level Obama official now dominates the city.

Like countless experts across America who have examined the standards — [including those selected to serve on Common Core’s own Validation Committee](#) — the CTU chief said education was suffering as a result of the plot. “Common Core eliminates creativity in the classroom and impedes collaboration,” she explained. “We also know that high-stakes standardized testing is designed to rank and sort our children and it contributes significantly to racial discrimination and the achievement gap among students in America’s schools.”

Another one of the oft-cited complaints surrounding Common Core is the way in which states were bribed using “stimulus” funds into accepting the standards before the public even knew what was going on. Also key in imposing the national education regime were waivers from the disastrous Bush-era “No Child Left Behind” schemes, another deeply controversial intrusion into state and local affairs that is not authorized by the Constitution. Like state lawmakers, parents, and teachers all across the nation, CTU pointed to both of those federal “incentives” in its statement blasting Common Core.

“Common Core’s origins can be traced to the 2009 Stimulus Bill which gave \$4.35 billion to the federal



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Department of Education which created the ‘Race to the Top’ competition between states,” CTU said on its website. “In order to qualify for funding, the states needed to adopt Common Core with the added incentive that participating states would be exempted from many of the more onerous provisions of George Bush’s ‘No child left behind’ program.”

In the resolution, approved by the union’s “House of Delegates,” CTU said the “purpose of education is to educate a populace of critical thinkers who are capable of shaping a just and equitable society in order to lead good and purpose-filled lives, not solely preparation for college and career.” While conservatives may disagree with the notion that education is supposed to train students to create an “equitable” society, the so-called “college- and career-ready” talking points have come under attack from all across the political spectrum.

Several prominent critics of Common Core have even argued that using one set of standards to prepare children for both college and career makes no sense in the first place. After all, preparing for higher education would seem to encompass a different set of skills and knowledge than what would be needed to go straight into the work force. In both cases, though, Americans are largely united in their belief that education should produce critical thinking skills — something that more than a few education experts who have reviewed the national standards say Common Core will not accomplish.

CTU also blasted the standards themselves, saying they “were developed by non-practitioners, such as test and curriculum publishers, as well as education reform foundations, such as the Gates and Broad Foundations.” As a result, “the CCSS better reflect the interests and priorities of corporate education reformers than the best interests and priorities of teachers and students.” The measure also said Common Core standards were “piloted incorrectly,” have been “implemented too quickly,” and as a result, “have produced numerous developmentally inappropriate expectations that do not reflect the learning needs of many students.”

Especially impacted adversely by Common Core, the union said in its resolution, are “students of highest need” — “students of color, impoverished students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.” The teachers also blasted Common Core’s emphasis on improper “pedagogical techniques” that they said distort instruction and remove instructional materials from their “social context.” Despite the union’s efforts to support teachers, it said, the significant time, effort, and expense associated with aligning curricula to the Common Core standards is also taking away resources from proper education.

Like parents nationwide who have started refusing to allow their children to take Common Core assessments, CTU also blasted the secrecy surrounding the federally funded testing regime, and the fact that “teachers and parents are not allowed to view the tests.” In New York State, one of the furthest along in implementing the scheme, children complained that the national tests were packed with what more than a few parents and critics believe were paid advertisements by mega-corporations — sparking yet another Common Core-related scandal last month.

In light of all the issues raised in the resolution, the Chicago union resolved to oppose the Common Core and the testing regime aligned with the standards as a framework for teaching and learning. Instead, CTU said it will advocate for a curriculum that is “student-based” and “supported by research.” Going forward, the union will be involved in discussions to educate its members and seek feedback from them on the impact of Common Core on students, the resolution said.

Finally, CTU announced that it plans to “lobby the Illinois Board of Education to eliminate the use of the



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Common Core State Standards for teaching and assessment.” It will also organize others to help increase opposition to Common Core, the resolution explained. The state education board, the Chicago Board of Education, the governor of Illinois, and state lawmakers will all receive copies of the resolution. It will also be submitted to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) for consideration at its convention later this year.

Already, though, state officials are digging in their heels. “These are really standards that not only ensure that students understand the concepts but can apply them to everyday life and to their careers and in the workforce,” claimed Illinois Board of Education spokeswoman Mary Fergus in response to the teacher revolt. “The state board remains committed to the implementation of these standards in Illinois.” Once the union starts throwing its money around, however, analysts say that could change quickly.

The AFT, which recently started rejecting more Common Core-linked funding from billionaire population-control zealot Bill Gates, is also coming under increasing pressure to come out against the controversial standards. Last week, the union’s chief, Randi Weingarten, even [warned in an interview](#) with the online Salon outlet that Common Core “may actually fail” due to the public backlash and an implementation that has been even more botched than the ObamaCare healthcare takeover. Critics have even started blasting Common Core as “ObamaCore” to emphasize the disastrous nature of the scheme.

The major announcement by Chicago’s educators follows similar developments in New York, where the board of the massive state teachers’ union [voted unanimously against the implementation of Common Core](#). The late January decision by the 600,000-strong coalition of educators dealt a major blow to proponents of the Obama-backed national education regime. New York State Assemblyman Al Graf, a member of the Assembly Education Committee with a degree in education, [said Common Core was tantamount to “state-sponsored child abuse.”](#)

Ironically, the same day CTU voted against the standards, a fringe leftist group with ties to various government agencies [tried to demonize much of the opposition to the nationalization of education as some sort of vast right-wing conspiracy against public schools](#). In reality, the criticism is coming from [virtually every point on the political spectrum](#). Analysts, though, say the [uprising against Common Core is only just beginning](#) as parents slowly start to understand what has happened. Expect the revolt to spread quickly in the coming months.

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