Forty-five states, four territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity adopted the Common Core State Standards after their release on June 2, 2010. Minnesota only adopted the English language arts standards. Indiana, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia have refused to adopt the Common Core altogether.

As the pedagogical weakness and ballooning implementation cost of the standards become evident, many adopting states are scrambling to delay or defund implementation. Already, the Common Core was consulted as a curriculum authority in the formulation of the National Sexuality Education Standards and a New York high school teacher tasked her students with persuading her in five paragraphs or less that Jews are evil and that she should be loyal to the Third Reich.¹

[Equally disconcerting is the fact that] it is almost impossible for states to implement the Common Core without agreeing to help build one of the biggest and most detailed data systems in American history. However, it is not too late to change course. With your involvement [and prayer], student information [and the integrity of our education system] can be protected.
WHO OPPOSES THE COMMON CORE & WHY?

MIKE SMITH is president of Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), an advocacy organization defending and advancing the constitutional right of parents to direct the education of their children and to protect family freedoms. He has served as president of the organization since 2001. In addition to the overview of the Common Core standards on page 1 and 8, as well as a sampling of key opponents (provided below), HSLDA offers an excellent critique of the Common Core and an extensive FAQs section (see footnotes on page 9).

Common Objections

Education professionals, policy analysts, and government officials center their critiques of the Common Core on four points:

• The standards are pedagogically nonsensical and academically deficient.
• The standards will not fix the broken education system.
• The method of implementing the standards is flawed and expensive.
• The federal government has overstepped its bounds.

Five members of the Common Core Validation Committee oppose the Common Core. Three of these members have collaborated to write two studies that condemn the academic merit of the standards (pictured above, left to right): R. JAMES MILGRAM, Professor Emeritus at Stanford; SANDRA STOTSKY, Professor at University of Arkansas; and ZE’EV WURMAN, Department of Education official under G.W. Bush.

GROVER WHITEHURST (pictured right), a Brookings Institute policy analyst, observes that high academic standards and high student achievement are not connected. TOM LOVELESS (not pictured) of the Brookings Institute further notes that low national achievement levels result from varied performance levels within individual states, not among different states. But the Common Core will do nothing to remedy this problem, because it maintains the status quo of statewide standards and does nothing to assist struggling school districts.

RANDI WEINGARTEN, president of the American Federation of Teachers, the second-largest teachers’ union in America, argues that the Common Core will only be destructive, since the government has done nothing to prepare teachers to successfully utilize the standards.

DIANE RAVITCH, a liberal education historian who has pushed for national standards for years, summarizes, “The Common Core standards effort is fundamentally flawed by the process with which they have been foisted upon the nation….Their creation was neither grassroots nor did it emanate from the states.”
The battle is real and we as the Body of Christ will only stand firm in this siege on our educational system in proportion to our courage to seek truth and fight for it. Intercede for the following names and organizations, all of them inspired by a belief in the new standards’ superiority to current state standards, the ease of moving from state to state made possible by the standards, and the benefits of standardized curricula and assessments. Some of these leaders are influenced directly or indirectly by the principles of the United Nations. Pray John 15:5 (“... apart from Me you can do nothing”) over this collision of worldviews, asking our Father in heaven for leaders who will work to safeguard American freedoms.

The Common Core is copyrighted by the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices (NGA), now chaired by Colorado Governor JOHN HICKENLOOPER (pictured right) and The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), which some conservatives warn is an illegal federation of states. CHRIS MINNICH (pictured left) serves as the Executive Director for the CCSSO. These two organizations partnered in June 2009 to begin writing the Common Core.

The organization, Achieve, evaluated and promoted the Common Core standards after they were drafted by the NGA and the CCSSO. Achieve is an organization founded in 1996 by a group of governors and corporate leaders to work for standards-based education reform across the states. MICHAEL COHEN (pictured right) became president of Achieve in 2003. He has held several key roles in education during the past 20+ years, including Director of Education Policy at the NGA (1985-90).

ALLAN GOLSTON is the president of the U.S. Program under the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a nonprofit that has provided millions of dollars in funding since 2007 to help develop and advance Common Core State Standards and student data systems. The U.S. Program intends to “play a catalytic role” in the development of innovative solutions in education that can “trigger change on a broader scale.” See the Washington Post’s article “How Bill Gates Pulled Off the Swift Common Core Revolution” for more about the Foundation.
Rewind to 1989....

GEORGE H.W. BUSH and his future presidential opponent, Governor BILL CLINTON, both played a role in preparing the soil for the Common Core via a meeting that convened in Charlottesville, VA, in 1989. At this historic summit, attended by 49 of the nation’s governors, a reform agenda took shape in the national education goals jointly adopted by the National Governor’s Association led by Governor Clinton and signed by President Bush a year later. Congress later included these goals in legislation, and President Bill Clinton signed them into law in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act of March 1994.

The contemporary term “National Curriculum Standards” is a carryover from Goals 2000 and is “joined at the hip,” as some researchers say, with Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development principles—leaking into history standards, economics, civics, and government, etc. According to these standards, the new purpose of education is to totally transform society and to groom young people to become global citizens.

JILL BIDEN met with former United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Director-General Koichiro Matsuura and delivered a keynote address on July 5, 2009, in which she reiterated a commitment to the U.N. in promoting sustainable development within our education system(s). Prior to that, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who was not present at the UNESCO meeting on Sustainable Development on March 21, 2009, had sent words of unreserved support on behalf of the president. During her keynote speech in 2009, Second Lady of the U.S. (a leading American educator) reiterated Duncan’s and Obama’s support for UNESCO’s goals.

Sustainable Development Defined

What exactly is sustainable development, and what are the goals Biden claims we, the American people, support? According to the The Brundtland Report of 1987, titled “Our Common Future,” it is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It is more radical than just good stewardship (which is harmless enough), because it involves aggressive transformation of community and society, including:

“Can teachers successfully educate children to think for themselves if teachers are not treated as professionals who think for themselves?”

~Diane Ravitch
•International interdependence •Enforced community control •Redistribution (i.e., less material and more equitable growth) •Ensuring a sustainable level of population •Merging environment and economics in decision-making •A new ethic that will worship (more or less) the relationship between man and nature

ARNE DUNCAN is the U.S. Secretary of Education, and has worked in the U.S. Department of Education, since January 2009. Prior to that, he worked as CEO for Chicago Public Schools from January 2001 - December 2008. Duncan states on his Facebook page that he believes “education is THE civil rights issue of our generation, the only sure pathway out of poverty, and the only way to achieve a more equal and just society.”

The U.S. Department of Education has developed a Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan as of June 30, 2011, which bears striking language similarities to the United Nations global action plan called Agenda 21. Duncan makes it no secret that transforming education in America is “our generation’s moon shot.” His goal is to equip the next generations to be environmentally literate citizens, responsible energy consumers, and successful leaders in the new green economy. Success, according to Duncan, will occur when children assume their responsibilities as global citizens.

With these goals in mind, it is important to understand the position of UNESCO’s three leaders whose positions may influence U.S. policy and principles regarding “Sustainable Development.”

IRINA BOKOVA, a native of Bulgaria, has been the Director-General of UNESCO since November 2009, and is now in her second term as of 2013. She is a proponent of Holocaust remembrance and awareness and is the first Director-General of the Organization to appoint a Special Envoy for Holocaust Education. Bokova says Gender Equality is her personal priority for UNESCO. Now a Socialist and formerly a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Bokova graduated from Moscow State Institute of International Relations, and studied at the University of Maryland (Washington, D.C.) and the John F. Kennedy School of Government (Harvard University). She has two grown children who live and work in the United States.

ALEXANDER LEICHT is Chief of the Section of Education for Sustainable Development at UNESCO. Before joining UNESCO, he was Head of the German Secretariat for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development at the German Commission for UNESCO in Bonn for almost seven years. He holds a PhD in North American Studies from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom. According to Leicht, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) means providing everyone with the opportunity to acquire the values, skills, and knowledge that enable them to contribute to sustainable development. He says, “It is important to work with policy-makers and show them the potential of ESD to reorient curricula and make them more relevant. All over the world, education administrators need to be reorienting their institutions entirely.” Further, he says, “The challenge is ... to make kids understand the value of what is being lost if climate change continues.”
William D. Ruckelshaus served as the first Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administrator, from December 1970 to April 1973 and returned for a second term as the EPA’s fifth administrator. He is currently Chairman Emeritus of the World Resources Institute and Strategic Director of Madrona Venture Group. In 1987, the U.S. participated on the World Commission on Sustainable Development after which Ruckelshaus helped produce a document in 1994 called the Education for Sustainability Agenda for Action. The Agenda states: “Today, educators face a compelling responsibility to serve society by fostering the transformations needed to set us on the path to sustainable development. The time has come to ensure that the concepts of education for sustainability—in the broadest sense—are discussed and woven into a framework upon which current and future educational policy is based.”

Step-by-Step Transformation (Chronology):

Goals 2000, 1994 (Bill Clinton)
No Child Left Behind, 2001 (George W. Bush)
Race to the Top, 2009 (Barack Obama)
Common Core, 2010 (Barack Obama)

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed by President Johnson in 1965 and reauthorized every four years, placing the federal government front and center in ensuring that assessments and federally mandated school improvement remedies are a feature of every state’s accountability system. The push to align with and conform to other state standards, not to mention international standards in keeping with Sustainable Development and the U.N.’s Agenda 21, becomes stronger each year.

According to Michael J. Chapman, Founder of American Heritage Research, the Common Core is just a repackaged name that carries the same philosophical bias of its predecessors. Chapman insists that it is false that No Child Left Behind (the ESEA reauthorized), a federal education initiative passed under the Bush Administration, usurps Goals 2000. It does not. States are being asked to provide evidence that they are achieving equivalent standards on their own; and therefore, while the language may be different, the results are still the same. The end product is that states are held accountable to previously signed contracts and told that they must be on par with a national assessment of educational progress.

“But if it is believed that these elementary schools will be better managed by the Governor and Council, the commissioners of the literary fund, or any other general authority of the government, than by the parents within each ward, it is a belief against all experience.”

~Thomas Jefferson

“We cannot be common. Common never won anything.”

~Herb Brooks
And what about Obama’s Race to the Top (RTTT)? This program provided states with an opportunity to compete for a share of $4.35 billion reserved for state education incentives by the American Recovery and Restoration Act. With the RTTT funding competition, states are awarded for coming together and adopting common standards and assessments. Different language, same results.

For states wishing to opt out, there is an avalanche of paperwork to face in the form of a waiver. For example, Wisconsin and Colorado both requested waivers and were given 123-page and 371-page avalanches, respectively. Both states were asked to demonstrate how they would use the waiver (so-called “flexibility”) to implement state standards and assessments by the 2014-2015 school year. In either case, the result is still the same, though perhaps with different language: Local classrooms report directly to the federal government and not to their state organizations.

“Alignment” is a key term. The goal is to create an accountability system that aligns state and federal standards. Reading the fine print reveals that waivers may be a means to bypass the law and yet accomplish the same results (compliance with federal mandates) faster. Secretary Arne Duncan instructed states to submit waivers because “constraints of the law [Congress has failed to reauthorize the ESEA] make it difficult to move ahead with important reforms.” Beyond cutting corners, Chapman (American Heritage Research) says this statement by Duncan reveals that these waivers are “illegal” even by Duncan’s own admission. Forty-three states have been granted these waivers.

**WestED**, an organization that describes itself as a “nonpartisan, nonprofit research, development, and service agency working with education and other communities throughout the United States and abroad,” is working with Colorado to help the state comply with equivalent standards in keeping with Common Core. However, they do not appear to be the independent analysis group they are supposed to be in dealing with Colorado’s waiver from the system. Instead, WestED is a laboratory in the West that assisted with generating the national curriculum for Common Core. Headquartered in San Francisco, WestED is led by CEO **GLEN HARVEY** whose tenure has grown the nonprofit from $28.2 million in annual revenues in 1997 to approximately $130 million in 2012. From 10 offices in 1997, the agency now has 16, during which time it has grown to over 600 staff members. The Department of Education provides the funding and resources for 10 different laboratories, WestED included. This is nothing less than subterfuge, says Chapman. Every tentacle points back to the federal government.

“We need mavericks and dissenters and dreamers far more than we need junior vice-presidents, but we paralyze them by insisting that every step be a step up to the next rung of the ladder.... Failure isn’t fatal. Countless people have had a bout with it and come out stronger as a result. Many have even come out famous ... they had faith in their own sense of direction ... their system was better than the one that they beat.”

—William Zinsser
*The Right to Fail*
RUTH CURRAN NEILD is the Commissioner of the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (REL—Regional Education Laboratory), a regional network of laboratories created by Congress in 1966 under the ESEA, two of which became WestEd. WestEd laboratories works as “a public agency performing an essential government function, exempt from income taxes.”

Additional Programs/Groups for Prayer:

NAEP—National Assessment of Education Progress, a federal program to provide a national “snapshot” of United States students’ achievement at grades 4, 8, and 12.

PARCC—Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, a consortium of 26 member states that has received $170 million in federal education dollars to craft standardized assessments that align with the Common Core State Standards.

SBAC—SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, a group of 31 member states that has received $160 million from the U.S. Department of Education to develop standardized assessments that align with the Common Core State Standards.

Conclusion

The Common Core Has An Explicit Philosophical Bias
See http://www.hslda.org/commoncore/topic4.aspx to read the full article on bias.

Three threads of philosophy weave through the Common Core—statism, moral relativism, and progressivism, which are revealed both by what is proclaimed and what is omitted. The statist goals of the Common Core are implicit in the lockstep uniformity that is the central thesis of the program. All children in all states will learn the same content in the same manner so that the children may become useful workers. Traditionally, education has been premised on the notion that all education of value is designed to know truth that only can be fully known in God. The omission of the pursuit of truth as a core goal of the Common Core demonstrates its alliance with the dominant philosophy of modern education that there are neither absolute truths nor absolute values. Finally, we see progressivism in the view that all that is new is inherently superior to that which comes from prior generations of human knowledge ... meaning that educators should continually reject old methods in favor of new ones. The Common Core is this kind of schoolhouse experimentation.... “We are a nation of guinea pigs.”
American Heritage Research Warning: Sound the Alarm for the Next Generation

Once upon a time, Americans believed in national sovereignty and Creator-given rights (life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness). Today, students are fickle in their allegiance to America and their recognition of government by consent of the citizens. Why is this? According to American Heritage Research founder, Michael Chapman, the Center for Civic Education (CCE)—an NGO funded by the U.S. DOE in 1994 to write America’s “National Standards for Civics and Government”—might be the culprit. The CCE posted an article on its Web site called, “Teaching Democracy Globally, Internationally, and Comparatively: The 21st Century Mission of Schools.” It offers this narrative: “In the past century, the civic mission of schools … was education for democracy in a sovereign state…. In this century, by contrast … education will become everywhere more global…. And we ought to… improve our curricular frameworks and standards for a world transformed by globally accepted and internationally transcendent principles.”

Chapman reports on the curriculum bias, quoting these words from We the People: “It is within the sovereign authority of the American people to revise or abolish entirely the Bill of Rights,” and “it is doubtful that the founders had in mind an uncritical acceptance of the wisdom of the past.” According to this new philosophy, human rights come from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 29.3 states that our rights and freedoms may “in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.”

This is the new ideology. If education continues along this trajectory, the next generation will grow up believing that one’s highest civic virtue is the dedication of citizens to the common good, even at the cost of individual interests and liberty.

If this trend succeeds, our children will be America’s new enemies.

The framework for this compilation of photos, biographies, and commentary on Common Core is provided in the following Webinar by AmericanPolicy.org with guest Michael Chapman from American Heritage Research: http://americanpolicy.org/webinar-live/?mc_cid=ea031cb884&mc_eid=d16d897532

Notable References:

Please visit HSLDA Common Core Issues “FAQS” section: http://www.hslda.org/commoncore/Analysis.aspx/#FAQ
WE ENCOURAGE YOU to meditate on the Scripture verses below and allow these words to guide you in your time of intercession for this issue.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1 • “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13 • “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:9

Pray for Ongoing Legislation

For example, lift up COLORADO:

H.B. 1208: House bill introduced by Rep. Klingenschmitt that repeals Common Core standards and forbids the State Department of Education from entering into agreements with the federal government regarding standards or curricula. The bill was introduced on February 3, 2015, and referred to the House Education Committee.

H.B. 1105: House bill that repeals Common Core standards and creates a committee to create new standards with local input. The bill was introduced on January 15, 2015 and referred to Education and Appropriations Committee.

To track ongoing legislation in your state and to determine how to pray more strategically regarding Common Core, visit:


Praise Report!

Pushback against third-party data collection succeeded in closing inBloom, a nonprofit founded in 2012 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to build a $100 million database to track students from kindergarten through college. With your involvement and prayer, student information can be protected, and the integrity of our education system can be preserved.