



Common Core A Part of Leftist Centralized Education Plan, Says Heritage Foundation Report

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The Common Core standards initiative is part of the progressive push to centralize education, says the Heritage Foundation in a new report – a compilation of essays by experts in education policy in the United States.

Lindsey Burke, a Heritage Foundation education fellow, introduces the report with a summary of how the Common Core initiative evolved:

The Common Core State Standards Initiative was created by Achieve, Inc., and driven primarily by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association. The effort began moving forward in earnest in 2009, with the financial support of the Obama Administration. Following the introduction of Common Core, the Administration offered \$4.35 billion in federal Race to the Top grant money, along with waivers from the onerous provisions of the widely derided No Child Left Behind Act.

Forty-six states signed on to Common Core, either enticed by the waiver/grant package dangled before them by Washington, or out of a belief in the project itself. Whatever the motivation, the Common Core standards, along with federally funded common assessments aligned to the standards, put American education on the path toward a national curriculum.

Neal McCluskey, director of education at the Cato Institute, writes in his essay, “[T]he trajectory of Common Core is a direct path to a federal curriculum.” He continues with a history of education in the United States and the march toward centralization.

“Americans do not need centralization at the national level; rather, we need to move to complete decentralization so we can treat children as what they are: unique individuals,” McCluskey states.

Theodor Rebarber, CEO of AccountabilityWorks, explains the seeming paradox that many proponents of “school choice” are also proponents of Common Core. He observes that some

conservatives and libertarians have been fooled into believing the “market-based language” of school choice used by many who also support Common Core’s standards-based tests.

Rebarber writes that the United States has been using a model of education policy whereby “curriculum standards serve as the fulcrum for education reform...state policy elites aim to create excellence in the classroom using an array of policy levers and knobs – all aligned back to the standards...”

“Common Core defines and constrains the content and sequencing of the curriculum—and, in many cases, even the instructional methods—to such an extent that the distinction is disingenuous,” he writes.

The Advanced Placement and SAT programs are created and administered by the College Board whose president, David Coleman, was also the “architect” of the Common Core standards. Stanley Kurtz, a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, writes:

Under Coleman’s leadership, the College Board has begun to radically redesign all of its Advanced Placement exams, not just AP U.S. History. Ultimately, this transformation will also include subjects such as Physics, World History, European History, U.S. Government and Politics, and Art History. So in effect, Common Core covers English and math, while the College Board’s AP subjects cover the rest of the curriculum.

“It is time to wake up and realize that Common Core has radically expanded its reach, capturing the entire spectrum of the curriculum, not in name, but in fact,” Kurtz adds. “If we are ever to restore local control and public accountability to America’s education system, the College Board’s recent power grab must be a central component of the debate over Common Core.”

William Estrada – director of federal relations at the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) – says that, as a result of the unpopularity of the Common Core initiative, homeschooling is growing in the United States. He articulates his concern that, with further centralization of education, homeschooling freedom will be adversely affected.

“The current Common Core effort has applied solely to the public schools thus far, but if proponents are successful at establishing a nationalized one-size-fits-all approach to education, policymakers will likely inquire as to why homeschoolers and private-schoolers are not taking the same tests,” he writes. “How do we know, the argument will go, that these children are receiving a good education?”

Williamson Evers, research fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution, explains that despite parents’ and taxpayers’ passion for local control of education, given the current public school “monopoly” of distant elites setting policy, those closest to the children “view the public schools as an unresponsive, declining bureaucracy carrying out edicts from distant capitals.”

Evers says Common Core not only “undermines competitive federalism,” but also “in part” was “designed to do so.” Nevertheless, he sees organized groups of parents pressing for Common Core’s repeal in their respective states and opting out of the Common Core-aligned tests as a positive force for education freedom.

The entire Heritage Foundation report can be read [here](#).