



John Kasich's Common Core lie

By [Jason Russell](#) | May 2, 2015 | 5:00 am

Potential presidential candidate and Ohio Gov. John Kasich defended his support for Common Core on Friday, claiming the standards were developed by governors and adopted locally. Critics argue that Common Core was written behind closed doors with little evidence governors were closely involved, then forced on schools by the federal government.

"Governors themselves wrote the standards," Kasich said at the National Review Institute's Ideas Summit. "We've implemented the standards. I didn't implement them, Obama didn't implement them, nobody did. The local school boards have adopted the standards, and now, the curriculum is being written by local school boards. I don't know what's wrong with that."

Kasich paints a picture of Common Core that would be nice, if only it were rooted in reality.

"Literally, it's not at all true," Neal McCluskey, director of the libertarian Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom, told the *Washington Examiner*. "To my knowledge, there were no actual governors involved in writing the actual standards."

In reality, some governors did ask the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers to draft some potential standards. That's where the involvement of governors stopped. Governors didn't even agree at that point to adopt the eventual standards — rightly so, because they didn't know what they would look like.

If governors didn't write the standards, as Kasich suggests, then who did? That's a difficult question to answer. "It was all done behind closed doors," McCluskey said. "The actual drafting was closed to the public. Again, there's no evidence that there were any governors actually sitting there, doing it."

The idea of local school boards adopting Common Core also stretches the truth. States adopt Common Core standards, and local school districts risk losing funding if they don't score well on Common Core-aligned tests. Technically, local school districts don't have to comply with Common Core. But if they don't, it is almost guaranteed they will lose money.

Kasich also falsely implied that President Obama had nothing to do with Common Core adoption. President Obama essentially forced states to agree to adopt Common Core before they could get a waiver from the standards created by No Child Left Behind, which more than a decade after its adoption had become obsolete and increasingly harsh and impossible to meet. Obama also attached federal dollars to Common Core adoption using Race to the Top funding.

There are legitimate arguments in favor of Common Core, but the notion that governors came together to write the standards in a transparent fashion is false. If Kasich wants to make the case for Common Core, he should focus on any academic gains made in his state instead of lying about the way Common Core was written.