

Jay P. Greene's Blog

“Testing” Is Not a Synonym for Common Core

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Over at the [Cato-at-Liberty blog](#) today, I dissect the results of BAEO's recent survey of black voters' views of education policy. BAEO is a fantastic organization, but this isn't their best work. Although their question about school vouchers was straightforward (when asked "Do you support school vouchers/scholarships?" more than 60 percent answered in the affirmative), the survey question that they claim shows support for Common Core actually does no such thing.

BAEO claims the survey "indicated solid support among Black voters that believe educational standards such as Common Core and its related assessments is essential to holding education stakeholders responsible for student learning outcomes."

It does not. As I explained at the Cato blog:

If the wording of the survey question was identical to how it appears on their website, then it says absolutely nothing about black support for Common Core. The question as it appears on their website is: "Do you think that testing is necessary to hold school accountable for student achievement?" The question doesn't mention Common Core at all. For that matter, it doesn't mention standardized testing specifically, nor explain how the testing is meant to "hold schools accountable." Perhaps it means publishing the score results so parents will hold schools accountable. Or perhaps it means the state government will offer financial carrots or regulatory sticks. Or maybe it means whatever the survey respondent wants it to mean.

If Acme Snack Co. asked survey respondents, "Do you like snacks that are delicious and nutritious?" and then claimed "two-thirds of Americans enjoy delicious and nutritious snacks such as Acme Snack Co. snacks," they would be guilty of false advertising. Maybe the survey respondents really do like Acme Snacks—or Common Core—but we can't know that from that survey. Just as some people may enjoy carrots (delicious and nutritious) but find Acme Snacks revolting, lots of parents may support some measure of testing while opposing Common Core testing for any number of reasons.

"Testing" is not a synonym for Common Core. Supporting the former does not imply supporting the latter. (Just ask the Pioneer Institute.) If BAEO wanted to ask about Common Core, they should've asked about Common Core. Instead, they asked about mere "testing." Making any claims about support for Common Core based on this question is irresponsible. BAEO can do better.

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