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### National standards = bad education policy

Bill Bumpas - OneNewsNow - 3/12/2010 6:15:00 AM



U.S. governors and school superintendents have proposed new national standards for what public school children should learn in math and English.

The draft published this week by the National Governor's Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers outlines out what children should learn in the two subjects each year from kindergarten through grade 12. The crafters of the "[Common Core State Standards](#)" say it would replace a patchwork of widely varying standards throughout the nation with common standards.



But Neal McCluskey, assistant director of [Cato Institute's](#) Center for Educational Freedom, tells OneNewsNow it is "inherently wrong" to try to establish one standard that everyone must reach.

"No two kids are exactly alike," he states. "There's huge variety in kids and they should all be able to pursue that which best meets their interests and that they have the most aptitude for -- and [they should] be able to do so at their own rates."



McCluskey

There is more about the standards that concerns McCluskey. "[Y]ou want to have competing standards, you want to have competing curricula, you want to have competing ways of delivering education," he argues, "because that's the only way you find out what's best."

And according to the Cato spokesman, the proposed common standards are far from voluntary. He contends the standards would become mandatory for states to adopt because they would risk losing billions of federal dollars if they choose not to.

"So in no way is this truly voluntary," he says, "and there's no way that it's not national because the federal government is saying if you don't adopt these, you don't get any money."

McCluskey says that is "perhaps the most dishonest component" of the proposal.



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