

Common Core Concerns and Issues You Might Not Have Considered

Why the confusion about who led the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) aka Common Core aka “Idaho (your state) Core”?

Confusion on the origin of Common Core stems from the convoluted nature of the advancement of “national standards” and the fact that education “reformers,” philanthropic organizations, and politicians followed this dogma, “You never let a serious crisis go to waste” (Rahm Emanuel).

The Coalition for Student Achievement took advantage of the Great Recession, gathered in D.C. to discuss how to use funds from *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* of 2009, set the target date of January 2012, and the priorities for action. The plan - Smart Options: Investing the Recovery Funds for Student Success – set priority 1) common American standards, 2) data collection, 3) teacher evaluations, 4) “turnaround” of low-performing schools, and lastly 5) to help struggling students.

To read the whole story about this meeting, visit my Daily KOS diary entry

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/12/18/1352383/--Smart-Options-and-the-Revolving-Door-of-Common-Core?showAll=yes>

Who then “developed” the Common Core National Standards?

There was an official “development team.” And it was looking closely at some of these individuals that prompted me to get so deeply involved in helping to stop the advancement of Common Core. You should take a brief look at some of these people - <http://thecrucialvoice.com/2014/08/04/research-made-me-do-it/>

Aren’t Common Core Standards just an upgraded version of standards adopted using the same process we have used before?

Not in Idaho. We have always had educational “standards” to guide instruction. But when we first adopted standards for “accountability” purposes, we – the People – were actually given the opportunity to weigh in on them in front of the Joint Education Legislative Committee. In this case – with common Core – a set of privately copyrighted standards were given the go-ahead by the Senate Education Committee only. Open dialogue was missing. <http://thecrucialvoice.com/2014/02/18/masters-of-deception/>

How are the Common Core standards different from our former standards?

The biggest difference is that they are privately copyrighted and a limit on how much they can be altered exists because the tests will be written to these standards not to evaluate the real education that children receive locally. It is for ease in test writing and for standardization of student and teacher data.

In Idaho, the “Core standards” don’t vary all that much from our old ones but the curriculum that they are pushing – how the standards are taught – varies significantly. Curriculum, testing, and all the “remediation” products are where money is to be made.

Overall 22% of ELA (English Language Arts) Common Core Standards were listed as “not matching” our old ones but put another way, 21% were a weak match while only 1%

had no match at all (Achieve Gap Analysis Report.pdf). With math, it is somewhere between 17 and 24% that did not match up (ID_Math_Detailed_Report_7.30.10.pdf) depending on how you slice it.

One “difference” noted in both math and ELA was a shifting of topics to different grades – things were “rearranged.”

What is the biggest appeal of Common Core?

The biggest appeal for venture capitalists is the money to be made. The biggest appeal, in my opinion, to the public is the packaging of it as a tool with the ability to create a common base of knowledge. The problem is, standards do not create or transfer knowledge and skills. It takes resources – human and material - to “educate” people.

Why do so many people believe the federal government is involved in Common Core?

The Common Core Standards *Memorandum of Agreement* (based on the Smart Options document) put forth by the National Governors Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO) directed federal Recovery Act dollars and defined the role of the federal government in Common Core. The creators of the Common Core scheme were directly responsible for federal government involvement.

<http://www.thefederalistpapers.org/current-events/the-control-and-power-of-common-core>

What about the testing?

The tests have been described as harder, longer, much more expensive, and are set in many states to be used inappropriately. <http://thecrucialvoice.com/for-you-to-use/>

Is the data collection really anything more than what it was before?

MUCH, MUCH more. The plans for the data on students was to centralize it in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) as outlined by the Council of Chief State Schools Officers which was to be completed with the reauthorization of ESEA (No Child Left Behind). See page 9, item #10

http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2009/ESEA_Task_Force_Policy_Statement_2010.pdf

Were the Common Core standards field-tested before adoption?

There were plans written stating that there “were” pilot states but their adoption happened so quickly, the plans were not sufficiently acted upon. Short answer, no.

Do we know what implementation and testing will cost us? Anyone?

Victoria M. Young provided this short Q&A because a pro/con debate never occurred in Idaho. There are so many more questions unanswered! This information is not copyrighted so please feel free to use these words in anyway you think is helpful. If you change anything, please remove my name. Thank you. Also, please visit <http://thecrucialvoice.com/about-my-book/> and consider reading the better option.