

# **Common Core State Standards**

Presented By: Whitney Neal

# Background

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Public Relations

Minor: Political Science

Director: Recreational and Early Competitive Programs

Masters Degree in Public Policy and Administration

Emphasis: Education Policy

Fundamental Research: Public School Finance, NCLB, and Special  
Interest Influence on Public Education

# Background

Director – Social Studies Department – Coppell, Texas

Certified in Social Studies, Special Education, Gifted Education

Two time finalist for Teacher of the Year

Led Social Studies Curriculum Development – Middle School

Project Based Learning Mentor

Director of Grassroots – FreedomWorks

2 million + Membership Nationwide

4 million followers on Facebook

# Educational Philosophy

Every child, regardless of economic background or social standing, should have access to quality education.

Every child is unique, creating a fundamental need for teachers to have the freedom to be innovative problem solvers in the classroom, setting the example for our children to do the same.

Families should have the ability to choose the best educational opportunity for their children without having to sacrifice belief systems or cultural identities.

# Common Core

Common Core is a set of **uniform** national curriculum standards in math and language arts (with future iterations for science and social studies) developed by Washington, D.C. based organizations with zero accountability to states, schools, or communities.

Common Core and its surrounding requirements eliminate **local control**, limit **parental involvement**, open the door to invasive **data collection**, provide little options for **reform**, and cater to **special interest influence** in individual classrooms.

# Foundations & History

1996 – Achieve, Inc. is formed by the NGA and national corporations.

1998 – Achieve, Inc. begins a national standards and benchmarking project

2001 – Achieve, Inc. sponsors a national summit to determine what “must have skills” are needed by the nations top employers. Begins working with Pearson.

2004 – Achieve, Inc. releases “Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts” identifying a common core of English and Math standards deemed most needed for success in the workforce.

2007 – Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Eli Broad Foundation pledge \$60 million to the creation of uniform American standards.

# Foundations & History

2008 – Gates Foundation awards \$2.2 million to governors and stakeholders to promote the adoption of national standards.

2008 – National Governor’s Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, and Achieve, Inc. write “Benchmarking for Success” funded by the Gates Foundation.

2009 – Federal Government offers \$4.35 billion in Race to the Top Grants via the ARRA Stimulus Package.

2009 – States must agree to adopt Common Core standards in order to compete for Race to the Top Funding. Standards have not yet been written and adoption does not ensure funds will be awarded.

# Foundations & History

2009 – Gates Foundation executives are hired to serve as Secretary of Education Arne Duncan’s Chief of Staff and as head of the Office of Innovation and Improvement.

June 1, 2009 – Congress’ initial objectives are revised by the Department of Education to include longitudinal data systems.

March 2010 – The Department of Education releases its “Blueprint for Reform” in which it states that formula funds, for instance Title I funding, will now be linked to compliance with national standards.

“Beginning in 2015, formula funds will be available only to states that are implementing assessments based on college and career ready standards that are common to a significant number of states.”

# Invested in Common Core

## **The Creators:**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (\$163 million investment)

*Key staff members hired by Department of Education*

The Eli Broad Foundation (Partner in \$60 million initial investment)

The GE Foundation/Jeffrey Immelt

## **The Developers (Common Core Standards Initiative):**

National Governor's Association

Council of Chief State School Officers

Achieve, Inc.

*The three groups have received more than \$27 million combined*

# Invested in Common Core

## The Players:

The Department of Education/Secretary Arne Duncan

Pearson Publishing

Achieve, Inc.

inBloom (Amplify Education, Wireless Generation)

*NewsCorp, Microsoft owned entities*

PARCC (\$170 million+ Federal & Gates Foundation Funding)

Smarter Balance Consortium (\$160 million+ Federal & Gates Foundation Funding)

## The PR Machine:

The Foundation for Excellence in Education/Jeb Bush

The Fordham Institute

Hunt Institute (received \$2.2 million)

# NGA & CCSSO

## **National Governors Association**

The NGA is a D.C. based 501c3 organization funded by federal grants, state taxpayers, and private organizations. President at the time of Benchmarking for Success: Janet Napolitano. Received \$2.2 million from The Gates Foundation to promote common standards to governors.

## **Council of Chief State School Officers**

The CCSSO is a “nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization” based in Washington, D.C. that “leads and facilitates collective state action to transform our public education system in the four strategic areas of Educator Workforce; Information Systems and Research; Next Generation Learners; and Standards, Assessment, and Accountability.

Funded by Business Partners such as: Pearson Education, Microsoft, McGraw Hill, Global Scholar, ETS, Data Recognition Corporation, Apple, Wireless Generation, Intel, etc.

# Achieve, Inc.

Achieve, Inc. is a Washington, D.C. based organization hired by the CCSI to develop math and language arts standards.

## **Current Board:**

Craig Barrett, Intel Corp.  
Mark Grier, Prudential Financial  
Governor Bill Haslam, Tennessee  
Governor Dave Heineman, Nebraska  
Governor Jay Nixon, Missouri  
Governor Deval Patrick, Mass.  
Jeff Wadsworth, Battelle

## **President:**

Michael Cohen – Achieve

## **Treasurer:**

Peter Sayre – Prudential Financial

## **Chairman Emeritus:**

Louis V. Gerstner, JR. – IBM

# Achieve, Inc.

## Financial Contributors:

AT&T

The Battelle Foundation

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The Boeing Company

Brookhill Foundation

Carnegie Foundation

Chevron

Cisco

DuPont

GE Foundation

IBM

Intel

Lumina

MetLife

Microsoft

Nationwide

Prudential

State Farm Insurance

Travelers Insurance

# Pearson Publishing

Pearson is a UK based international corporation offering educational services across the globe. In their own words, they offer:

“... educational materials, technologies, assessments and related services to teachers and students of all ages. Though we generate approximately 60% of our sales in North America, we operate in more than 70 countries. We publish across the curriculum under a range of respected imprints including Scott Foresman, Prentice Hall, Addison-Wesley, Allyn and Bacon, Benjamin Cummings and Longman.

We are also a leading provider of electronic learning programmes and of test development, processing and scoring services to educational institutions, corporations and professional bodies around the world.”

# Pearson Publishing

Pearson has come under scrutiny in states like New York and Texas for being a monopoly on public education.

Because Pearson is involved in the development of standards, curriculum, and assessments, their materials are also targeted to those items. Meaning, school districts and individual campuses that purchase all materials from Pearson stand a better chance of performing well on assessments.

It is not beneficial for any party involved for single corporations to hold such power over the standards, curriculum, materials, technology, and assessments used in the classroom.

# Pearson Publishing

In April of 2011, Pearson received \$3 million in grant funding from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to increase their role in Common Core classroom implementation by developing “a full series of digital instructional resources. Online courses in Math and Reading/English Language Arts will offer a coherent and systemic approach to teaching the new Common Core State Standards.”

## Pearson Looks at Big Profits Ahead – Wall Street Journal

"It's a really big deal," says Peter Cohen, CEO of Pearson's K-12 division, Pearson School. "The Common Core standards are affecting literally every part of the business we're involved in."

The Fordham Institute estimates that it will cost states and districts upwards of \$8 billion in materials costs to implement the new standards.

<http://www.edexcellence.net/commentary/education-gadfly-daily/common-core-watch/2013/pearson-crosses-a-line.html>  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303674004577434430304060586.html>

# PARCC & SBC

**PARCC – Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College & Careers**  
**SBC – Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium**

Funded by The Gates Foundation and Race To The Top grants from the federal government.

## **What is PARCC?**

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a consortium of 19 states plus the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. These new K-12 assessments will build a pathway to college and career readiness by the end of high school, mark students' progress toward this goal from 3rd grade up, and provide teachers with timely information to inform instruction and provide student support. The PARCC assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year.

PARCC received an \$186 million grant through the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top assessment competition to support the development and design of the next-generation assessment system.

# Foundation for Excellence in Education

**Founder: Jeb Bush, former governor of Florida**

Biggest donors: Microsoft, GE, Intel, IBM, ETS, State Farm Insurance, the Eli Broad Foundation and The Gates Foundation.

In fact, The Gates Foundation gave the Foundation for Excellence in Education \$501, 485 to promote Common Core Standards, which FEE does on their website extensively including a “tool-kit” of teacher resources.

In March, Jeb Bush attended a private meeting with Bill and Melinda Gates, Warren Buffett, Oprah, and Michael Bloomberg (key Common Core supporters) on Kiawah Island near Charleston, South Carolina.

# inBloom

## inBloom

Formed via \$100 million in grant funding by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and The Carnegie Foundation

Created to build systems to track/analyze data collected by school districts.

Bloomberg reports inBloom will begin charging fees to states and individual districts in 2015 to use the system.

# Amplify & Wireless Generation

## **Amplify**

Owned by media giant NewsCorp (Rupert Murdoch)

Received \$12.5 million in federal grants from the SBC to develop classroom resources targeted at implementing Common Core Standards.

## **Wireless Generation**

Also owned by NewsCorp.

The original entity also hired by the SBC (including South Carolina) to develop systems to track and analyze assessment data. Now Amplify.

# Invested in Local Schools

But NOT involved in the creation and implementation of Common Core State Standards:

Parents

Students

Teachers

Campus Administrators

Central Office Administrators

School Board

City Councils

Community Leaders

State Representatives



# Benchmarking for Success

Co-Chairs of the Committee Creating the Document:

Governor Janet Napolitano - Arizona

Governor Sonny Perdue - Georgia

Craig R. Barrett - Chairman of the Board, Intel Corporation

Committee Members Included Individuals From:

Microsoft Corporation, Fordham Institute, Hunt Institute, National Council of La Raza, etc.

Note:

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and GE Foundation generously supported the preparation of this publication.

# Benchmarking for Success

In its 2009 Visioning Document “Benchmarking for Success” the consortium specifically states that they want to:

**Upgrade state standards** by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts.

Leverage states’ **collective influence** to ensure that textbooks, digital media, curricula, and assessments are **aligned**.

**Revise state policies** for recruiting, preparing, developing, and supporting teachers and school leaders.

Hold schools and systems accountable through **monitoring, interventions, and support**.

Measure state-level performance globally.

# Benchmarking for Success

The document acknowledges setting up national standards:

“Over the long term, the federal government will need to update laws to align national education policies with lessons learned from state benchmarking efforts and from federally funded research” utilizing “tightly aligned instructional tools—from assessments to classroom curriculum materials.”

The document specifically mentions competition with nations such as:  
Singapore, Germany, China, Brazil, and Korea

The document references the federal governments responsibility to:  
Provide states with data systems and longitudinal tracking tools.

# Poor Standards

## **Dr. Sandra Stotsky**

Former Senior Associate Commissioner of Mass. Department of Education  
Served on the Common Core Standards Validation Committee  
Refused to sign off on Common Core ELA Standards

“As empty skill sets, Common Core's ELA standards cannot strengthen the high school curriculum and they cannot reduce post-secondary remedial coursework in a legitimate way.”

“Overwhelming focus on skills over content in reading combined with confusion about the writing standards, lack of detail about oral presentation, and the sporadic rigor of the media standards.”

# Poor Standards

## **Dr. James Milgrim**

Professor Emeritus at Stanford

Served on the Common Core Standards Validation Committee

Refused to sign off on Common Core Math Standards

“There are a number of extremely serious failings in Core Standards that make it premature for any state with serious hopes for improving the quality of the mathematical education of their children to adopt them. This remains true in spite of the fact that more than 35 states have already adopted them.

For example, by the end of fifth grade the material being covered in arithmetic and algebra in Core Standards is more than a year behind the early grade expectations in most high achieving countries. By the end of seventh grade Core Standards are roughly two years behind.”

# Qualifications and Input

## Qualifications of Committee Members

Dr. Stotsky, Dr. Milgrim and others have questioned why most members of both standards review committees were testing experts, NOT content area experts.

Feedback by the committees were filtered by five people.

Members of the validation committee have “no idea” what happened to their comments after they were returned to the writers. Suggested revisions were not reflected in the final standards.

<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/james-milgram-on-the-new-core-curriculum-standards-in-math/>  
<http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-state-standards/state-led-common-core-primarily-had-only-five-writers/>

# Lack of Transparency

Common Core Standards were not presented for review to teachers, administrators, or a large consortium of educational experts.

Members of committees were hand-picked by special interest groups, NOT representative of the 45 adopting states.

Comments made by those who did receive the opportunity to review were not reflected in the final released standards.

How are these state-led reforms when the entire process to develop them exhibits an utter lack of transparency?

# Field Testing/Benchmarking

Members of the validation committee repeatedly asked for proof of international benchmarking.

None was ever provided.

No pilot programs were conducted on the standards prior to adoption and implementation by the states.

Most states adopted the uniform standards before they were written or approved.

# Longitudinal Data Systems

## According to Achieve, Inc.

States must collect, coordinate, and use K-12 and postsecondary data to track and improve the readiness of graduates to succeed in college and the workplace.

Longitudinal data systems should **follow individual students from grade to grade and school to school, all the way from kindergarten through postsecondary education and into the workplace**. Such systems would also provide more accurate measures of dropout and graduation rates, and provide the foundation for early warning systems.

For states to evaluate and understand the impact of particular policies around graduation requirements, assessments and preparedness for postsecondary, they must **follow students through K–12 into postsecondary and the workforce** and establish feedback loops to the relevant stakeholders to make informed decisions that improve policies and practices around increasing student preparedness.

# Longitudinal Data Systems

## About the SLDS Grant Program

Better decisions require better information. This principle lies at the heart of the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program. Through grants and a growing range of services and resources, the program has helped propel the successful design, development, implementation, and expansion of K12 and P-20W (early learning through the workforce) longitudinal data systems.

These systems are intended to enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately **manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records**. The SLDSs should help **states, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes**; as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps

# Longitudinal Data Systems

## What You Might Hear ...

Data collection is optional. Mississippi hasn't bought into this system yet. You have nothing to worry about, they'll ask before they do this.

## But Wait ...

According to the Mississippi DOE, the major outcomes of their \$7.6 million grant are to:

- Create a relational database linking all education (K-20) and workforce data through a unique common identifier that does not permit an individual to be identified by users of the system
- Develop an online one-stop portal that will provide access to the relational database and make the system universally interoperable
- Develop the hardware and software capacity for building and hosting the relational database and the one-stop portal
- Upgrade each partner with the appropriate infrastructure and technology for data collection, storage, and use
- Develop and adopt a statewide, comprehensive policy on data quality assurance
- Train state and local personnel on data entry and use to facilitate full adoption and effective use of the system
- Include all the necessary data to link PK with K-20.

# Longitudinal Data Systems

**Claim:** Under the Federal Rights and Privacy Act student information cannot be released without prior written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

**Reality:** “Buried within the enormous 2009 stimulus bill were provisions encouraging states to develop data systems for collecting copious information on public-school kids. To qualify for stimulus money, states had to agree to build such systems according to federally dictated standards. So all 50 states either now maintain or are capable of maintaining extensive databases on public-school students.”

“Last April (2010), the department proposed regulations that would allow it and other agencies to share a student’s personal information with practically any government agency or even private company, as long as the disclosure could be said to support an evaluation of an “education program,” broadly defined.”

# Longitudinal Data Systems

## What can they measure?

In addition to traditional data points, current P-20 system can collect more than 400 individual pieces of data on students, including:

- Hobbies
- Medical Conditions
- Learning Disabilities
- Religious Affiliations
- Family Income
- Behavioral Problems
- At-Risk Status
- Homework Completion
- Overall Health Status
- Dwelling Arrangements
- Career Goals

# Privacy

In 2011, FERPA was changed to reflect the need to release certain information to “outside entities.” The changes read:

*One exception, which permits **disclosure without consent**, is **disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests**. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official may also include a volunteer or contractor outside of school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.*

# Loss of Local Control

You may be told the following:

We don't have to worry about this – we are an independent school district.

We set our own curriculum.

We can change this and made it specific to our local needs.

But wait, not so fast.

# Loss of Local Control

Common Core State Standards are privately owned and copyrighted by the NGA and the CCSSO.

Common set of K-12 standards means a set of content standards that define what students must know and be able to do, and that are **identical across all States** in a consortium. Notwithstanding this, a State may supplement the common standard with additional standards, provided that the additional standards **do not exceed 15 percent** of the State's total content standards for that subject area.

--Federal Register July 29, 2009

# Loss of Local Control

What does this mean?

Local school boards can alter the standards – but 85% of them MUST be what is used in the classroom.

Districts may use altered standards BUT students will still be assessed only on Common Core aligned assessments – not the fifteen percent of information that was changed/altered.

If problems arise with the standards, who is responsible? Who will advocate for the children when it's a private organization that owns the standards and the power? A private organization accountable to special interest groups, not parents and teachers.

# Initial Costs

It is estimated, based on studies by the Pioneer Institute, that “one-time costs, year one operational costs, and ongoing costs for years 2 to 7,” of implementing all of the programs associated with Race to the Top and Common Core will reach **\$15.8 billion** divided between participating states AFTER Race to the Top Funding is utilized.

# General Costs

## Materials

Textbooks, databases, assessments, equipment, technology, etc.

## Training

Teachers, Administrators, and Data Coaches

## Databases

Creation, Implementation, Operation, Maintenance, Tracking, Privacy

## Teachers

Loss of ability to be creative and innovative in the classroom

## Local Control

Local communities lose their ability to determine educational quality

# Consider ...

Obama's recently introduced "Preschool for All" Program

Focuses on early child education (3-5 years of age)

Includes longitudinal data systems for daycares and preschool programs.

P-20 Workforce Database

Race to the Top Grants

Health and Human Services Partnerships

Emphasizes importance of home visits

Common Standards

Suggests raising sales taxes to continue funding after grant money is allocated

# Who Benefits?

## Special Interests

The Bill and Melinda Gates  
Foundation

Jeb Bush Foundation

Achieve, Inc.

National Governor's Association

Council for Chief State School  
Officers

Amplify

inBloom

## Big Business

Microsoft

GE

Intel

## Big Government

Department of Education

Secretary Arne Duncan

# Who Loses?

Taxpayers

Local Communities

Local School Boards

School Administrators

Teachers

Parents

**Students**

