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Let's Get Off the National Standards Train

by Henry W. Burke and Donna Garner

Updated 2.24.11

INTRODUCTION

Let's pose a question. If you wanted to "sell" something that a number of people did not need, how would you do it? You might try setting up a **contest** where everyone competes for a significant financial prize. After all, Americans love to compete, especially when money goes to the winner.

Here are the **contest details**: The competitors are strapped for cash; the competitors must give up some of their prized possessions in order to qualify; and the game organizers do not announce all of the rules until the game is well underway. How **fair** does this sound?

This is exactly what Barack Obama and U. S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan have done with Common Core Standards (CCS) and Race to the Top (RTTT).

Under Obama and Duncan, the **federal takeover** of our schools is rapidly spreading across our nation.

It is not too late for the "contestants" to **quit playing this game**. States that have taken no federal Common Core Standards (CCS) money can drop out of the game. Even states that have received some of their Race to the Top (RTTT) funds could make a plea to Congress to pass a **"hold harmless"** clause that would allow these states some relief.

The questions that states must answer are, "Do we really want the **federal government taking control of our public schools**? How much will it **cost** the cash-strapped states to handle the **extra expense** of CCS / RTTT?"

[Please note -- The major update to this report is the addition of a new Section -- D. RTTT and Per-Pupil-Spending]

This report includes the following sections:

- A. Origin of Common Core Standards (CCS)**
- B. Money and Race to the Top (RTTT)**
- C. Race Winners**
- D. RTTT and Per-Pupil-Spending**
- E. States That Adopted Common Core Standards**
- F. Federal Control of Education**
- G. Quality of Common Core Standards**
- H. Assessments**
- I. Follow the Money Trail**
- J. Congressional Hearings on Common Core Standards**
- K. Legality of CCS and RTTT**

Conclusion and Action Steps are included at the end of this report.

A. Origin of Common Core Standards (CCS)

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) project (a.k.a., **CCS** for short) is an effort to establish national standards for all K-12 public schools. The two organizations that are leading the CCS project are the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

The NGA is a “bipartisan organization of the nation’s governors that speaks with a unified voice on national policy.” The CCSSO is "a nationwide, nonpartisan, and nonprofit membership organization...made up of states' chief school officers."

The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) is part of the United States Department of Education’s federal Race to the Top (**RTTT**) contest.

Other non-governmental organizations also heavily involved in the CCSSI project are: Marc Tucker, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as a major sponsor of the project, and Achieve, Inc., as a principal advocacy organization.

No Congressional public hearings have been held on CCSSI/RTTT nor have any been announced for the future. (One Congressional hearing, to be discussed later in this paper, was held on 12.08.09; but only invited guests were allowed to testify.) No Congressional votes by those we elected to represent us were ever taken on the CCSSI/RTTT.

The people chosen to write the Common Core Standards (CCS) documents are closely aligned with the Obama administration. Of course, the administration has tried to make it look as if the standards/curriculum/assessments are coming from the private sector; but the people chosen to write these CCS documents are all tied together.

B. Money and Race to the Top (RTTT)

When Secretary of Education Arne Duncan inserted a half-page program description into the Stimulus Bill in early 2009, few people except top Democratic leaders knew that it would create Race to the Top. This “Race” dominated the education news in 2010 because of the **potential money** that states could receive. Using a combination of the **carrot-and-stick approach**, the Obama administration has pressured states to adopt the national standards.

In Bill Costello's comments (9.22.10), he captured the strings attached to taking the federal money:

http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/09/the_federal_takeover_of_educat.html

As an **incentive**, states that adopted the Common Core by August 2, 2010 greatly improved their chances of receiving a share of the **\$4.35-billion Race to the Top** federal grant. The strategy worked: most states adopted the standards. However, only nine states and the District of Columbia were actually awarded the money [in Phase 2]. All ten of those winners had adopted the standards.

As a **penalty**, states that failed to adopt the Common Core risked losing funding from Title I, a \$14.4-billion program that provides funds for low-income students. Most school districts participate in the Title I program.

States spent millions of dollars and many hours filling out the complicated RTTT applications. According to the U.S. Department of Education's website, it took states an average of **642 hours** to complete each application. That means it took two staff members, working full-time for two months (doing nothing else but working on the RTTT application), to finish the task.

In her article on 1.26.11, Michelle Malkin captured some of this effort and the role of teachers' unions:

<http://www.investors.com/NewsAndAnalysis/Article.aspx?id=560985&p=1>

You need a chain saw to cut through the **bureaucrat** of the winning state applications, but the bottom line is that the ‘race’ is ‘won’ only when school reformers get **buy-in from the teachers’ unions** — the most stalwart enemies of introducing choice and competition to the atrophying system.

Robert Holland wrote an article on the RTTT’s hidden price tag (11.04.10).

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/nov/4/race-to-the-tops-hidden-price-tag/print/>

In addition, local and state bureaucrats who competed for RTTT grants like a pack of wolves snapping at juicy pork chops are finding **the grants may cost more than they bring in.**

Given that the loot will be dribbled out over a four-year period, it is entirely possible that **bureaucratic costs will consume any presumed windfall** and localities will have to foot the bill to keep the promises they made to Washington.

In **Massachusetts** the State Board of Education voted to replace the Commonwealth’s best-in-the-nation academic standards with inferior quality national standards and assessments. The \$250 million award calculates out to be **\$64 per student per year**, over the four-year period. “The federal grant we won amounts to **44 cents a day per student** for the next four years. And for that rather miserly investment, what did Massachusetts get?” (Jim Stergios, 11.24.10)

When the **Texas** Education Agency calculated how much the state would have received from Race to the Top (if Texas had decided to apply for RTTT), it amounted to a **paltry** one-time grant of around **\$75 per student**. States that “won” RTTT funds received similar amounts.

Thankfully, **Texas** Gov. Rick Perry and Commissioner of Education Robert Scott told Washington, D. C. -- **“Not interested in Common Core Standards nor in Race to the Top.”**

California has also found that Race to the Top amounts to an **unfunded federal mandate**. On 12.20.10, Doug Lasken (a retired Los Angeles Unified teacher and consultant) wrote:

http://www.dailybreeze.com:80/editorial/ci_16905517

It is in this context that we need to take a hard look at the costs we incurred under the Schwarzenegger administration when we accepted

provisions of President Barack Obama's education initiative, Race to the Top, **an unfunded mandate of the first order, costing millions and not at all essential.**

But Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the legislature agreed to drop our standards, and then found that the state had been rejected by Race to the Top and would get no money. **This means we must cover the costs of all the changes made to qualify for a race we didn't win.** There are a variety of estimates of the costs we walked into, but what they have in common is that they will come to many millions of dollars.

Consider that the "Schiff-Bustamante" bill passed in 1998 allocated **\$1 billion over four years to pay for textbooks** aligned with the then-new California standards, in addition to the **\$70 million per year already allocated for textbooks.** Grim projections come as well from the nonprofit EdSource, which estimates **\$800 million for new curriculum frameworks, \$765 million for training teachers and \$20 million for training principals, plus assorted minor costs, coming to a total of \$1.6 billion.**

How expensive would implementation of the CCS really be? Let's use Lasken's figures for California (cited again in an article on 1.23.11).

http://www.dailynews.com/opinions/ci_17168645

\$800 Million for new curriculum

\$765 Million for teacher training

\$20 Million for training of principals

Total = \$1.6 Billion

However if California had "won" in the RTTT competition, California would have received a **maximum of \$700 Million**. According to the USDOE Budget Requirements, Category 1 states could receive \$350 Million - \$700 Million. The states in this Category are: California, Texas, New York, and Florida.

How could a **\$700 Million** RTTT award cover the implementation cost of **at least \$1.6 Billion**? Obviously, California would be on the hook to cover the shortfall; and the same thing will happen to any state that tries to implement the CCS.

[Note -- This FY 2012 Budget information is an update to the report.]

Obama submitted his **Fiscal Year 2012 budget** on 2.14.11. This budget provides **\$77.4 billion for the Department of Education**. It includes **\$1.4 billion for RTTT and a whopping \$26.8 billion** for a reformed Elementary and Secondary Act (**ESEA**)! (Please note that the White House announcement uses the **\$1.4 billion figure for RTTT**.)

The **White House** press release for the Education Budget stated this about RTTT:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2012/assets/education.pdf>

*Adapts the **Race to the Top** Model of Competition to Transform Lifelong Learning. Widely viewed as **leveraging more change than any other competitive education grant program in history**, the Race to the Top (RTT)*

initiative spurred States across the Nation to bring together teachers, school leaders, and policymakers to achieve difficult yet fundamental improvements to our education system.

Clearly, the Obama administration will use the RTTT funds and ESEA funds (billions of dollars) to **indoctrinate our public school children**. Common Core Standards and Race to the Top are the vehicles to further their agenda.

At this point, the final FY 2012 budget amounts have not been determined. Obama and Duncan may not get everything they want. With Republicans now in control of the House of Representatives, **Obama no longer has an unlimited credit card!**

C. Race Winners

Arne Duncan announced the two Phase 1 RTTT “winning” states on 3.29.10 and the ten Phase 2 winners on 8.24.10. The **12 states** selected were: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>

These states “won” the right to have their students thoroughly indoctrinated by the federal government because they are taking the federal funds from Race to the Top.

Could a state that has received an RTTT award drop the Common Core Standards? It is unlikely [but not impossible -- please see conclusion at the end of this paper] that a state would be able to pull out unless it repaid the federal funds. On 1.11.11, Catherine Gewertz explained:

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2011/01/guidance_on_rtt_--_httpwwwedwe.html

The new guidance doesn't specifically mention or address the common standards. But as you might recall, all 12 of the RTT winners adopted them. They got points in their applications for doing so (as they did for embracing other reforms the department favors). So now that they've won money on those promises, the department wants to make sure that they're carried out.

Those that wander too far from their key goals will be subject to ‘enforcement actions.’ [The heavy-handed fist of the federal government...]

We who wrote this report (Burke and Garner) have heard that many states are having **“buyers’ remorse”** on their decision to go along with the Race to the Top scheme.

[Please note -- This entire Section was added in this update.]

D. RTTT and Per-Pupil-Spending

As mentioned above, the Education Department conducted the Race to the Top (RTTT) competition in two phases. On **3.29.10**, the Department announced that the **two "winners"** of Phase 1 were Delaware (#1) and Tennessee (#2).

On **8.24.10**, the Department announced the **ten "winners"** for Phase 2. The winning states were ranked from #1 (first place) to #10 (tenth place). The ten winners were: #1 -- Massachusetts, #2 -- New York, #3 -- Hawaii, #4 -- Florida, #5 -- Rhode Island, #6 -- District of Columbia, #6 -- Maryland, #8 -- Georgia, #9 -- North Carolina, #10 -- Ohio. (Note that neighbors D.C. and Maryland tied for sixth place, and there was no seventh place.)

The 12 RTTT winners and the Award amounts are shown in the Table, **Race to the Top (RTTT) Awards**.

The Table also lists the rank for each state in the Phase 1 competition and the Phase 2 competition. You will note that **Alaska, North Dakota, Texas, and Vermont did not participate**. **We commend these states for not playing the game.**

We reluctantly entered the word **"award"** in this Table. The Education Department uses the term "award" to apply to the grant passed to the winning states. On the dates mentioned above, the Department notified each "winning" Governor with an "Award Letter" that specified the dollar amount of the grant.

Of course, federal awards or grants must come from somewhere. We taxpayers pay huge amounts of money in taxes to the federal government, and it returns a small portion back to the states and calls it an "award" or "grant." **This is not free money!**

Race to the Top (RTTT) Awards

(Rank, Awards, Award / Student / Year)

State	Phase 1 Rank	Phase 2 Rank	RTTT Award	Enrollment (No. Students)	Award/Stud./ Year
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Alabama	37	36		748,000	
Alaska	--	--		129,000	
Arizona	40	12		1,161,000	
Arkansas	17	21		487,000	
California	27	16		6,435,000	
Colorado	14	17		827,000	
Connecticut	25	25		559,000	
Delaware	1	--	\$119,122,128	125,000	\$238
District of Columbia	16	6	\$74,998,962	70,000	\$268
Florida	4	4	\$700,000,000	2,771,000	\$63
Georgia	3	8	\$399,952,650	1,735,000	\$58
Hawaii	22	3	\$74,934,761	174,000	\$108
Idaho	28	--		283,000	
Illinois	5	15		2,117,000	
Indiana	23	--		1,049,000	
Iowa	24	22		480,000	
Kansas	29	--		467,000	
Kentucky	9	19		692,000	
Louisiana	11	13		661,000	
Maine	--	33		185,000	
Maryland	--	6	\$249,999,182	828,000	\$75
Massachusetts	13	1	\$250,000,000	941,000	\$66
Michigan	21	23		1,635,000	
Minnesota	20	--		830,000	
Mississippi	--	34		496,000	
Missouri	33	30		919,000	
Montana	--	35		142,000	

State	Phase 1 Rank	Phase 2 Rank	RTTT Award	Enrollment (No. Students)	Award/Stud./Year
Nebraska	39	31		290,000	
Nevada	--	24		463,000	
New Hampshire	38	29		198,000	
New Jersey	18	11		1,362,000	
New Mexico	30	28		331,000	
New York	15	2	\$696,646,000	2,669,000	\$65
North Carolina	12	9	\$399,465,769	1,520,000	\$66
North Dakota	--	--		92,000	
Ohio	10	10	\$400,000,000	1,802,000	\$55
Oklahoma	34	20		649,000	
Oregon	35	--		565,000	
Pennsylvania	7	18		1,824,000	
Rhode Island	8	5	\$75,000,000	142,000	\$132
South Carolina	6	14		706,000	
South Dakota	41	--		119,000	
Tennessee	2	--	\$500,741,220	1,006,000	\$124
Texas	--	--		4,949,000	

Utah	19	25		573,000	
Vermont	--	--		89,000	
Virginia	31	--		1,238,000	
Washington	--	32		1,026,000	
West Virginia	36	--		281,000	
Wisconsin	26	27		861,000	
Wyoming	32	--		87,000	
Total U.S.			\$3,940,861,000	49,788,000	\$71

Source:
U.S.D.O.E.
2.21.11

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase1-applications/score-summary.pdf>

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase2-applications/summary.pdf>

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase2-applications/index.html>

http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_034.asp?referrer=list

Notes:

1. The latest available USDOE enrollment numbers are "Projected Fall 2009."
2. Award per student per year is based on the 4-year award period.
3. The Total Award / Student / Year of \$71 is based on the total RTTT awards and total students for the 12 RTTT winning states.

For the **enrollment numbers** in the Table, we used the **latest available figures** from the USDOE ("Projected Fall 2009"). These numbers include public elementary and secondary schools (K-12) for each state.

The "**Award / Student / Year**" column needs some explanation. Let's use Delaware as an example. Delaware placed No. 1 in Phase 1 and received a grant for \$119,122,128; the state has 125,000 students in its K-12 public schools. [\$119,122,128 divided by 125,000 students = \$953 / student] For each state, the award period is four years. [\$953 per student divided by 4 years = \$238 / student / year] Then the Award per Student per Year = **\$238**.

The Award per Student per Year allows us to keep education spending in **perspective**. Public school education in this country has always been funded primarily at the local and state levels. The federal funding is relatively minor.

Let's take **Massachusetts** as an example. The state received **\$250 million** in federal RTTT. That amount may seem large, but it represents only about **1/144 (0.70 %)** of Massachusetts' overall school funding for the four-year period. Most states have similar percentages.

The **Texas Education Agency (TEA)** is charged with the task of collecting and reporting state education data, much of which has to do with local, state, and federal funding sources. The TEA recently produced the **2009-10 Texas Education Agency Pocket Edition of Texas Public School Statistics** (published in December 2010).

According to the TEA's Pocket Edition, the **per-pupil spending figure for Texas is \$11,567**. This figure includes the total per-pupil spending (i.e., expenditures) including local, state, and federal dollars.

Total Revenue Per Pupil -- **\$9,965**

Total Expenditures Per Pupil -- **\$11,567** -- This figure includes local revenue (47.1%), state (42.9%), and **federal revenue (10.0%)**.

Federal funding is nice when you are getting it, but what happens when the flow stops? States and local governmental agencies got used to the **Stimulus** funds during 2009 and 2010.

Now that the Stimulus funds are essentially depleted, states and cities are **running deficits** and are being **forced to lay off workers**. In the same way, RTTT money is temporary, but **the "pain" of Common Core Standards will last for many years to come!**

E. States That Adopted Common Core Standards

<http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>

Alaska and Texas early-on declared that they would not participate in the Common Core Standards / Race to the Top. They are to be commended for not going along with the federal takeover of the public schools.

As of 2.23.11, forty-two (42) out of the 51 states (50 states + D.C. = 51 “states”) have formally **adopted** the Common Core Standards.

The nine (9) states that have not yet adopted the CCS standards are: Alaska, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

[Please refer to our table, **Scorecard of States**, to see how each state stands on RTTT, CCS, and Assessment Consortia.]

Can states back out of the national standards if they have a change of heart? As discussed above, the 12 states that accepted federal RTTT funds may be stuck unless they pay the money back to the federal government. However, we have presented in the conclusion of this paper some hopeful ideas that we believe may offer possible solutions.

What about the other 39 states? [51 states – 12 states = 39 states.] On 9.02.10, the U.S. Department of Education awarded funds to two **assessment consortia** (SBAC and PARCC). The assessment consortia are the ones who will produce the national assessments that students will be required to take. Most of us know that **when anyone accepts federal money, there are always strings attached.**

We need to stop and explain the differences between the terms **“assessments”** and **“tests.”** **Tests** have right-or-wrong answers, and the majority of test questions are generally scored objectively.

Assessments are subjectively scored based upon evaluators' cognitive domain (e.g., opinions, feelings, and emotions) and may also utilize artificial intelligence. The types of questions on assessments might include students' opinions/beliefs/emotions, performance-based projects, simulations, and/or open-ended responses.

As Gewertz explained:

[http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2011/01/guidance_on_rtt -- httpwwwedwe.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/curriculum/2011/01/guidance_on_rtt_-_httpwwwedwe.html)

Only 12 states won Race to the Top money, but 45 states and the District of Columbia are participating in consortia to design new assessments for the common standards. Those consortia have \$360 million in federal money to do that work. And a condition of being in the consortia is that you adopt the common standards. So **un-adopting them would mean un-participating in the assessment consortia.**

[The Department of Education's updated website (as of 2.23.11) indicates that **44 states plus D.C.** are participating in the two consortia. The total money awarded to the two consortia is approximately **\$330 million.**]

A state that drops out of the national standards might be required to repay the federal government. Quite likely, the repayment amount has not been established. If we divide the total award of \$330 million by 45 states, we get **\$7.3 million per state**, a rather small amount of money considering how much more the taxpayers in each state will have to pay to implement the entire CCS initiative.

Many states might jump off the national standards train. As Jim Stergios wrote on 11.16.10:

http://boston.com:80/community/blogs/rock_the_schoolhouse/2010/11/rumblings_about_a_rift_in_stat.html

The key states to watch are California, Indiana, Minnesota, *New Jersey, Texas and Virginia. In addition to being states that either did not adopt the national standards, or adopted them and did not win federal funds, they have one additional and important commonality among them: They have had higher standards than most other states in the nation.

*The founders of the New Jersey Coalition for World Class Math (<http://njworldclassmath.webs.com>) strongly disagree with Mr. Stergios' inclusion of New Jersey in his grouping of states that have higher standards than most other states in the nation. The New Jersey math standards for Grades 9 - 12 underwent minor revisions in 2008; but the

Pre-K through Grade 8 New Jersey math standards still reflect the pre-2006, discredited NCTM constructivist math standards and are not aligned with the recommendations of the The National Mathematics Advisory Panel.

Texas Governor Rick Perry, as the new Chairman of the **Republican Governors Association**, may force the National Governors Association to **revisit** its support of the national standards. The game is not over.

Scorecard of States:

Participation in -- RTTT, CCS, Assessment Consortia

State	Abbrev.	RTTT Winner	Adopted CCS	Assessment Consortia		None
				PARCC	SBAC	
Alabama	AL		Y	Y	Y	
Alaska	AK					N
Arizona	AZ		Y	Y		
Arkansas	AR		Y	Y		
California	CA		Y	Y		
Colorado	CO		Y	Y	Y	
Connecticut	CT		Y		Y	
Delaware	DE	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Florida	FL	Y	Y	Y		
Georgia	GA	Y	Y	Y		
Hawaii	HI	Y	Y		Y	
Idaho	ID		Y		Y	
Illinois	IL		Y	Y		
Indiana	IN		Y	Y		
Iowa	IA		Y		Y	
Kansas	KS		Y		Y	
Kentucky	KY		Y	Y	Y	
Louisiana	LA		Y	Y		
Maine	ME				Y	
Maryland	MD	Y	Y	Y		
Massachusetts	MA	Y	Y	Y		
Michigan	MI		Y		Y	
Minnesota	MN					N
Mississippi	MS		Y	Y		
Missouri	MO		Y		Y	
Montana	MT				Y	

State	Abbrev.	RTTT Winner	Adopted CCS	Assessment Consortia		None
				PARCC	SBAC	
Nebraska	NE					N
Nevada	NV		Y		Y	
New Hampshire	NH		Y		Y	
New Jersey	NJ		Y	Y	Y	
New Mexico	NM		Y		Y	
New York	NY	Y	Y	Y		
North Carolina	NC	Y	Y		Y	
North Dakota	ND			Y	Y	
Ohio	OH	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Oklahoma	OK		Y	Y	Y	
Oregon	OR		Y		Y	
Pennsylvania	PA		Y	Y	Y	
Rhode Island	RI	Y	Y	Y		
South Carolina	SC		Y	Y	Y	
South Dakota	SD		Y		Y	
Tennessee	TN	Y	Y	Y		
Texas	TX					N
Utah	UT		Y		Y	
Vermont	VT		Y		Y	
Virginia	VA					N
Washington	WA				Y	
West Virginia	WV		Y		Y	
Wisconsin	WI		Y		Y	
Wyoming	WY		Y		Y	
Washington, D.C.	DC	Y	Y	Y		
Totals		12	42	25	31	5

Sources:

USDOE, PARCC, SBAC

2.23.11

Note:

Depending on the source, there is a discrepancy in the Consortia list for Georgia, New Hampshire and Wyoming.

<http://www.corestandards.org:80/in-the-states>

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>

<http://www.fldoe.org/parcc/pdf/partstates.pdf>

<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-secretary-education-duncan-announces-winners-competition-improve-student-asse>

F. Federal Control of Education

Now, as the Obama administration pushes for the nationalization of our public schools, local control is being eviscerated.

Texas Education Commissioner Robert Scott described the push for national education standards as **"a step toward a federal takeover of the nation's public schools."**

On 7.28.10, Donna Garner wrote:

http://www.educationnews.org/commentaries/insights_on_education/96839.html

I am appalled that the public has not yet figured out that **this federal takeover of the public schools is as bad if not worse than the federal takeover of the healthcare system.**

Our children are our most important products. How can people stand back and hand their children's minds over to the federal government to indoctrinate them?

Remember that the Common Core Standards at this point are only for Math and English, but coming on their heels will be Science and Social Studies. Can you imagine what the standards/curriculum/assessments produced by the Obama administration would look like for Science and Social Studies?

Ben Boychuk tells us about the “voluntary” nature of the standards.

<http://www.educationnews.org/educationnewstoday/76566.html>

The standards are billed as ‘**voluntary**,’ but that's a joke. The Obama administration has already announced plans to make \$14 billion in federal Title I funds and another \$15 billion in future Race to the Top grants contingent on states adopting the national standards. In short, **the standards would be as ‘voluntary’ as reporting personal income to the IRS**, regulating the drinking age or maintaining the speed limit. Just try to opt out and see what happens.

Obama and Arne Duncan employed a classic “**bait-and-switch**” strategy to take over the schools. In 2009, most of the **governors (except for Texas and Alaska) signed the Common Core standards adoption agreements before** the public was told about the national tests.

Duncan waited until the state contracts were signed **before** he made the rest of the plan clear: **States would have to adopt the national standards in order to qualify for Race to the Top funds.** Other “surprises” included national assessments, national curriculum, and an elaborate national tracking system to link student assessment scores to individual teachers.

Up until early February 2010, the states that signed the agreements thought they only had to commit to teach **85 %** of the Common Core standards. They assumed that the other 15 % would give them some “local control.”

During a two-day meeting in February (2.1.10), they were told by a deputy executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers that **states will not be allowed to pick and choose; they must use the entire national standards document word for word (i.e., 100 %).**

[Even if states are allowed their own 15 %, students are going to be assessed on the CCS's 85 %. Consequently, teachers will be forced to teach the 85 % material in order for the students to get a passing assessment score.]

G. Quality of Common Core Standards

How good are the CCS? What are the experts saying about the national standards (Common Core Standards)? **Many who are knowledgeable in the field keep trying to remind the public that the national standards are untested and unproven** with no student data to support them.

Both Massachusetts and California chose to drop their very good standards in order to adopt the national standards.

Catherine Gewertz made these comments about **reversing** the Massachusetts decision on 1.31.11:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/02/02/19assess.h30.html?tkn=WMPFsszOdXOXtOZEjyVQ9TUSAI M2ZPO1b5S5&cmp=clp-edweek>

At the behest of a local school board, three lawmakers in Massachusetts have drafted a bill that would **override** the state board of education's decision to adopt new common academic standards.

...Mr. Cooke said he believes that in adopting the standards [Common Core Standards/Race to the Top], **the state board was motivated more by the prospect of winning the federal Race to the Top contest—which awarded points to states that adopted the standards—than by what is best for students.** And Mr. Cooke worries that embracing the standards will mean loss of local control over curriculum.

In an earlier article, people in Massachusetts voiced their concerns about adopting the national standards in Massachusetts (1.17.11):

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20110117/NEWS/101170409>

My concerns remain, one, we're **dumbing down state standards**; two, the **increased costs on schools** because we would have to have a new curriculum, a new testing; and, the third, you're letting a bunch of **faceless federal bureaucrats** technically set the standards for all the schools in Massachusetts...

I don't think it's in the best interests of the students at Tantasqua or even the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (to adopt the National Educational Standards). Massachusetts students fare better on classic achievement tests than students from any other state, so why would we want to **go backward**?

On 5.20.10, The Pacific Research Institute released its report on the national standards.

<http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/the-emperors-new-clothes/>

These proposed national standards are vague and lack the academic rigor of the standards in Massachusetts and a number of other states,” said Pioneer Institute Executive Director Jim Stergios. ‘The new report shows that **these weak standards will result in weak assessments**. After so much progress and the investment of billions of tax dollars, it amounts to **snatching mediocrity from the jaws of excellence.**’

On 7.19.10, the Pioneer Institute issued its opinion of the national standards:

<http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/national-standards-still-dont-make-the-grade/>

Adopting the final draft of proposed national education standards in English language arts (ELA) would result in a **significant weakening** of the intellectual demands placed on Massachusetts and California students in language and literature, according to a review published jointly by the Pacific Research Institute and Pioneer Institute.

Dr. Sandra Stotsky examined the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) [CCRS is another attempt to nationalize education] and commented on 9.09.10:

http://www.mindingthecampus.com/originals/2010/09/shaky_new_standards_for_colleg.html#more

CCRS consist wholly of content-empty and culture-free generic skills (e.g., ‘Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text’).

Dr. Stotsky has gone on to say that the CCS emphasize **informational** texts instead of the **classics**. The CCS are also full of **educational gibberish** such as “use modal auxiliaries to convey various conditions” instead of saying, “identify subject and verb agreement in a sentence.”

An English teacher put it best when she wrote on the Blue Mass Group blog (*Boston Herald*, 9.29.10):

I teach English because **I love literature** of all genres - drama, fiction and poetry - and I love to teach kids how to think and write critically through the close reading and study of literature. The study of literature is the study of the human condition. No other classroom offers that. Sadly adoption of the **Common Core** State Standards all but ensures that the classroom experience I just described is a **thing of the past**.

Dr. R. James Milgram and Dr. Sandra Stotsky issued a report on the national standards for math and English. The title best captures their overall sentiments: “**Fair to Middling: A National Standards Progress Report.**” Stotsky determined that the elements were **too broadly worded**, and explicit goals were not established. Also literature was very **weak**.

Educators are **displeased** with many aspects of the national standards. Examples include: the standards have **dropped cursive writing**, English grammar and reading are **weak**, and **grade-by-grade progression is poor** in both English and math.

The national standards in **math** were found to be **weaker** than some of the state standards (California, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Minnesota). That is quite unfortunate because STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education is especially important in this technological age. Also the math standards specified an "unteachable" number of topics (70 in one year).

<http://www.sacbee.com/2010/07/24/2911462/proposed-math-standards-unteachable.html#>

<http://www.heraldnews.com/opinions/x294023073/GUEST-OPINION-Strong-STEM-education>

The **Texas** State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted **excellent standards documents** during the last three years for English / Language Arts / Reading (ELAR), Science, and Social Studies. Many experts deem these three standards documents to be the **best in the country**. How do the Common Core Standards compare with the Texas Standards?

A Comparison of CCS-ELAR Standards to Texas-ELAR Standards

Please notice the **stilted and confusing verbiage used in the Common Core Standards for ELAR** compared to the clarity of the terms used in the Texas ELAR standards. If you were a teacher, which set of standards would be easier for you to understand and implement into your classroom? If the standards are **clearly worded**, the chances of their being implemented with fidelity by the teachers into their classrooms are greatly increased.

The **Common Core Standards (CCS)** for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects K–12 were published on June 2, 2010. Here is the link:

http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf

The **Common Core Standards** for ELAR are organized into the following five strands:

Reading
Writing
Speaking
Listening
Language

=====

The new **Texas** English / Language Arts / Reading (ELAR) standards were adopted in May 2008 and are organized into the following five strands.

Reading (literary and informational texts)
Writing
Research
Listening and Speaking
Oral and Written Conventions

Please notice that Texas has a separate section (Oral and Written Conventions) that emphasizes the all-important writing skills of grammar, usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and handwriting (including both printing and cursive).

The Texas standards lay out the important skills emergent readers need to learn to be successful readers -- systematically taught phonemic awareness and decoding (**phonics**) skills. Sadly, the way the Common Core Standards are written would allow almost any **whole-language** reading program to satisfy them; and whole language instruction has been completely **discredited** by the empirical reading research done by the National Institutes of Health (**NIH**).

The Texas standards also have a well-developed strand dedicated solely to research writing.

Both literary and informational text are given **equal treatment** in the Texas ELAR's. In the CCS-ELAR's, the emphasis is definitely taken off classic literature and is focused heavily on informational text.

Here are the links to the Texas ELAR standards:

English / Language Arts / Reading – K - Grade 5
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/index.html>

English / Language Arts / Reading -- Grades 6 - 8
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter110/ch110b.html#110.17>

English / Language Arts / Reading -- Grades 9 - 12

For states which are genuinely interested in writing their own standards, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has said they will be glad to collaborate to help guide states through the process of developing their own standards. The TEA believes the standards for each state should be unique, but the TEA will be glad to walk other states' staffers through the Texas standards.

H. Assessments

Donna Garner has been warning people for years about the **federal takeover of our schools**. She provided the following information about the key role of **assessments** in this takeover scheme. She believes it is easy to tell that assessments are **important** because the U. S. Department of Education has awarded **\$330 million** for these national assessments to be developed.

Mrs. Garner has predicted for well over two years that a state must commit to **“Value-Added Assessments” (VAA) in order to qualify for the RTTT Award.** [VAA is a method of tying an individual student's test scores to his individual teacher to measure progress the student has made under that teacher.] It looks as if she was right. **VAA is the key to forcing teachers to teach whatever it is that the federal government wants them to teach.**

Garner has been using this graphic for about two years to illustrate the inter-relationship of the various parts. This is the way that the Common Core Standards and Race to the Top work. [The arrows mean “lead to.”]

National standards → national assessments → national curriculum → teachers' salaries tied to students' test scores → teachers teaching to the test each and every day → national indoctrination of our public school children → national database of students and teachers

How can the Obama administration take over the control of our nation's public schools and impact the entire future of our nation?

It is easy. All his administration has to do is to **pressure teachers to teach each and every day whatever is on the national assessments** that are tied to the national curriculum that is tied to the national standards.

Then by making sure that **individual students' scores are tied directly to their individual teachers** and that those teachers' performance scores are made public, the Obama administration will have achieved its goal of forcing teachers to **indoctrinate** their public school students. The **indoctrination** will promote such things as: subjective feelings, opinions, beliefs, multiculturalism, political correctness, diversity, global warming, homosexuality, and social justice.

Consider the problems associated with **subjective assessments** rather than with objective tests that contain right-or-wrong answers. With objective tests, the end score is much more accurate for comparing state-to-state, school-to-school, and student-to-student results.

With **subjective** questions scored by following a rubric, the students are scored based upon the subjective opinions of the evaluator; and opinions differ from person to person.

Worse yet, to whom will the **parent** go to complain if he feels his child's national assessments have been graded wrong...to the U. S. Department of Education in the insular world of **Washington, D. C.**?

Not only are subjective assessments open to indecisiveness, but they are also much more expensive to score. Are taxpayers going to want to pay higher taxes just so their students' assessments can be scored in a subjective way?

Just think about what states will have to do to implement the CCS into their schools and how much all of this is going to **cost in time and salaries**:

1. Provide digitized CCS master copies of documents to all educators
2. Pay the salaries of consultants to come into the state and into school districts to "interpret" to educators what the gobbledygook CCS jargon means. Produce grade-level-specific curriculum documents that break down the broad and generic CCS requirements into explicit goals for teachers/students to reach at each grade level
3. Train teachers at each grade level to understand fully what needs to be taught and help them to develop all new lesson plans accordingly
4. Do intense teacher training to acquaint them fully with the national assessments tied to the CCS
5. Create an entirely new teacher evaluation system that is tied to how well teachers' students do on the national assessments

6. Coordinate the K-12 curriculum documents and assessments with college admission and higher-education standards
7. Aggregate immense amounts of data in a standardized format to transmit to the national database

Federally Controlled Assessments for All CCS States

The following information was taken from *Education Week*, 6.23.10:

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/23/36assessment.h29.html?tkn=MUTFAu%2FYouCRzguLFMOG9pu3XKtubM04BYIa&print=1>

Consortia (1)

On 9.2.10, the U. S. Department of Education awarded \$160 Million to the **SMARTER** Balanced Assessment Consortium (**SBAC**) to develop assessments tied to the Common Core Standards for 31 states including: Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia.

SMARTER will rely heavily upon subjectively scored assessments such as open-ended responses, projects, teacher-scored benchmarks, etc. The term “subjectively scored assessments” means students’ scores are based upon evaluators’ cognitive domain (e.g., opinions, feelings, and emotions).

SMARTER will use computer-adaptive technology that will adjust the difficulty of test questions in relation to how well the student does on each response.

SMARTER will have teachers score the subjectively scored projects and open-ended questions supplemented with computer-scoring (i.e., artificial intelligence) software.

SMARTER will use one test at the end of the year for accountability purposes but will create a series of interim tests (a.k.a., benchmarks) to let students, parents, and teachers know whether the students are on track.

Consortia (2)

On 9.2.10, the U. S. Dept. of Education awarded \$170 Million to **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC, or Partnership) to develop assessments linked to the Common Core Standards for 26 states. These states are a part of PARCC: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Mississippi, North Dakota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee.**

The PARCC coalition will test students' ability to read complex text, complete research projects, excel at classroom speaking and listening assignments, and work with digital media.

PARCC will replace the one end-of-year high stakes accountability test with a series of assessments administered throughout the year.

PARCC emphasizes college and career success with less emphasis on formative assessments but would use both human and computer scoring.

Testing experts have voiced their concerns (a) about the lack of research-based evidence for both the assessment plans and (b) the rush to get the national assessments in place by 2014-15.

To learn more about the national assessments to be developed by the SMARTER and PARCC consortia, please go to the following link:

<http://thejournal.com/articles/2010/09/15/are-we-ready-for-testing-under-common-core-state-standards.aspx>

The national assessments are to be done **online** and will cost taxpayers **unbelievable amounts of money** to purchase the very latest multimedia technology for all students (Bill Gates wins). With tight budgets, where will school districts find the money to pay for all of this **expensive** equipment and software?

Layers of **technology staffers** will be required to keep the technology functioning in every classroom because students will be taking frequent national formative (benchmark or periodic assessments) and summative assessments (end-of-course assessments) that will take weeks to finish because they will contain performance-based simulations, interactions, digital media, graphing, etc.

The computer labs scattered around most schools will **not suffice** because the large numbers of students who will be involved with taking the national summative and formative assessments regularly will necessitate multimedia technology for each student.

Taxpayers will be required to pay for elaborate and ongoing **teacher training** and evaluations on all the new and innovative multimedia technology required for the online national assessments.

<http://thejournal.com/articles/2010/09/15/are-we-ready-for-testing-under-common-core-state-standards.aspx>

On 9.16.10, Houghton Mifflin announced it is putting \$400 Million into investing in more technology for our nation's classrooms. Houghton is also planning to **invest \$300 Million** during the next three years to produce an algebra application for the Apple iPod that contains the full curriculum and online tutoring based on quiz and test scores.

Where are the taxpayers in the downturn of our economy going to get the funds to **pay** for all of these new and **expensive** "techie toys"?

I. Follow the Money Trail

1. Marc Tucker and America's Choice

On August 3, 2010, **Pearson** (the largest education publishing company in the world) **purchased Marc Tucker's America's Choice** for \$3.6 Million per year to be paid as an endowment to Tucker's National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE).

Phil Daro, the head of the Common Core Math Writing Team, is on the board of *America's Choice*.

In an article on Oct. 26, 2010, Charles Chieppo, a senior fellow, and Jamie Gass, director of the Center for School Reform at Pioneer Institute, stated that a key finding of the 2008 National Math Advisory Panel is that more students need to be prepared to take Algebra I in 8th grade. However the **CCS math requirements are “dumbed down”** and will only serve to **weaken** students’ math and science knowledge.

R. James Milgram, math professor emeritus at Stanford University, concurs and said the Common Core math standards are several years behind the standards in high-performing countries; and the “coherence of the standards for fractions” offers **serious concerns**.

According to a report entitled “Literary Study in Grades 9, 10, and 11 in Arkansas” (pp 41-42), *America’s Choice* (AC) was brought into Arkansas in 2006 at a cost of \$6.2 Million to turn around the low-performing schools on its School Improvement list. Was AC successful in doing that? **No**.

http://coehp.uark.edu/literary_study.pdf

Arkansas high-school English teachers in an AC school testified that AC **“homogenizes”** all students to fit the lowest standards and **holds the better students back**. The Pre-AP students do the same AC assignments as the lower-level students.

AC expects students to read 25 books per year but excludes the difficult classics right away...the AP Syllabus supersedes AC...AC pedagogy is more important than content...AC courses are designed specifically for kids reading at the 5th or 6th grade level in an attempt to get them reading at grade level...we’ve changed from book-based, theme-based, literature-based to **strategy-based**. The emphasis of AC is not on college-readiness but is on how to **fill out forms**, on life skills, on reading instructional manuals, and gets rid of the classics.

Arkansas is not the only state that has complained about the **lack of academic achievement by AC schools**. Massachusetts had the same outcome when AC partnered with Holyoke, Massachusetts, from 2006-2008. “As noted by a local reporter: ‘Few improvements were seen when the schools tried the America’s Choice math program so that was ended.’ ”

For more information about who and what **Marc Tucker** is, please read Donna Garner’s 11.29.10 article on EducationNews.org.

<http://www.educationnews.org/index.php?news=103613>

2. **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

What part has the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation played in the **federal takeover** of the public schools under the Obama administration? Since the beginning of Obama's campaign for President, Bill Gates has supported him and the Obama agenda. Because **Massachusetts** has had some of the highest standards in the country, the goal was to get the "**crown jewel**" of standards to join CCS, and that would influence other states to join Obama and the Gates Foundation's national standards movement.

In 2008, the **Gates Foundation** awarded \$35 Million to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) to write and promote the CCS.

Achieve, Inc. received \$12.6 Million from the Gates Foundation in 2008. Massachusetts **Governor Deval Patrick** is a board member for Achieve, Inc...

It was Achieve, Inc. (and the Council of Chief State School Officers) that paid for Massachusetts Education Commissioner **Milton Chester's** frequent **first-class travel and luxury resort expenses** to such places as Arizona, Chicago, Washington, D. C., and London.

[**Is it any wonder** that **Massachusetts Gov. Patrick** and Ed. Commissioner **Chester** were so committed to **dump** their state's first-class standards and replace them with CCS/RTTT?]

The Fordham Institute, who gave favorable reviews to the CCS, received \$1.4 Million from the Gates Foundation including \$960,000 to review the Common Core Standards.

On December 10, 2010, the roll-out of the national database was announced by the United States Department of Education; and the consortia efforts were supported by the **Gates Foundation** and the Susan Dell Foundation. These are both companies that will stand to make **billions of dollars** from the CCS/RTTT digitized standards, curricula, assessments, teacher evaluations, and personal data on all students (and their families) and educators in the public schools of our country.

The following URL link provides good information on the money trail:

<http://pioneerinstitute.org/download/gates-money/>

J. Congressional Hearings on Common Core Standards

So far as we know, the only hearing that was ever held on Common Core Standards/Race to the Top occurred on 12.08.09. **Congress never took a floor vote on this huge expansion of the federal government into public education.**

The U. S. House Committee on Education and Labor (HCEL) held a hearing on 12.08.09 to examine the Common Core Standards. U. S. **Rep. Glenn Thompson** (R-PA), a member of the HCEL, made the following excellent comments:

<http://republicans.edlabor.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=173176>

The goal of the initiative is to provide a voluntary, research and evidence-based set of standards for mathematics and English-language arts.

I want to emphasize the word ‘voluntary’ in that description. While the Common Core is still under development, I don’t believe anyone involved in the initiative intended for it to become the one and only set of academic standards in the United States.

For that reason, I’d like to focus my remarks this morning not on the quality of the standards themselves, but on what the federal government is doing with those standards.

Secretary Duncan has not been shy about his intentions to dramatically reshape education through the Race to the Top fund.

And one key component of the Race to the Top guidelines is the requirement that states participate in and adopt a set of common academic standards.

The only common, multi-state academic standards I am aware of are those being developed through the Common Core Initiative. Therefore, it stands to reason that any state wishing to receive funding through the Race to the Top program **will be mandated to adopt the Common Core** – and to test its students based on those standards.

In other words, the Common Core is being transformed from a voluntary, state-based initiative to a set of federal academic standards with corresponding federal tests.

To our knowledge, no other Congressional hearings, even with invited testifiers, have taken place since 12.08.09.

K. Legality of CCS and RTTT

In October of 2010, Sen. Tom Coburn's office released "[Pork 101: How Education Earmarks School Taxpayers](#)." The report is mainly focused on federal education earmarks but also hits on overall [federal education involvement](#). It shows that Washington has spent huge amounts of money on education over the last several decades, but there have been few-to-no corresponding improvements in national test scores. The report tells us:

<http://www.educationnews.org/michael-f-shaughnessy/101202.html>

[What constitutional authority does the Federal government have in education? As the report makes clear, pretty much none.](#) Under the 14th Amendment, Washington must prohibit state and local discrimination in the provision of education, and the feds have authority over the District of Columbia and other federal lands. Other than that, the feds have no constitutional authority whatsoever to be involved in education.

[Currently, the United States does not have a national school system. In accordance with the 10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the ultimate authority to create and administer education rests with the states.](#)

The \$4.35 billion Race to the Top (RTTT) competition was created under the Stimulus Bill (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA). Danaher Dempsey, Jr. rightly questioned the [legality](#) of the Race to the Top program.

<http://www.educationnews.org/educationnewstoday/90820.html>

Is Secretary Arne Duncan violating U.S. Education Code?
20 U.S.C. § 3403 (Pub.L. 96-88, Title I, § 103, Oct. 17, 1979, 93 Stat. 670). *United States Code. Title 20. Education. Chapter 48* states:

It is the intention of the Congress in the establishment of the Department to protect the rights of State and local governments and public and private educational institutions...The establishment of the Department of Education shall not increase the authority of the Federal Government over education...

No provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration...

Race to the Top as written is not in compliance with the U.S. Code. **The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) had no provisions that allowed Sec. Duncan to create a program in which state and school districts are bribed to comply with his direction.**

Read the legislation: the ARRA hardly gives Duncan the power and control he has seized through Race to the Top...The ARRA does not allow his RTTT bastardization of the original education legislation as RTTT violates Federal Code.

Let's consider a state which chooses to drop out of CCS and/or RTTT. Could the Education Department penalize such a state by stopping the flow of Title I money?

Title I funding goes directly to the school districts from USDOE. Obama and Duncan may try to **get even** with those states by passing new ESEA regulations to remove U.S. Code, Title 20, Section 3403 provisions. (See Code above.) Congress and the states must remain diligent. [Note: The above statement comes from high-level state education department officials.]

CONCLUSION

A. Common Core States

The following statements are directed to the 42 states that have formally adopted the **Common Core Standards**. **These states** should drop the national standards for the following reasons:

1. For states that did not receive RTTT funding, it will cost them **millions of dollars to switch** to the national standards. In California, which did not win

RTTT funds, it would cost them between **\$1 billion and \$2 billion** to convert to the Common Core Standards! Other states will face the same type of expenditures **far-and-above the federal dollars to implement the CCS.**

2. The national standards allow the federal government to **take over** the schools.

3. **No** studies show that national standards will improve student achievement. The research does **not** exist.

4. The **quality** of the national standards **is very questionable**. The Common Core Standards are **weaker** than the standards of many states.

5. The proposed national standards are **vague and lack the academic rigor** of the standards in Massachusetts, California, Texas, and a number of other states.

6. Massachusetts and California dropped their very good standards in favor of the **inferior proposed national standards**, an action many people in those states are now regretting.

7. With the national standards, the federal government will have a huge **influence** over the curriculum and governance of our nation's schools.

8. Through assessments, the federal government will be granted **enormous power** over our public school students and their future progress. The government can **indoctrinate** our public school children in whatever direction it chooses (e.g., subjective feelings, opinions, beliefs, victimization, multiculturalism, political correctness, diversity, global warming, homosexuality, and social justice).

9. Because there will be great emphasis on test (assessment) scores, teachers will **“teach to the test,”** each and every day.

10. The **national curriculum** will be stressed. Assessment scores will pressure teachers to tailor their instruction to whatever is on the national assessments.

11. **Subjective assessments** give the assessment writers and scorers unlimited control. Also subjective assessments are **more expensive to score** than objective tests. Assessment scores cannot be compared from school-to-school and state-to-state because of inherent subjective irregularities.

12. The two **assessment consortia** received federal money to do that work. When a state leaves the CCS program, the federal government might require the state to **repay** a portion of the funds. (A total of 45 states

participated in the consortia. Maine and North Dakota participated but have not adopted the CCS.)

13. It is possible that the federal government would threaten to withhold **Federal Title I funds** if a state drops out of the national standards; however, it is doubtful that the Obama administration would want to appear draconian, particularly toward states that dropped out of CCS because of significant budgetary constraints.

14. The **legality** of the Common Core Standards is on shaky grounds. The federal government has no Constitutional authority whatsoever to control what is taught in local classrooms.

15. If no federal money has yet been sent to a state to implement CCS, then that state should be free to express **"buyers' remorse" and to opt out of CCS**.

B. RTTT Winner States

These statements are directed at the **12 states** that “won” **Race to the Top** money. These states also should **consider pulling out of RTTT** for the following reasons:

1. Race to the Top provides relatively small funding for the schools. Massachusetts, which received a \$250 million RTTT grant over four years, found that it amounted to **\$64 per student/per year** (i.e., **44 cents a day per student** over four years).

2. When the Texas Education Agency figured out how much the state would have received from Race to the Top, it amounted to a **paltry** one-time grant of around **\$75 per student**.

3. It will cost **millions of dollars** for a state to **convert** from its existing standards to the national standards. For example, it is estimated that California would need to spend around **\$2 billion** to make the conversion.

4. RTTT is an **unfunded federal mandate** and will cost the states **more dollars to implement the Common Core Standards Initiative than they receive**.

5. These 12 RTTT states have **yielded control** over their schools to the federal government.

6. As part of the lengthy application process for RTTT, the states had to **standardize their data collection** to fit the requirements of the federal government. The USDOE has reams of data on each state, preparing the way for a national database. The fear of many people is that outside entities could

gain access to this **[national database](#)** to data mine vital and intrusive information about students, families, and educators.

7. Because the Obama administration cannot afford to fail with the RTTT plan, the U. S. DOE is busily **[micromanaging](#)** everything in the RTTT states. Many states are having **[“buyers’ remorse”](#)** over their decision to participate in the RTTT scheme.

8. The worst case scenario might be that states would have to **[repay](#)** the government over time for the RTTT funds received, but that would be a big **[public relations nightmare](#)** for the DOE to sue states for the return of that money. More than likely, the RTTT money has already been spent by the state and its school districts; and to give back the federal money right away would cause serious hardships on states that are already struggling with their finances. Besides if such a lawsuit were filed, it would take many years for the case to wind through the various courts.

9. The Obama administration has indeed made threats to withhold **[Title I funding](#)** from states that do not participate in the CCS. On 2.22.10, **[The White House](#)** issued this statement:

Cut/copy/paste URL: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/president-obama-calls-new-steps-prepare-america-s-children-success-college-and-care>

[Require all states to adopt and certify that they have college-and career-ready standards in reading and mathematics, which may include common standards developed by a state-led consortium, as a condition of qualifying for Title I funding.](#)

10. However, with so much to lose in going along with the federal takeover of the public schools, the RTTT states should all get together **[as a group](#)** and announce to the U. S. DOE that they are all withdrawing from the CCS/RTTT Initiative. The U. S. DOE would probably not dare target one state unfairly and would have a very hard time targeting all of the 12 RTTT states as a block.

OUR PLEA

A federal judge has ruled that **ObamaCare is unconstitutional** because of the over-reaching of the federal government into people's personal lives. The federal takeover of the **public schools** by the Obama administration is no less egregious. What is more precious than the minds of our children?

Common Core Standards / Race to the Top **never came before Congress** for public hearings, debate, and a floor vote; and that is the reason the Obama administration has been able to capture the public schools of our country without the public's knowledge.

The Common Core Standards and Race to the Top are **against public law**. (Please see 20 U.S.C. § 3403 (Pub.L. 96-88, Title I, § 103, Oct. 17, 1979, 93 Stat. 670). *United States Code. Title 20. Education. Chapter 48* posted below.)

The federal government is **forbidden** by public law to take over state and local school education systems. The federal government is **forbidden** by public law to meddle in curriculum and programs of instruction used at the local school level. CCS/RTTT does all of the above.

We are pleading with grassroots citizens to **get informed and make their voices heard** at the local, state, and national levels in the same way that they did on ObamaCare and at the polls on Nov. 2, 2010. If enough people join together to tell the federal government to stop trying to indoctrinate our children, **we can stop** the CCS/RTTT tentacles from spreading.

ACTION STEPS

1. Understand the **legality** of the federal government's takeover of our schools. Ask your State Attorney General to examine the **legality** of the government's position. Please write to your Congressmen, remind them of *United States Code. Title 20. Education. Chapter 48*, and ask them to **repeal** CCS / RTTT based upon this public law.

Here is the **U. S. Code** found in the U. S. Department of Education, Public Law that limits the authority of the federal government over states' rights and also prohibits the federal government from exercising any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum and program of instruction in the public schools.

<http://uscode.house.gov/download/pls/20C48.txt>

Department of Education, Public Law -- 2/01/10

20 U.S.C. § 3403 (*Pub. L. 96-88, Title I, § 103, Oct. 17, 1979, 93 Stat. 670*).
United States Code. *Title 20. Education. Chapter 48*

Chapter 48 -- **Sec. 3403. Relationship with States**

-STATUTE-

(a) Rights of local governments and educational institutions

It is the intention of the Congress in the establishment of the Department to protect the rights of State and local governments and public and private educational institutions in the areas of educational policies and administration of programs and to strengthen and improve the control of such governments and institutions over their own educational programs and policies.

The establishment of the Department of Education shall not increase the authority of the Federal Government over education or diminish the responsibility for education which is reserved to the States and the local school systems and other instrumentalities of the States.

(b) Curriculum, administration, and personnel; library resources

No provision of a program administered by the Secretary or by any other officer of the Department shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any such officer **to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel** of any educational institution, school, or school system, over any accrediting agency or association, or over the selection or content of library resources, textbooks, or other instructional materials by any educational institution or school system, except to the extent authorized by law.

2. Urge your State Attorney General and the Congressional Oversight Committees to **investigate the legality** of the government's possible **withholding of Title I funds**.
3. Ask your Congressmen to **stop the funding for CCS/RTTT**.
4. Get your Congressmen to pass a bill that contains a **hold harmless**" clause whereby states would not have to pay back the CCS/RTTT funds already received.
5. Contact your state and locally elected officials; explain to them that they must **not apply** for any more CCS/RTTT **funds**.

6. Ask your state department of education officials to **remove** themselves **from** any and all **assessment consortia** (e.g., SMARTER and PARCC).
7. Contact your elected state officials and ask them **not to adopt** the Common Core Standards (**national standards**). This would include members of the State Board of Education, legislators on the Education Committee, and your Senators and Congressmen.
8. If your state has formally adopted the national standards, urge them to **drop those standards**.
9. If your state is an RTTT winner, urge your state education department officials to consider the astronomical **costs** to state taxpayers **over and above** the money the state will receive to implement the CSS.
10. Urge your state education officials to **write their own standards**. Tell your officials that the Texas Education Agency has offered to collaborate with any state that needs help in setting up a standards adoption process.
11. **Share this report** with as many people as you possibly can so there is a **groundswell of grassroots objections to CCS/RTTT**.
12. **Do not give up hope**. Bad laws can be repealed and defunded. Think about **ObamaCare**. On 1.19.11, the House of Representatives voted **245-189** to **repeal ObamaCare**. Note that last year the healthcare bill passed the House with only **219** votes. **Senate** Republicans are pushing to force a vote on the healthcare repeal measure.
13. The Obama administration had a bad day in court on 1.31.11. **Federal Judge Roger Vinson** (Florida) **ruled** that the healthcare law (**ObamaCare**) **was unconstitutional**. In his decision, he declared that the individual mandate was unconstitutional and struck down the entire law. In doing so, the judge **sided with 26 states** [there is **power in numbers**] that sued to block the healthcare overhaul. Obviously, the administration will appeal the ruling; and the case will work its way up to the Supreme Court.

It is not too late to get off the national standards train. Once the states have spent millions of dollars to convert to the national standards, they will not be very receptive to dropping them. The time to stop the train is **now** before it

picks up speed. **You can make a difference!** **Our country's educational future is at stake!**

Bio for Henry W. Burke

Henry Burke is a Civil Engineer with a B.S.C.E. and M.S.C.E. He has been a Registered Professional Engineer (P.E.) for 37 years and has worked as a Civil Engineer in construction for over 40 years. Burke was a Sanitary Engineer in the National Air Pollution Control Administration for two years. Mr. Burke had a successful 27-year career with a large construction contractor, where he was a Project Engineer, Engineer-Estimator, Superintendent, Senior Engineer, and Training Manager.

He serves as a full-time volunteer to oversee various construction projects for his church and a local Christian university. That university recognized his contributions when it awarded him an honorary doctorate degree.

Henry Burke has written articles on education, engineering, construction, and our economy.

Bio for Donna G. Garner

Donna Garner was an educator for 33 years and was appointed by President Reagan and re-appointed by President George H. Bush to serve on the National Commission on Migrant Education.

Garner has been active in helping Texas develop new English / Language Arts / Reading standards and was a writer/researcher for Scott & White Hospital's Worth the Wait abstinence education program. She was also the writer/consultant for MyStudyHall.com, an online tutorial to help students (ages 10 through 100) to learn English skills.

Garner is currently a researcher/author and is involved in political, social, and education issues.