Why Moms Are Protesting Common Core

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One of the major reasons why Moms are vigorously opposing schools adopting the much ballyhooed Common Core standards is that they are tied to the gathering and storing of in-depth personal data about every child. The files are called longitudinal, which means they include information from birth and track the kids all through school and college.

This longitudinal system reminds us of the ominous practice of the Chinese Communists who, in pre-internet days, stored every child's personal information (academic, medical, behavioral, and home situation) in a manila folder that was ultimately turned over to his employer when he finished school.

The New York Times published a famous picture of a Chinese warehouse filled with a dangan (archival record) for millions of Chinese individuals. The collection and retention of voluminous personal information (academic from pre-K through university, behavioral, political, and appraisals by others) is the way a totalitarian state keeps control of its people.

Federal law is supposed to prevent collection of this sort of personal information and the building of a national database on students, but the FERPA regulations have been amended to weaken privacy restrictions. Databases on students can be collected by states and then exchanged with other agencies and states, which effectively achieves a national student database.

Only the English and Math Common Core standards have so far been released. The Math standards are based on an unproven theory called Constructivism, which means the kids are not drilled in basic arithmetic (addition, subtraction, and multiplication) but instead are taught to "construct" their own way of figuring out the answers.

English literature selections are not read for the joy of reading and learning, but so they can be analyzed and critiqued by students using leftwing norms. That's called New Criticism Literary Analysis, another unproved theory of education.

A bill just introduced in the Florida State Senate (SB 1316) shows more reasons why parents are upset about Common Core. The bill would require that, before adopting Common Core, at least one hearing to receive public testimony must be held in each congressional district, attended by at least one state school board member.

The Florida bill requires a fiscal report on the projected cost of implementation of Common Core standards before they are adopted. The bill would also prohibit the State Board of Education from entering into any agreement that cedes to an outside entity control over curricular standards or assessments.

Common Core replaces traditional local control of education with a privately copyrighted document that must be used as written and not altered in any way. Schools and teachers are complaining about the high cost of teacher training plus buying all new materials, books, workbooks, iPads and computers for every student.

Common Core has created a tremendous money-making opportunity for private companies that advertise their products as "aligned" with Common Core, and "aligned" has become the magic word to promote sales. California has allocated $1.25 billion in the current school year for adopting Common Core.

For example, now available for purchase is a set of nearly 500-page books called "SpringBoard, Consumable Student Edition" which is advertised on the cover to be "The College Board's official Pre-AP program." There is a book for each middle-school and high-school level that includes large spaces where students can write their answers or comments.

The selected readings in one of these middle school books are a curious lot. Two of the longest readings are the complete United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the complete United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Global diversity appears to be the rationale for article selections. They include articles about head scarves on Muslims in France, the punishment of an American teenager in Singapore, an arranged marriage in India, learning the Japanese language, an African novel, and three articles promoting belief in global warming.

The very few pages devoted to American culture include the problem of a kid trying to avoid parental punishment for arriving home after his curfew deadline, Halloween, and a controversy over sea lions in Oregon.

The advertising for these books specifies that "The SpringBoard program is well aligned with the Common Core standards," and "The strength of the SpringBoard program continues to be the development of critical thinking and close reading skills through scaffolded instruction."

If you are mystified, so am I and so are the teachers. But be assured: David Coleman, the person credited with developing the Common Core standards, is the new head of the College Board and says he is now rewriting the SAT tests. The tests are the mechanism of national control over curriculum.

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