

Terrorist Professor Bill Ayers and Obama's Federal School Curriculum

aim.org/special-report/terrorist-professor-bill-ayers-and-obamas-federal-school-curriculum

Mary Grabar

September 21, 2012



Three years after the Department of Education announced a contest called Race-to-the-Top for \$4.35 billion in stimulus funds, some parents, teachers, governors, and citizen and public policy groups are coming to an awful realization about the likely outcomes:

- A national curriculum called Common Core
- Regionalism, or the replacement of local governments by federally appointed bureaucrats
- A leveling of all schools to one, low national standard, and a redistribution of education funds among school districts
- An effective federal tracking of all students
- The loss of the option of avoiding the national curriculum and tests through private school and home school

Working behind the scenes, implementing these policies and writing the standards are associates from President Obama's community organizing days. In de facto control of the education component is Linda Darling-Hammond, a radical left-wing educator and close colleague of William "Bill" Ayers, the former leader of the communist terrorist Weather Underground who became a professor of education and friend of Obama's.

When these dangerous initiatives are implemented, there will be no escaping bad schools and a radical curriculum by moving to a good suburb, or by home schooling, or by enrolling your children in private schools.

How was it that 48 governors entered Race-to-the-Top without knowing outcomes?

It was one of the many "crises" exploited by the Obama administration. While the public was focused on a series of radical moves coming in rapid-fire succession, like the health care bill and proposed trials and imprisonment of 9/11 terrorists on domestic soil, governors, worried about keeping school doors open, signed on. Many politicians and pundits praised Obama on this singular issue, repeating the official rhetoric about raising standards.

It stands to reason, though, that education policies would be consistent with Obama's agenda. After all, one of his most controversial associations, highlighted during the 2008 presidential campaign, was with an *education* professor, Bill Ayers. As a terrorist, he and his wife, Bernardine Dohrn, had dedicated their *Prairie Fire Manifesto* to Sirhan Sirhan, the convicted assassin of Robert F. Kennedy. It was for this reason that Kennedy's son, Christopher Kennedy, chairman of the University of Illinois board of trustees, voted against bestowing "professor emeritus" status on Ayers after he retired. "I intend to vote against conferring the honorific title of our university whose body of work includes a book dedicated in part to the man who murdered my father, Robert F. Kennedy," he said.

THE OBAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: WHERE DID BILL AYERS GO?

Back then, the former bomber and co-founder of the communist terrorist Weather Underground organization was Distinguished Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The two had worked together closely from the year Ayers hosted a political launch party for Obama, in 1995, to 2002. At the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, "the brainchild of Bill Ayers," they funneled more than \$100 million to radical groups like ACORN and Gamaliel, which used the funds to promote radical education.[i] This initiative was also promoted by Arne Duncan, now Secretary of Education. Also as board members of the Woods Fund, Ayers and Obama channeled money to ACORN and the Midwest Academy.[ii]

When initial White House visitor logs were released in 2009, the administration quickly dismissed speculations about visits by "William Ayers." That was a *different William Ayers* Americans were told. The Obama administration is appealing an August 17 order to release the other visitor logs in response to a lawsuit filed by Judicial Watch and others.[iii]

It appears, however, that “the” Obama-friendly Bill Ayers has been visiting Washington, D.C. for education-related matters.

In October 2009, the year before he retired, Ayers had an encounter with the “Backyard Conservative” blogger at Reagan National Airport. At that time, there was speculation about Ayers being the real author of Obama’s autobiography, *Dreams from My Father*. Ayers teased that he was indeed the real author.

Blogger and law professor, Stephen Diamond, noted that no one asked why Ayers would even *be* in Washington, D.C. It turns out that Ayers was one of three keynote speakers at a conference sponsored by the Renaissance Group, which, according to Diamond, was dedicated to problems of poverty, diversity, and multiculturalism—and the inability of white teachers to deal with them. The other two speakers were Secretary of Education Duncan and U.S. Under Secretary of Education, Martha Kanter.

It is not clear what Ayers spoke about at this particular conference. But my analysis of his courses and methods at the University of Illinois determined that his purpose is to radicalize future teachers—and by extension their students—for the purpose of sparking a revolution and overthrowing capitalism.

It is shocking that Obama Education Department officials would appear at a conference that also featured someone like Ayers. On the other hand, their boss, President Obama, worked with Ayers in Chicago, and this kind of collaboration is not entirely surprising. We are left, however, wondering about the precise nature of the role that Ayers is playing in the development of this federal education plan. But his participation in this conference clearly suggests he is playing a role of some kind.

At this three-day conference, Mr. Nevin Brown of Achieve, Inc., made a presentation on the “Common Core State Standards” Initiative. A recipient of the largesse of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Achieve would become a key player in revamping education under Common Core. Hence, Ayers was a major speaker at a conference that was involved in developing a new national curriculum. If Achieve has ever disavowed Ayers or his teaching methods, we could find no evidence of this on the public record.

The notion of a “Common Core” seems to recall E.D. Hirsch’s traditionalist Common Knowledge curriculum, which emphasizes the need for students to understand America’s cultural and national heritage. But Common Core is not that at all. Many have been fooled, and an estimated 80% of the public does not even know about Common Core.

Common Core is part of an effort to implement regionalism, the replacement of local governments by regional boards of federally appointed bureaucrats, who in turn are beholden to international bodies. Regionalism will eliminate the freedom parents now have in choosing neighborhoods with good schools because tax funds will be distributed equally. There will be no escape in home schooling or private schools either, because the curriculum

will follow national tests. Students will be tracked through mandatory state records that will then be accessible to Washington bureaucrats. Ultimately, all students will be subject to education mandates implemented by Obama's radical cronies.

NOT LETTING A CRISIS GO TO WASTE

"Race to the Top" required that states commit to yet-to-be-written Common Core standards in math and English/Language Arts (ELA). Today, Common Core has the support of Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, and was included in the platform of the Democratic National Convention. It was embraced by former Republican Florida Governor, Jeb Bush, much to the consternation of Tea Party groups, who see this as an unconstitutional federal takeover of education. The Republican Party is divided.

Emmett McGroarty and Jane Robbins, in their white paper "Controlling Education from the Top: Why Common Core Is Bad for America," describe the pressure and sleight-of-hand that led governors to sign onto a commitment that was then changed before the ink had fully dried. They reveal that rather than being a state-led reform initiative, as touted, the new standards were written by a few well-connected, but non-qualified, education entrepreneurs. The history goes back decades, but in the most recent phase, the vision for Common Core was set in 2007, by the Washington-based contractor, Achieve, Inc., in a document entitled *Benchmarking for Success*.

The question is: Why was Bill Ayers keynoting a conference attended by the two highest officials in the Education Department and by Achieve, essentially the project manager of the nationalized education curriculum? It may be years before we know how often Ayers visited the White House, but the Ayers educational brand or philosophy is all over Common Core.

Some states are waking up. Virginia pulled out when Governor Bob McDonnell was elected. Georgia, Indiana, Utah, South Carolina, and others have begun the effort to extricate themselves.

When South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley said she would support a state legislative effort to block Common Core, which her predecessor had instituted, Education Secretary Arne Duncan dismissed her concerns about nationally imposed standards as "a conspiracy theory in search of a conspiracy."

But it doesn't take a conspiracy theorist to realize that Common Core will ultimately dictate the curriculum. Two consortia of states (SBAC and PARCC)[iv] have been given \$360 million in federal funds to create national Common Core-aligned tests and "curriculum models." Well-connected companies, such as Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the multinational textbook company Pearson, are in competition to design the test. David Coleman, a chief architect of the Common Core standards for English/Language Arts, recently was named President of the College Board, which administers tests, including those designed by ETS, like the SAT.

The Education Department on August 12, 2012, announced another competition for \$400 million in Race-to-the-Top funds for local districts to “personalize learning, close achievement gaps and take full advantage of 21st century tools.” Such a competition cleverly bypasses recalcitrant states and lures individual districts into the federal web.

The feds’ announcement echoes Common Core’s emphasis on personalized learning and leveling of achievement through technology and collaboration (the “21st century skills”). Common Core emphasizes “in-depth” reading of short passages, rather than long fictional or historical narratives. The Publisher’s Criteria reveal that a focus on short texts will equalize outcomes. Text selection guide B mandates that “all students (including those who are behind) have extensive opportunities to encounter grade-level complex text” through “supplementary opportunities.” The strategy of gathering students into groups to collaborate on short passages ensures that no one advances beyond others.[v]

In the tradition of John Dewey, multiple “perspectives” and “critical thinking” are emphasized over the accumulation of “facts.” Common Core advertises itself as promoting “skills,” rather than content. The skills, though, do not promise to make students more knowledgeable about literature or history, but to make them “critical thinkers” in the tradition of the radical curriculum writers who are selectively critical of the U.S. and the West.

BILL AYERS IN THE CLASSROOM

In 2008, attention was focused on Bill Ayers’ past as a terrorist; this, Stephen Diamond maintains, missed the real damage, which was political. Diamond, a social democrat, calls Ayers a “neo-Stalinist,” in line with Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez, whose country Ayers visited to make speeches about education being the “motor force of revolution.” According to Diamond, Neo-Stalinism is an “authoritarian form of politics which attempts to control and build social institutions to impose state control of the economy, politics and culture on the general population.” Ayers and his allies used the “critical policy area” of education, and through four aims: “local school councils,” small schools, social justice teaching, and payment of reparations through education spending.

Local school councils and “small schools” are efforts to escape modern schools that, in Ayers’ estimation, “are all about sorting and punishing, grading and ranking and certifying” and demanding “obedience and conformity.”[vi] Ayers’ numerous, supposedly scholarly, books and articles are filled with such hyperbole that depicts demands of the regular school day, like objective tests and class periods, as evidence of a police state.

Former Senior Policy Advisor to the Department of Education and member of the California Mathematics Framework Committee, Ze’ev Wurman, testified that the Common Core overlooks basic skills, lowers college readiness standards, and offers “verbose and imprecise guidance,”[vii] while dictating that geometry be taught by an experimental method that was tested on Soviet math prodigies in the 1950s—and failed.

In English classes, teachers will reduce the amount of time spent teaching their subject of literature to only 50 percent, and then to 30 percent in high school, a move criticized by education reform professor Sandra Stotsky. Replacing literature will be “informational texts” like nonfiction books, computer manuals, IRS forms, and original documents, like court decisions and the *Declaration of Independence*. Documents, like the *Declaration*, however, are taught in a manner that *downplays* their significance. Overall, students will be losing a sense of a national and cultural heritage that is acquired through a systematic reading of classical literature and study of history.

Although the official rhetoric promoting these standards is more muted, the approach parallels Bill Ayers’ pedagogy. The replacement of traditional mathematics with “conceptual categories” lends itself to advancing a social justice agenda, as Ayers colleague Eric Gutstein does through his math education classes. The Common Core emphasis on having students simply explore original texts parallels the John Dewey-inspired approach that Ayers favors, of having students “discover” and “construct” knowledge. Not wanting to be beholden to outside, objective measurements of students’ knowledge, such teachers promote other more subjective measures, like displays of “deep” understanding, “higher-order” thinking, and ability to collaborate. By all indications, the testing being developed now will use such criteria.

THE ROLE OF BILL AYERS “PAL” LINDA DARLING-HAMMOND

Stanley Kurtz, in his latest book, *Spreading the Wealth*, maintains that a nationalized curriculum is part of an effort to replace local governments with regional boards, who would disburse local tax dollars equally among school districts. Once all schools are the same—with the same curriculum and the same funding—people will no longer have the incentive to move to good suburbs. While Obama’s community organizing mentor, Mike Kruglik, implements the regionalism advocated by the Gamaliel Foundation through Building One America, Ayers’ close associate, Linda Darling-Hammond, exercises “de facto control”^[viii] through education.

Both Ayers and Darling-Hammond were leaders in the small schools movement. She has published in a collection edited by Ayers. Both have been advocates of ending funding disparities between urban and suburban schools, ending standardized testing, and attacking “white privilege.” She has been a board member of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), a group housed at the University of Illinois at Chicago, that provides studies of, and services for, Emotional Intelligence in schools—but really emotional manipulation aimed at making students global citizens.

Both also failed to improve schools or test scores. Ayers’ Annenberg Challenge failed miserably. The school created by Darling-Hammond, Stanford New Schools, which targeted low-income Hispanic and black students, had the distinction of making California’s list of the lowest-achieving five percent. Much of the reason may be her “five-dimensional grading rubric” of personal responsibility, social responsibility, communication skills, application of

knowledge, and critical and creative thinking. Yet, Darling-Hammond served as education director on Obama's transition team. In a January 2, 2009, *Huffington Post* column, Ayers argued for her nomination as Education Secretary. That summer, Darling-Hammond pushed Common Core in the *Harvard Educational Review*.

Darling-Hammond is in charge of content specifications at the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which received \$176 million of federal Race-to-the-Top money to develop Common Core testing. She appears frequently as a speaker and board member of other affiliated organizations. For example, she sits on the Governing Board of the Alliance for Excellent Education, Inc., recipient of a \$500,000 Gates grant "to advocate for high school reform at the federal level in order to educate federal policy members about Common Core standards. . ."

In the August 2009 *Harvard Educational Review*, Darling-Hammond gave a preview of new standards as she argued for "deep understanding" and advancing beyond "the narrow views of the last eight years" by "developing creativity, critical thinking skills, and the capacity to innovate." New assessments would use "multiple measures of learning and performance." These would presumably emulate "high-achieving nations" that emphasize "essay questions and open-ended responses as well as research and scientific investigations, complex real-world problems, and extensive use of technology."

In an April 28, 2010, *Education Week* article, "Developing an Internationally Comparable Balanced Assessment System," Darling-Hammond claimed that the new assessment system is "designed to go beyond recall of facts and show students' abilities to evaluate evidence, problem solve and understand context." Bill Ayers, throughout his writings, likens the testing for "facts" to a factory or prison system, and agrees with Darling-Hammond's emphasis on criteria like "student growth along multiple dimensions." Such buzzwords thinly disguise an agenda of replacing the objective measurement of knowledge and skills with teachers' subjective appraisals of students' attitudes and behavior.

Former testing foes, like Columbia Teachers College professor Lucy Calkins, now advance Common Core standards. Although long an incubator of anti-testing advocates, Columbia has produced the authors of the popular *Pathways to the Common Core* (2012), one of them Calkins.

Pathways is maddening in its lack of specificity. Repeatedly, the authors inveigh against "skill-and-drill" and favor "deep reading" and "higher-level thinking;" but they fail to say how this will be done or even what it means. They discuss "read[ing] within the four corners of the text" and having readers get "their mental arms around a text,"^[ix] but offer no specific, much less tested, strategies for improving reading comprehension. They contradict themselves when they cite studies that show that students who read fiction improve reading levels and then promote nonfiction. When examples of informational texts are given, they are most often from left-leaning publications, often on trivial subjects.

Common Core thus promises to *eliminate* the idea of a common core of knowledge—through the privileging of leftist “informational texts” and material presented in a scattershot manner. The national and cultural identity that is conveyed through a wide and interconnected exposure to literary works from Mother Goose to Shakespeare will be undermined.

While proponents tout a close, critical reading of short texts, or excerpts, the truth is that the approach lends itself to infinite interpretations wildly off the mark. The approach—where uninformed groups of students speculate about “original documents”—is intended to make them radically skeptical of any historical legacy.

Original documents are presented in such a manner as to actually diminish them. For example, a sample exercise about Abraham Lincoln’s *Gettysburg Address* threw teachers into confusion when they were instructed to refrain from providing background and to read the speech without feeling. In this way, this pivotal document is stripped of its historical significance and eloquence. Nor are the religious references, so important to Lincoln’s speeches, to be mentioned. The strategy puts the *Gettysburg Address* on the same plane as other “informational texts,” say about frogs or snakes.

TRASHING THE UNITED STATES AND THE FBI

Other materials have the same effect. Stanford University’s “Reading Like a Historian” Project, promoted in a July 30 *Education Week* article, offers teachers a ready-made lesson on the Cold War with four documents: excerpts from Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech, the Truman Doctrine Speech, a telegram sent by Soviet Ambassador Nikolai Novikov to the Soviet leadership in 1946, and a modified letter by Henry Wallace, shortly before he was asked to resign by President Truman. The “Guiding Questions” focus on “close reading” and “context.” But with the scant information offered, students will likely see the final question, “Who was primarily responsible for the Cold War, the United States or the Soviet Union?” as one of moral equivalence.

Another lesson on the Cold War is sold by Rutgers professor Marc Aronson, who advertises himself as a “Common Core consultant,” speaker, and author. He calls Common Core “a magnificent opportunity.”^[x] His most recent book, *Master of Deceit: J. Edgar Hoover and America in the Age of Lies*, is tailored for English teachers who need to teach “informational texts” to middle and high school students. Aronson makes it easy for them, offering them free teachers guides.

Master of Deceit mocks Hoover’s own bestselling *Masters of Deceit* that described and warned about communist subversion. Aronson’s book is extremely manipulative and salacious, and engages in wild speculation. While a conservative point of view is thrown in here and there, the points come off as gratuitous and obviously contradictory to the main (correct) message. Aronson presents FBI Director Hoover as a repressed homosexual, who exploited Americans’ irrational fears about communism. Among the “original documents”

that Aronson provides are photographs—of Hoover with his friend Clyde Tolson. He points out, for the benefit of eleven-year-olds, that photos of Tolson reclining on a lawn chair, and fully clothed, “might be seen as lovers’ portraits. . . but we cannot say for sure.”

In fact, we can. As Bernie Reeves, founder of the Raleigh Spy Conference, has noted, the story of Hoover’s alleged homosexuality was contrived by the KGB in the 1960s. He notes evidence that “...the Hoover rumor, fabricated by the KGB, found its way into the lexicon of our culture where it has evolved from vicious disinformation to accepted fact—a veritable success for the KGB and another example of the role of the failure of established media to serve as an honest broker in the affairs of the nation and the world.”

“Hoover provided the security Americans wanted,” writes Aronson. “Our beliefs about what was acceptable—what could be shown in public and what had to be guarded in private—shaped the secrets he could gather.”

Aronson’s parting words to the student are, “I hope *Master of Deceit* shows that we must always question both the heroes we favor and the enemies we hate. We must remain open-minded, even when the shadow of fear freezes our hearts.” In fact, our fear was real. Hoover led the FBI’s efforts to expose the Communist Party members and fronts that were part of the international communist movement that the editors of the *Black Book of Communism* had estimated were responsible for about 100 million dead.

Others advertise their services as Common Core speakers and workshop leaders, many through Edutopia, funded by movie producer George Lucas that has been promoting disturbing anti-bullying and emotional intelligence videos and workshops.

The publisher of *Pathways to the Common Core*, Heinemann, also publishes ready-to-go curricular material and offers workshops on Common Core by Calkins and her colleagues.

SELLING OBAMA CORE MATERIALS

Publishers are promoting new Core-aligned materials. The American Library Association directs educators to their Booklist, which offers “classics” suggestions from *contemporary* authors. More typical are categories like “Exploring Diversity.”

TeachingBooks.net offers lesson plans and discussion questions, reportedly, to more than a quarter of all U.S. schools. The site also features interviews and blog posts by authors about the research process on favorite topics like the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers’ strike.[xi] Publishers Random House, Scholastic, and Holiday House are re-launching their teacher and librarian sites with information about the Core.[xii]

PBS promotes the use of “public media” in the Common Core, thus updating their educational activities.

A July 18 *Publishers Weekly* article notes that publishers are eagerly putting out Common Core books by adapting adult nonfiction books, like *Fast Food Nation*, for classroom use in a new title, *Chew on This*. Indeed, they are following the lead of officials: One of the sample Common Core guides is for teaching *The Omnivore's Dilemma*.

Lerner Publishing Group is publishing biographies on stars, “such as Justin Bieber,” while carefully adhering to “Core criteria such as reading level, narrative arc, and sentence structure.” Books are sold in clusters, by topic, because “Typically, Core authors want students to think more critically about what they’re reading . . . to compare multiple sources in different formats; and to give more sourced evidence, and less personal opinion in their writing.”

Presumably, preteens would not be writing opinion essays about how “cute” Bieber is, but would rigorously be providing “sourced evidence” in their “deep” analyses.

CLASSROOM LESSONS

How is Common Core now being used in classrooms? On March 14, *Education Week* reported that tenth-graders in a suburb of Des Moines would be reading *Nickel and Dimed* by far-left activist Barbara Ehrenreich. This book, along with others on “computer geeks, fast food, teenage marketing, chocolate-making, and diamond-mining,” is about the “real-world topics” (like Bieber) promoted by Common Core.

The Pearson Foundation, with a grant from the Gates Foundation, will offer a “coherent and systemic approach to teaching the Common Core State Standards.” Another big, well-connected publisher, Scholastic, is developing “Everyday Literacy,” which according to *Education Week*, is a “K-6 program that incorporates brochures, catalogs, menus, and other text types.”

New York City’s new “Core-Aligned Task” for eleventh- and twelfth-graders centers on “doing work ‘On Behalf of Others.’” This idea of speaking out on behalf of the oppressed is canonized as “a long and dignified tradition of documentary work” that produces records “meant to raise questions and to function as calls to action.”

Students are asked to “read” a *New York Times* photo essay and audio clip titled, “Joshua Febres: The Uncertain Gang Member.” This exercise in “literacy” consists of “listen[ing] carefully” and “look[ing] closely at the images that accompany the audio.”

The exercise, “Building reading comprehension,” involves “extracting and analyzing relevant information from [Dorothea Lange’s Depression-era] ‘Migrant Mother’ photos.” The teacher is to:

Place students in pairs or trios. Using all the photographs, have the students spend at least ten minutes looking closely at the sequence of images that led up to the final image, as well as that final image. Ask them to infer what was selected and what was deflected from earlier

photos, when making the final photo.

After reading an informational *paragraph* about James Agee and writing a one-sentence summary of it, students “return to [the] images.” As a class they then read a web page “which describes the complicated history of that image.”

The class next watches a short video about the artist “JR,” who works “on behalf of others,” by doing “massive public art installations all over the world in which he posts photographs of regular people on places such as the walls of buildings, rooftops, and the sides of bridges and trains.”

The essay-writing task is a “micro-report” of 500 words “about an event you witnessed [sic] place or person you know that *needs to be brought to light or told about.*”

Obviously, with only a “micro-report,” evaluation cannot be based on written “literacy” alone. So the teacher is offered a handy “Speaking and Listening Standards: Observation and Comment Form.” These upper-classmen are judged on “participat[ing] in collaborative discussion” that includes “work[ing] with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and fair decision-making.”

HIGHER STANDARDS?

Are these higher standards or dumbing down? Will Common Core produce well-educated Americans or indoctrinated pacifist global citizens?

Huffington Post blogger and “Award-Winning Historian and Inner City Teacher” John Thompson cheers this curriculum. So does PBS, as it promotes its educational materials as Common Core compliant, while receiving federal funds and the largesse of Bill Gates.

In her *Harvard Educational Review* article, “President Obama and Education: The Possibility for Dramatic Improvements in Teaching and Learning,” published in the summer after Bill Ayers had urged her nomination as Secretary of Education, Linda Darling-Hammond waxed on about the Obama administration’s “opportunity to transform our nation’s schools.” Some may remember Obama’s promise to “fundamentally transform America.” Darling-Hammond noted (or warned), “Barack Obama has outlined a set of ambitious plans to transform American education on a scale not seen since the days of the Great Society.”

APPENDIX: THE GATES FOUNDATION

McGroarty and Robbins note that the Gates Foundation “has poured tens of millions of dollars into organizations that have an interest, financial or otherwise, in the implementation of Common Core.”^[xiii] While the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gives to worthy causes like fighting malaria and HIV infection, the foundation’s 2010 IRS documents reveal funding

of other, mostly leftist, causes. Gifts went to the Tides Fund, and Planned Parenthood and other “reproductive health” efforts. In education, Gates has given money to teachers unions, La Raza schools, and a school named after Caesar Chavez.

They have given a lot to school districts. After Bill Gates met with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, reporter Jaime Sarrío gushed about Gates’ generosity: a \$20 million investment in “game-based learning,” technical support in Georgia’s Race to the Top application, a gift of \$500,000 for teachers to meet the standards of Common Core, and \$10 million for Atlanta public schools’ “Effective Teacher in Every Classroom” program.

Florida schools received a substantial portion of education funding.

In 2010, the Gates Foundation gave millions to a number of developers of “game-based learning” and “digital learning.” Gates is also helping companies that will evaluate teacher effectiveness, like Teachscape. Among Teachscape’s business partners are the testing company ETS and the National Education Association. Teachscape’s founder is on the board of Oracle, a company that advertises itself as teaching “21st century skills.” Oracle donated money to Teachscape. Another business partner of Teachscape, Leaning Forward, will hold a conference in December, sponsored by the Gates Foundation. Presenters will offer their companies’ and their schools’ advice on using technology to implement Common Core. Session topics fall into categories like “Brain-Based Learning” and “Race, Class, Culture, and Learning Differences.”

Gates also gave millions to projects on “data collection” programs that track teacher and student progress.

The Gates Foundation supported efforts to market Common Core through media “education.” The Corporation for Public Broadcasting received half a million dollars to “identify and amplify ‘teacher voice’ to help ensure teachers are in the center of the dialogue on teacher accountability” (nothing for parent or citizen voice, though). NPR received \$250,000 “to support coverage of education issues.” The Education Writers Association received \$603,900 “to enhance media coverage of high school and post-secondary education by offering seminars and online training for reporters building bridges between mainstream and ethnic community media,” and \$23,634 to “support media coverage of the education components of American Recovery and Reconstruction Act.”

The Gates Foundation provided a \$489,453 grant to the George Soros/Obama mouthpiece, the Center for American Progress, “to help communicate the importance of education reforms and support progressive states seeking to implement them.” The same year CAP was also awarded \$302,680 to “enhance degree completion for low-income young adults through the publishing of new policy papers, stakeholder engagement and media outreach.” Over \$1 million was given to the Editorial Projects in Education, which publishes *Education Week*, which is supported by other foundations favoring Common Core. *Education Week* published

the Darling-Hammond article promoting new assessments. Stephen Diamond in an October 9, 2008, blog post complained that *Education Week* was “whitewashing” Obama’s relationship with Bill Ayers in the Annenberg Challenge.

Universities across the country received grants to promote Common Core, as did Boards of Regents. Columbia Teachers College, Ayers’ alma mater, and place of employment for Lucy Calkins, was a major beneficiary.

Gates’ efforts are aligned with the federal government’s, of making reparations, as it were, by allocating money to low-income and minority students and making them “college-ready.” Such allocations are quite frequent in the tax return.

But critics worry that equalization will be achieved by lowering standards. None of the education non-profits funded by Gates are dedicated to raising standards through a rigorous, traditional curriculum, or by promoting Western or American principles. As Heather Crossin and Jane Robbins point out, realistically, the idea of universal college-readiness can be met only by lowering standards. Some Common Core advocates have admitted that this is the case.

[i] Stanley Kurtz, quoted in *The Corruption Chronicles: Obama’s Big Secrecy, Big Corruption, and Big Government* by Tom Fitton (New York; Simon and Schuster, 2012) page 124.

[ii] Kurtz, Stanley. *Spreading the Wealth: How Obama Is Robbing the Suburbs to Pay for the Cities*. New York; Sentinel, 2012. 138.

[iii] *The Judicial Watch Verdict*, August 2012, Volume 18, Issue 8. 10, 12.

[iv] SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and Partnership for Assessment Readiness of College and Careers

[v] David Coleman and Susan Pimentel, “Revised Publishers’ Criteria for the Common Core Standards.” Revised 4/12/12.

[vi] Ayers, William. “A Simple Justice: Thinking about Teaching and Learning, Equity, and the Fight for Small Schools,” in *A Simple Justice: The Challenge of Small Schools*, Ed. William Ayers, Michael Klonsky, and Gabrielle Lyon. New York: Teachers College Press, 2000. 1-8.

[vii] Page 25.

[viii] Kurtz. 184.

[ix] Page 39.

[x] *Publishers Weekly*, July 18, 2012.

[xi] Springen, Karen. “What Common Core Means for Publishers.” *Publishers Weekly*, July 18, 2012.

[xii] *Ibid.*

[xiii] Page 15.
