



Concerned Women for America of Alabama stands in opposition to the state's adoption of the Common Core State Standards.

The battle being waged in Alabama is not a new one. For decades the struggle in public education has been over one very basic principle – who will control what is being taught to our children. Education policy coming out of Washington, D.C. for years (regardless of which party controls the government) has lessened the role of parents in our schools and increased the authority of the federal government.

Not only has authority shifted more and more to the federal government, but along with that more authority is being taken by the state from the local school boards. Years ago when literacy rates and graduation rates were high and discipline problems in the schools were low, local school boards set the standards for academic achievement and school governance. They were then able to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of their students in achieving those standards. Much of this authority has been given over to the state board of education. And now the push is on to nationalize these “state-led” standards by rewarding or punishing states for their participation in the Common Core State Standards

The federal government through No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, reauthorization bills and support of Common Core State Standards continues to reach into our local school districts with mandates, programs, incentives, and restrictions. All of these diminish the authority exercised by the state school board and local school boards as they continue to grow the U. S. Department of Education into the third largest bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. surpassed only by the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services. And all of this is being done in an area that is constitutionally not even a function of the federal government.

A question that must be asked is, “What comes after the adoption of Common Core State Standards? Will common assessments follow? Will the creation of common instructional materials and curricula follow?” Here is the answer to those questions found at www.corestandards.org:

Will common assessments be developed?

Like adoption of common core standards, it will be up to the states: some states plan to come together voluntarily to develop a common assessment system, based on the common core state standards. A state-led consortium on assessment would be grounded in the following principles: allow for comparison across students, schools, districts, states and nations; create economies of scale; provide information and support more effective teaching and learning; and prepare students for college and careers.

C o n c e r n e d W o m e n f o r A m e r i c a o f A l a b a m a

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Will CCSSO and NGA Center be playing a role in the implementation process, such as creating common instructional materials and curricula?

The release of the final Common Core State Standards marks a historic moment in time. However, the NGA Center and CCSSO recognize that state adoption of the Common Core does not signify the conclusion of standards work. States that have adopted the Common Core must now turn their attention to the critical work of ensuring that implementation of the standards is carried out thoughtfully.

To that end, the NGA Center and CCSSO are committed to assisting state policymakers in the following ways:

- *Developing a State Policymaker Guide to Implementation of the Common Core State Standards, which will provide state policymakers with the key areas that require attention and work as states transition to the standards;*
- *Convening organizations to facilitate conversations about the standards' implementation so states, districts and teachers have the tools they need and providing opportunities for groups with similar activities to collaborate;*
- *Planning and implementing the future governance structure of the Common Core State Standards Initiative; and*
- *Convening the publishing community to ensure that high quality materials aligned with the standards are created.*

So we see in these answers that adopting the Common Core State Standards is not the end of this process. **Policymaking guides, instructional materials, curricula, and assessments will all be developed for use in all of the states that have adopted the standards.** Control moves further and further away from the parents who have the primary responsibility for educating their children.

And always lurking in the background of any discussion about state standards is the question of what will be the level of involvement of the federal government. Again going to www.corestandards.org, we find their answer:

The federal government has had no role in the development of the common core state standards and will not have a role in their implementation.

However, the federal government will have the opportunity to support states as they begin adopting the standards. For example, the federal government can

- *Support this effort through a range of tiered incentives, such as providing states with greater flexibility in the use of existing federal funds, supporting a revised state accountability structure, and offering financial support for states to implement the standards.*
- *Provide long-term financial support for the development and implementation of common assessments, teacher and principal professional development, and research to help continually improve the common core state standards over time.*
- *Revise and align existing federal education laws with the lessons learned from the best of what works in other nations and from research.*

“Secretary of Education Arne Duncan writing in *The Washington Post* listed ‘working toward common, internationally benchmarked standards’ as his No. 1 requirement for states to win funding ... In addition, the Obama administration announced in February that it intends to require states to adopt common national standards in order to remain eligible for Title I money. Nearly every school district in America participates in the \$14.5 billion Title I program, which provides federal funds for low-income students.” (*Townhall*, “School of Barack”, Meredith Jessup, Sept. 2010, p. 49)

Federal intervention in education is almost always tied to money. **Once the standards are in place, the federal dollar incentives will bring more regulation and more intrusion into our state and local school systems.** Concerned Women for America of Alabama urges the State Board of Education to not tie the hands of educators in Alabama. The old adage that people are best governed by those who live closest to them is certainly true in the area of education. State school boards and local school boards can best meet the needs of the families in their states and their communities. **A bureaucrat sitting in Washington, D.C. or someone in another part of the country sitting on a committee does not have the answers to a quality education in your state; you as members of this board and representatives of the people in this state must not abdicate your authority.** We the citizens of this state are calling upon you to provide the best education for our children by maintaining control of the standards, assessments, instructional materials and curricula that will be used to educate our children.

Respectfully submitted,

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Concerned Women for America of Alabama