

## COMMON CORE: MYTHS VS. FACTS

### ***Myth***

### ***Fact***

Common Core (CC) was a state-led initiative.

The CC standards were initiated by private interests in Washington, DC, without any representation from the states. Eventually the creators realized the need to present a façade of state involvement and therefore enlisted the National Governors Association (NGA) (a trade association that doesn't include all governors) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), another DC-based trade association. Neither of these groups had a grant of authority from any particular state or states to write the standards. The bulk of the creative work was done by Achieve, Inc., a DC-based nonprofit that includes many progressive education reformers who have been advocating national standards and curriculum for decades. Massive funding for all this came from private interests such as the Gates Foundation.

The federal government is not involved in the CC scheme.

The US Department of Education (USED) was deeply involved in the meetings that led to creation of Common Core. Moreover, it has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the two consortia that are creating the national tests that will align with CC. USED is acting as the enforcer to herd states into the scheme (see next myth).

States that adopted CC did so voluntarily, without federal coercion.

Most states that adopted CC did so to be eligible to compete for federal Race to the Top funding. To have a chance at that money, recession-racked states agreed to adopt the CC standards and the aligned national tests sight unseen. In addition, the Obama Administration tied No Child Left Behind waivers to CC adoption, making it very difficult for a state to obtain a waiver without agreeing to accept CC.

Under CC, the states will still control their standards.

A state that adopts CC must accept the standards word for word. It may not change or delete anything, and may allow only a small amount of additional content (which won't be covered on the national tests).

CC is only a set of standards, not curriculum; states will still control their curriculum.

The point of standards is to drive curriculum. Ultimately, all the CC states will be teaching pretty much the same curriculum. In fact, the testing consortia being funded by USED admitted in their grant applications that they would use the money to develop curriculum models.

## ***Myth***

## ***Fact***

The CC standards are rigorous and will make our children “college-ready.”

Even the Fordham Institute, a proponent of CC, admits that several states had standards superior to CC and that many states had standards at least as good. CC has been described as a “race to the middle.” And as admitted by one drafter of the CC math standards, CC is designed to prepare students for a nonselective two-year community college, not a four-year university.

The only mathematician on the CC Validation Committee said that the CC math standards will place our students about two years behind their counterparts in high-performing countries. An expert in English education said that CC’s English language arts standards consist of “empty skill sets . . . [that] weaken the basis of literary and cultural knowledge needed for authentic college coursework.” She also suspects from her analysis of work done so far on the standards that the reading level deemed sufficient for high-school graduation will be at about the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade level. And CC revamps the American model of classical education to resemble a European model, which de-emphasizes the study of creative literature and places students on “tracks” (college vs. vocational) at an early age.

The CC standards are “internationally benchmarked.”

No information was presented to the Validation Committee to show how CC stacked up against standards of other high-achieving countries. In fact, the CC establishment no longer claims that the standards are “internationally benchmarked” – the website now states that they are “informed by” the standards of other countries. There is no definition of “informed by.”

We need common standards to be able to compare our students’ performance to that of students in other states.

If we want to do that, we already can. In the elementary/middle school years we have the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) test; in high school we have the SAT and ACT.

We need common standards to help students who move from state to state.

The percentage of students who fit that description is vanishingly small (much less than 2%); most families move, if at all, within states, not to other states. It is nonsensical to bind our entire education system in a straightjacket to benefit such a small number of students.