



Insanity In the Classroom: Government Schools Today

Despite major funding, U.S. kids are doing progressively worse at math, reading, and more, but it's not their fault. Blame schools and their curricula and those controlling them.



AP Images

American public schools continue to churn out graduates who are taught what to think, but not how to think. And this is happening according to the Common Core agenda. From confounding students with backward, immoral, and politically correct curriculum to vacuuming up every form of data conceivable about our children, to taking over parental responsibilities with “Full-Service Community Schools,” today’s government schools are a major threat to the well-being of our children.

Would you send your child into a building knowing that it was on fire? Of course not. But many parents are not aware that government schools are indeed on fire, figuratively speaking.

Government schools today are a massive failure — at least from the standpoint of providing a good education that enables children to learn and think. The government’s own data prove this conclusively. In 2018, for example, the U.S. Department of Education released the results of its National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) proving that the overwhelming majority of American children are not proficient in reading or math. In fact, about two-thirds of eighth-grade students in government schools were ranked below proficient in reading or math on the government’s Nation’s Report Card. In some districts, fewer than eight out of 100 students were proficient in *either* subject.

In English-Language Arts, the NAEP results showed that barely one-third of eighth-grade students could be classified as proficient or above in reading. In mathematics, the numbers were even worse. The 2017 results showed that more than two-thirds of eighth-grade students were ranked below “proficient” in math. By the time students hit 12th grade, the situation is even more alarming. According to the NAEP, just one in four American high-school seniors was proficient in math. The federal test is administered each year to a “nationally representative sample” of students. And it highlights glaring problems that threaten the future of America and its liberties.

Other government data paint a similarly dire picture. In California’s government schools, for instance, the state government’s own testing revealed that more than half of students in every grade except 11th failed to meet literacy standards, which are lower than they were in decades past. Less than one-fourth of black boys met the standards, with more than half scoring in the lowest possible category, suggesting that they are functionally illiterate. “The Ku Klux Klan couldn’t sabotage chances for black academic excellence more effectively than the public school system in most cities,” wrote economist Walter E. Williams of George Mason University, who happens to be black.



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In comparison with other jurisdictions though, Californians look brilliant. Consider government schools in Baltimore, where, despite some of the highest spending per pupil in America, 13 government high schools failed to produce even *one* single student proficient in mathematics for 2017. That number represents a third of the 39 government high schools in the city. Another six schools had just one percent of students scoring “proficient” in math. Out of those 19 government schools, more than 3,800 students took the federally mandated test — and just 14 students scored proficient. Six Baltimore schools did not produce one single student proficient in *either* English or math.

Obviously, illiterate children become illiterate adults. And the data show this clearly. In Washington, D.C., a stunning two-thirds of residents over the age of 15 are classified as functionally illiterate, according to a report by the State Education Agency. Nationwide, the most recent National Assessment of Adult Literacy by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics revealed just 13 percent of *adults* rank as proficient in literacy.

The reason America has an illiteracy crisis is hardly a secret. After all, the method used in government schools today to teach reading under Common Core was exposed as quackery over 150 years ago when it was first tried in Boston under Horace Mann. It has been exposed many times since then, including by Rudolf Flesch in his 1955 book *Why Johnny Can’t Read* and by Dr. Samuel Blumenfeld in his 1973 book *The New Illiterates*. On October 26 of 2018, even the *New York Times* exposed this in a piece headlined “Why Are We Still Teaching Reading the Wrong Way?” And yet, under Common Core, children are still being forced to memorize “sight words” in kindergarten, producing life-long reading disabilities in tens of millions of American children.

In short, American government schools are mass-producing illiterate and innumerate citizens on an industrial scale — and they are charging American taxpayers more than \$1 trillion per year for the service. The products of these schools in many cases are unable to even read their high-school diploma, much less sustain the experiment in liberty bequeathed to Americans by their Founding Fathers.

According to veteran educator Mary Black, who spent some four decades in the classroom and now works with the FreedomProject Academy, students coming to FPA from the government school system are way behind where they should be. “Until recently, the placement test scores revealed a gap of about two years,” she told *The New American*. “Now, some students come to us three years or more behind grade level.”

Common Core

The impulse behind Common Core is not new. And in fact, the problems with education began long before Common Core was even conceived. The insanity has been intensifying since the creation of the unconstitutional federal Department of Education in the late 1970s. Once public education fell under the umbrella of yet another byzantine Beltway bureaucracy, it was just a matter of time until the feds bought, bribed, coerced, and threatened their way to greater and greater centralization and control. For 45 years the process has proceeded apace, with standardized testing under the guise of accountability being a key tool to strip away state and local control of schools.

Veteran educator Patrick Huff, Ph.D., a retired middle-school and high-school principal who was recommended to President Trump as a potential secretary of education, told *The New American* about the process he observed firsthand. “The Accountability System, as it is written, creates a manufactured



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crisis of school failure,” he said, adding that the “fear-based system” has completely taken over education while creating toxic environments for teachers and students. And there is absolutely a link between the accountability-testing regime and the transformation of public schools into tools of globalist indoctrination rather than institutions of education.

“Because the Common Core standards (which promote globalism in so many ways) drive the curriculum which teachers drill into their students in order to get them ready for the test, teaching and learning become a closed system,” said Dr. Huff, who currently serves as a professor at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. “This is the dumbing down we hear so much about. Instead of a teacher being able to take their students in many directions in order to enrich, they instead are locked in. Now with the [Google] Chromebook taking over instruction, it is even more locked down.”

There are two principal reasons to be worried about Common Core, and both have serious consequences for homeschooling and private schooling: First, the standards represent the most serious consolidation yet of federal power over educational freedom. Second, the federal government — in conjunction with textbook publishers and testing corporations — is using this increased access and control to further politicize how America’s children are being taught and evaluated. Proponents of the standards insist they are merely benchmarks, simple guideposts that teachers can follow (in an infinite variety of ways, they tell us) to improve student learning. But this is nonsense. The only way we have to measure the standards is the tests. As both Common Core architect David Coleman and Common Core financier-in-chief Bill Gates have asserted: When the standards are aligned to the tests, the *curriculum* will line up as well, and the teachers will have *no choice* but to teach to the tests. Given that the only real way to measure the effectiveness of Common Core is the exams, it is beyond obvious that whoever controls the tests controls what happens in the classroom.

And despite seven years and counting for the Common Core era, that alignment between tests and standards did not begin in earnest for most states until the spring of 2015. This long postponement of the tests is by design: The engineers of Common Core knew exactly how arbitrary, stressful, and transformative the tests would be, and therefore delayed them until the elaborate and expensive infrastructure was set firmly in place (and well nigh impossible to remove). Given this carefully orchestrated timeline, it is not surprising that some teachers and school administrators claim not to have experienced the worst aspects of the Common Core scheme: Because of the methodical implementation schedule, we are only now entering the phase when the real aims and ambitions of those who created Common Core begin to surface.

It has also now become clear that the standards are terrible, academically speaking. In fact, they are so bad that the only two subject-matter experts on the Common Core Validation Committee *both* refused to sign off on them. The math expert on the committee, Stanford Professor James Milgram, publicly lambasted the standards after refusing to approve them. “The Core Mathematics Standards are written to reflect very low expectations,” he said, calling them “as non-challenging as possible” with “extremely serious failings.” In a letter outlining his concerns, Dr. Milgram even pointed to “actual errors” in sixth- and seventh-grade discussions about ratios and rates — “they are neither mathematically correct nor especially clear.”

The other subject-matter expert on the committee, English-Language Arts (ELA) specialist Dr. Sandra Stotsky from the University of Arkansas, told *The New American* that the Common Core standards reduce both literary study and the “opportunity for kids to develop critical thinking skills.” Much of the



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priceless literature produced by the brightest minds has been completely removed. And the standards are atrocious. “They were written hastily by people who didn’t care how poorly written they were so long as informational text was about 50 percent of the reading curriculum,” explained Stotsky. As such, she refused to approve them, and has testified in legislatures across America urging states to reject the scheme.

More than five years after the standards were implemented across America, scores in mathematics and other subjects on standardized tests also continue to plunge. According to the Condition of College and Career Readiness 2018 by the ACT, just 40 percent of high-school graduates tested were considered ready to succeed in a first-year college algebra class. Well over a third of graduating students did not meet the minimum benchmark in *any* subject. The trend is also downward: In 2012, 46 percent of students tested as ready for college work, while today, just two in five students are considered ready. The graduates are not ready for work, either. “Just around a fourth (26%) of ACT-tested 2018 graduates likely have the foundational work readiness skills needed for more than nine out of 10 jobs recently profiled in ACT’s JobPro database,” the ACT researchers found. And it is getting worse.

Centralized Indoctrination at the Lowest Common Denominator

The faults go way beyond English and math. One of the key organizations behind Common Core, Achieve, Inc., which has long been led by Deep State insiders affiliated with the globalist Bilderberg network and the Council on Foreign Relations, has developed the Next Generation Science Standards. These focus on indoctrinating children into climate alarmism and secular evolutionism more than actual science. “Human activities, such as the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, are major factors in the current rise in Earth’s mean surface temperature (global warming),” the elementary-school standards claim, without acknowledging the massive amounts of evidence contradicting the man-made-warming hypothesis. The theory of evolution, meanwhile, is the only theory of origins provided. And it is emphasized as fundamental, even though more than half of Americans reject the theory in scientific polls.

But bad academics and indoctrination are just two problems among many. Initially, the standards were sold on the seemingly benign premise that students in every classroom in every state should be learning the same thing at the same time every day. Wouldn’t it be nice if a child whose family moves from Arizona to Maine could walk into his new classroom and pick up exactly where he left off, without missing a beat? But the statistical actuality of such transfers is so staggeringly small that even hardcore advocates almost never make the argument anymore. But look past the utilitarian feint and consider the premise: An education system so hyper-regulated and cookie-cutter mass-produced could only be managed, monitored, and made compliant by a massive federal machine that must — by definition — eliminate any meaningful control of education at state and local levels. How can state and local school boards — let alone individual moms and dads — have any meaningful say in what goes on in the classroom under such a paradigm? And that is precisely the point.

Does anyone actually believe that applying the same Common Core standards to everyone will result in *higher* standards when the endgame is parity, not excellence (or even competency)? It does not require the convoluted processes of Common Core math to recognize that when the educational mandate for upwards of 60 million American schoolchildren is uniformity, not achievement, the new educational



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regimen will ultimately lower overall expectations, not enhance them, and inhibit, if not repress, high-achieving students.

The Every Student Succeeds Act and Big Brother

As Common Core was being implemented in virtually every state, the uprising against it became impossible to ignore. The overwhelming majority of Americans opposed it, polls show, and almost nobody except the special interests and the establishment supported it. The standards quickly became a politically toxic albatross around the neck of both Democrats and Republicans. More than a few state governments re-branded the standards and simply lied to voters, claiming Common Core was no more. In the GOP-controlled Congress, meanwhile, establishment Republicans passed a bill under the guise of restoring state and local control of education that actually cemented Common Core into place while adding even *more* outrageous mandates. That bill was the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Critics blasted it as a program for “child abuse in the classroom.” Big Labor, Big Business, and Big Government, however, all rallied behind the unconstitutional restructuring of the U.S. education system. Obama even called the legislation approved by the GOP Congress a “Christmas miracle.” The reason why is obvious.

Among other provisions, the gargantuan bill ensured that Common Core would remain in place by mandating standards that in practice mean Common Core and Common Core only. It also re-authorized federal intervention in education that was launched under the unconstitutional Elementary and Secondary Education Act and No Child Left Behind. These were the statutes used by the feds to hijack control over practically every element of K-12 education in America over a period of decades.

ESSA also expanded federal funding for pre-kindergarten classes to get younger and younger children into government hands. And the scheme opened wide the unconstitutional federal-funding spigot for charter schools, which are accountable to Washington, D.C., instead of local communities. These schools also serve to crowd out genuinely independent schools that avoid Common Core, use the Bible, or otherwise refuse to submit to federal control. Under ESSA, a broad array of federal-funding streams were made available to private and Christian schools, as well. But as always, these funds come with strings attached. This has resulted in an ongoing transformation of many once-independent schools into government-controlled schools, complete with Common Core, the whole-word reading method, standardized testing, data gathering, and more.

Also buried in the statute was a radical expansion of Obama’s “full-service community schools.” The controversial institutions, more accurately described as parental replacement centers, oversee every aspect of a child’s life, ranging from “mental health” and “well being” to nutrition and even dentistry. “Pipeline services” that must be provided include “a continuum of coordinated supports, services, and opportunities for children from birth through entry into and success in post-secondary education, and career attainment.” Those services must include, at minimum: “early childhood education”; school and out-of-school programs and strategies; support for children’s “transitions”; career counseling; “social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports”; “crime prevention and rehabilitation programs”; and more. In other words, everything that families once provided for children is the responsibility of community schools. All that is missing now is hugs and bedtime stories from Big Brother.



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Parents are in the cross hairs, too, with the statute mandating that these pipeline services include family “supports,” including “at home.” The federally funded institutions are also charged with providing “social, health, nutrition, and mental health services and supports, for children, *family members*, and community members.” (Emphasis added.) The law states as well that the parental replacement centers must “target” families and children for “services” covering their “academic, physical, social, emotional, health, mental health, and other needs.” In short, even parents are being “targeted” for “mental health” schemes. At the same time, the Obama administration’s Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education defined parents as “equal partners” with government in child-rearing in a federal policy document. They also called for home visits to ensure “family wellness.” Basically, the “Community Schools” are turning government schools into parents, and parents into pariahs.

Despite lies by GOP leaders, the more than 1,000-page statute also preserved and institutionalized (and purported to legalize) all of the lawless mandates on states issued by the Obama administration. “If you look at the substance of what is there ... embedded in the law are the values that we’ve promoted and proposed forever. The core of our agenda from Day One, that’s all in there — early childhood, high standards [Common Core], not turning a blind eye when things are bad,” said Obama’s Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who proclaimed that government should have some children “24/7” for their own benefit and bragged about conspiring with GOP leadership to pass ESSA. “For the first time in our nation’s history, that’s the letter of the law.” Indeed, for the first time ever, the U.S. secretary of education was given veto power over states’ education standards and plans.

In addition, ESSA unleashed a vast array of new intrusive programs to monitor, track, and compile every sort of data imaginable on children — forever. The statute institutionalizes and expands all of the federal data-gathering that was already taking place under Common Core and other schemes, and supercharges it. Combined with Obama’s Executive Order 12866 that gutted remaining privacy protections for students, the feds are now compiling dossiers on practically every child in America, dossiers that contain hundreds of data points on children’s personalities, views, health, mental status, teeth, academics, home life, and more. Whistleblower teachers have revealed that they are being conscripted into creating psychological and psychiatric profiles on children. And this is being integrated with a vast central planning bureaucracy that will follow and direct their paths through career and beyond.

Indeed, in a 2016 National Education Technology Plan, the Department of Education revealed that as part of its work in “non-cognitive competencies,” technology-based “assessments” were being used and will continue to be used to “measure a broader range of desired educational outcomes, especially non-cognitive competencies.” So-called non-cognitive competencies, also referred to as “social and emotional learning” in the report, include “a range of skills, habits, and *attitudes* that facilitate functioning well in school, work, and life,” the document revealed. (Emphasis added.) Students who do not fit the mold will face “interventions” under ESSA.

Meanwhile, the Department of Education has deployed Orwellian and previously unimaginable technologies to monitor and track children. These tools can gather data about students’ responses to stimuli — smiles or frowns, changes in pupil dilation, eye-movement tracking, heart rate, and more — and then customize the “learning” experience based on the individual students.

Consider a 2013 report by the Department of Education dubbed *Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and*



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Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century. Included in the 100-page report is information about technology that was *already* being used in an Education Department-funded tutoring program. “Researchers are exploring how to gather complex affective data and generate meaningful and usable information to feed back to learners, teachers, researchers, and the technology itself,” the report explains. “Connections to neuroscience are also beginning to emerge.” The technological tools already being used by federally funded education schemes to probe students’ minds and “measure” the children include “four parallel streams of affective sensors.” Among the devices was a “facial expression camera” to “detect emotion” and “capture facial expressions” linked to software that “extracts geometric properties on faces.” There is also a “wireless skin conductance sensor” strapped to students’ wrists to collect “physiological response data from a biofeedback apparatus that measures blood volume, pulse, and galvanic skin response to examine student frustration.”

In 2017, the federal government began funding a program to create a “friendly social robot” to be deployed in schools to collect data on children’s mental health.

Another Education Department report, entitled *Enhancing, Teaching and Learning Through Educational Data Mining and Learning Analytics*, acknowledges similarly alarming schemes. “A student learning database (or other big data repository) stores time-stamped student input and behaviors captured as students work within the system,” it notes. “A predictive model combines demographic data (from an external student information system) and learning/behavior data from the student learning database to track a student’s progress and *make predictions about his or her future behaviors or performance.*” (Emphasis added.)

Beyond that, the “social and emotional learning” schemes under ESSA will not just gather information on children’s attitudes and beliefs, but systematically work to change them, too. As reported by Benjamin Herold in *Education Week*, under the guise of providing “personalized learning experiences,” new technology is targeting students’ “individual emotions, cognitive processes, ‘mindsets,’ and character and personality traits.” These schemes include “new efforts to dramatically expand the types of data collected in the classroom and to focus more attention on responding to individual students’ ‘mindsets,’ non-cognitive skills, and emotional states.”

There is also “values clarification,” in which teachers are trained to put students in imaginary situations that smash their moral compass. This has been going on for decades. A frequent example involves a hypothetical situation in which one or more people must be sacrificed for the good of the group. For instance, many schools use a variation of the “life boat” or “nuclear fallout shelter” for the purpose. Something along the lines of: “Suppose there are nine people in a life-raft that can only support seven: A black doctor, a Jewish engineer, a white fisherman, a pregnant Latino woman, etc. Which one do you throw overboard so everyone else can survive?”

The obvious answer would be not to throw anyone overboard and perhaps take turns swimming alongside the raft. But that is not an option offered to the students. Instead, children are ordered to think in terms of who they must *kill* to save everyone else. It puts the students into a moral dilemma in which they are supposed to reason that killing is the moral option, thereby proving wrong their dogmatic parents and churches who taught them that God commanded people not to kill. The process has been shown to be highly effective at devastating children’s values and moral systems as taught by parents, churches, and other sources. In short, it teaches children to believe that morality is subjective and situational — that there are no absolutes — and that their parents are wrong.



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Americans Unsatisfied

Clearly, victims of government schools are not getting a decent education — the government’s own data show that. And many parents — including many whose children are in public schools — realize this as well. A recent survey by EdChoice found that while more than eight out of 10 American students attend government schools, only about three out of 10 parents said they would choose that as “a first preference.” A plurality of parents — 40 percent — said they would choose a private school if they could, with another 13 percent saying they would choose a charter school. Fully 10 percent said they would prefer to homeschool their children.

The danger now is that the feds and the educational establishment will step up their efforts to absorb all educational choices into the one-size-fits-all model of indoctrination, manipulation, and dumbing down that has been unleashed on America. For now, parents still have the option in all 50 states to withdraw from the system. But in the years ahead, as more parents decide to protect their young from an increasingly disastrous government system that is destroying children by the millions, the totalitarians will do everything possible to quash educational liberty and choice. Americans must resist, or liberty itself will be destroyed.



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