



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on October 25, 2013

## Alongside Common Core, Feds Will Vacuum Up Data on Kids (Video)

Alongside the highly controversial nationalization of education via the Obama administration-backed “[Common Core](#),” the federal government is bribing and bullying state governments into [collecting huge amounts of private data on students](#) for use by the U.S. Department of Education and other bureaucracies. Despite establishment efforts to downplay the links, the outrage surrounding both schemes — removing local control of schooling through dubious national standards and vacuuming up information on America’s children — continues to grow nationwide.



In another [short video](#) about Common Core, part of an ongoing series produced by *The New American*, veteran educator Mary Black outlines some of the facts surrounding the data-mining component of the establishment’s education “reform” agenda. According to Black, who has 40 years of teaching experience and serves as the student development director for the online K-12 school [FreedomProject Education](#), the Common Core-linked information gathering on children is already happening on a huge scale — and it is set to get worse.

“Many people will tell you that it’s far-fetched, it isn’t going to happen,” Black explains in the video, referring to those who claim that the federal government does not plan to collect data on children through Common Core and related schemes. “I assure you that I am daily hearing reports about things that are actually happening.” Among the troubling examples she cited: A mother whose child had a wrist-strap attached — one of the myriad technological tools already being rolled out or in development aimed at monitoring students’ physiological reactions.

Billionaire Bill Gates, the key financier behind Common Core, as well as a strong supporter of the United Nations and Planned Parenthood, was recently in the spotlight again for funding controversial technology to monitor and track students for data-mining purposes — all of which will be shared with government. The most recent uproar surrounding Gates-funded technology was [a grant to develop “Galvanic Skin Response” \(GSR\) bracelets](#), which track physiological reactions to “measure engagement” of kids in the classroom.

Other sensors to monitor students that have attracted fierce criticism were outlined in the U.S. Department of Education document [Promoting Grit, Tenacity, and Perseverance: Critical Factors for Success in the 21st Century](#). Connecting the schemes to developments in neuroscience, the report describes four technologies that are already being used in some federally funded education programs: A “facial expression camera” used to “detect emotion” and “capture facial expressions”; a “posture analysis seat”; a “pressure mouse”; and a “wireless skin conductance sensor” strapped to students’ wrists.



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Across the country, more than a few troubling reports have emerged of biometric schemes being foisted on children, too. “Of course, we’re all hearing about the iris scanning that is going on so that the kids don’t have to carry student IDs,” Black explained in the video, referring to just one of the schemes being used to identify children using their unique biometric data. In some areas, as numerous media outlets have documented, students are also being forced to supply their fingerprints to get their lunch. But what does all that have to do with the Obama administration-pushed education “reform” agenda, which includes, among other components, the national standards and the accompanying testing regime? “Let’s talk about how data mining truly is part of Common Core,” Black continued. “If you just look at the standards, many people will tell you, ‘well it’s not in the standards.’ But let’s examine closely who is developing affective sensors, who is developing the tests and the requirements, and who set up the databases.”

First, Black examined the databases. Various unconstitutional bribes were offered to state governments by the Obama administration’s Department of Education in exchange for obedience to federal authorities on the school reform agenda. In addition to adopting Common Core to receive the taxpayer-funded “grants,” [each state was required to set up or expand databases that track vast amounts of student data](#). “There would be no reason for it if they didn’t intend to gather a great deal of information,” Black explained.

However, it is now clear that the federal government does plan to gather the information — in fact, it is admitted by authorities in a wide array of official reports, contracts, statements, and more. “There are over 400 points from a document in the Department of Education — points that they want to collect information about on your children,” Black continued, referring to a wide array of data points being sought on students by the Obama administration in exchange for bribes. “They intrude on family privacy.”

As just one concrete example among many that have already surfaced, Black pointed to a mother from the state of New York who saw the questions being asked of her eight-year-old daughter by her school. Among the sought-after information: whether or not her parents voted, if they were divorced, who the child would prefer to live with, and more. “These are some of the things that are incorporated in this,” Black said. “The desire to have all of this data is insatiable. I can think of no other adjective for it.”

A key component of the data gathering will be the Common Core testing regime. Because the assessments are funded by the U.S. taxpayers via federal government, all of the information gathered on students must be shared with bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. Indeed, the agreement between the Obama administration’s Education Department and the two Common Core testing organizations it funds makes that crystal clear: “The grantee must provide timely and complete access to any and all data collected at the state level to ED [the U.S. Department of Education].”

In a recent [in-studio interview](#) with *The New American*, Heartland Institute Education Research Fellow Joy Pullmann, an expert on Common Core, [explained](#) how the testing schemes are crucial to the standards as well as the data gathering. “We have a mass of student information available and open and unprotected — personal information about kids — that is literally being collected by Common Core,” Pullman explained. “The reason I call this the student-data pipeline is because states have promised these organizations they’ll give this information to them. It’s basically a blank check; whatever information they think is necessary.”

Of course, federal and state privacy laws would have prevented the accumulation and sharing of so



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much private data on children. In exchange for the administration's bribes, however, state governments promised to change their statutory and regulatory protections to ensure that all of the information is available to the federal government. Meanwhile, the Obama administration — in violation of federal law, as members of Congress and even Department of Education personnel have pointed out — unilaterally re-wrote the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in 2012 for the same reason.

Black noted that the FERPA changes purport to give schools "permission to use any of their data for sources that they believe would help the child's education." In other words, she explained, parents have had their rights usurped by the administration, which intends to gather any and all state-collected data on students. "The school can directly provide this without the parent even knowing that this is happening, so many of these implements to gather data will never be known by the parent," Black added.

It is not that nobody has spoken out. A senior Department of Education official was reportedly fired for pointing out that the administration's scheme to gut FERPA and collect all of that data was unlawful. In Congress, meanwhile, some have spoken out as well, blasting the unilateral re-writing of privacy protections and the broader effort to vacuum up data on America's children into a federal database. In an early 2010 letter to Education Secretary Duncan, Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.), now chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee, spoke out forcefully.

"As part of what you described as a 'cradle to career agenda,' the Department of Education is aggressively moving to expand data systems that collect information on our nation's students," Rep. Kline [explained](#). "The Department's effort to shepherd states toward the creation of a de facto national student database raises serious legal and prudential questions.... Congress has never authorized the Department of Education to facilitate the creation of a national student database. To the contrary, Congress explicitly prohibited the 'development of a nationwide database of personally identifiable information' ... and barred the 'development, implementation, or maintenance of a Federal database.'"

The administration, however, apparently does not care whether its schemes are unlawful. In fact, later in 2010, after receiving the letter from Rep. Kline, Secretary Duncan [boasted about the scheming](#) to the United Nations "education" outfit, UNESCO. "More robust data systems and a new generation of assessments can assist teachers and principals to improve their practices and tailor their instruction in ways that were largely unthinkable in the past," Duncan continued, celebrating the use of "stimulus" funds to bribe states into compliance. "We have advanced data systems that we are constantly improving."

It goes well beyond the tests, too, as multiple Department of Education documents highlighted in an [in-depth report for \*The New American\*](#) [explain](#). In the short video, Black emphasizes those points as well. "The means to gather this, I truly believe, will extend beyond the tests, because the parents at this point can opt out of the tests," she said. "The teachers can gather it — there are many ways I'm sure they will devise. But understand clearly that the federal government wants this information. Once it is in the databases, the information is open."

While most of the state and federal data-mining schemes are not technically a direct component of Common Core, they are intimately linked in numerous ways. "I hope that as you continue to do research on Common Core, you will understand this is not far-fetched, and this is being instituted by the federal government and is part of Common Core," Black concluded.



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