



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on November 11, 2015

Arizona Education Board Votes to Nix Common Core, Sort of

Under massive pressure from parents, teachers, voters, taxpayers, and the state's top education official, the Arizona Board of Education voted overwhelmingly to kill the [Obama-backed Common Core education scheme](#). Eventually, the state is expected to develop better state standards to replace the increasingly polarizing nationalization of K-12 schools imposed on Arizona with the help of federal bribes and bullying. At least that is the story the public is being told. In reality, though, the deeply controversial Common Core standards will remain in place, at least for now. And if the actions of other state governments provide any clue as to what might happen next, Arizona may well end up with most of Common Core intact, perhaps under a new label — unless citizens remain vigilant and engaged in the process.



State Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas (shown), who won over Arizona voters by vowing to battle Common Core as her top priority, admitted in public comments that the vote was not really the final nail in the coffin for Common Core in Arizona. “Let’s be clear, it’s not really a decision to kill off Common Core immediately, but it’s making a statement about where we in Arizona stand on Common Core,” explained Douglas, who motioned for the board vote on the resolution and has been speaking out against Common Core since the campaign trail. “The board is just saying, ‘We can take care of Arizona’s children,’ and this is a very proud day for Arizonans. This will send a clear message to the citizens of Arizona and the nation that Arizonans are smart enough, engaged enough, and collaborative enough to control the education of our own children.”

In a [statement](#) released after the vote, Douglas thanked the State Board of Education members who voted to sever ties with Common Core. “Today’s action means that Arizona is once again in control of its standards, which is a key step as we work together to improve education in our state,” she said, adding that she looked forward to “robust” Arizona standards developed and approved in the state. “While the current standards for English language arts and mathematics will remain in place pending modification by the Board, this decision gives us the flexibility to make the standards more rigorous and will give us the ability to tailor them to the unique needs of our students. It is significant to me that despite our differences, we were able to come together in support of Arizona parents and students.”

The board vote, which took place on October 26, was six-to-two in favor of repealing an earlier measure by the body that officially imposed the widely criticized Common Core scheme on all government schools in Arizona. The vote also severed Arizona’s ties to the Common Core copyright owners. Under



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the recently approved measure, though, the Obama-backed national standards will remain in Arizona schools while the education board completes an ongoing “review” of the existing Common Core and provides “recommendations” on possible changes. “We recognize this vote was symbolic, but any action that moves us closer to repealing Common Core is a positive,” the governor’s office said in a statement. “The governor has made it clear that it’s time to replace Common Core with Arizona standards and wants to see the board proceed with its process.”

Because Common Core is copyrighted by the federally funded, Washington, D.C.-based lobbying/trade groups that helped concoct it, only tiny, insignificant deviations from the scheme are formally permitted. So, if Arizona policymakers decide to formally get rid of Common Core, they can either produce new standards, let local districts make those decisions, or keep virtually all of Common Core but try to dupe outraged Arizonans by marketing it under a new name again — a phenomenon that has already occurred in multiple states that purportedly “dumped” Common Core. Indeed, Arizona officials already tried that once, with the administration of then-Governor Jan Brewer renaming the scheme “Arizona College and Career Ready Standards” in 2013. Arizonans did not fall for the ruse.

Not everybody was pleased with the state education board’s vote, however. On the other side of the debate were the board president and vice-president, both of whom lashed out at the effort to get D.C. out of the classroom. “Doesn’t mean anything,” fumed Board President Greg Miller. “It doesn’t mean a thing to any kid going to school tomorrow, or any teacher showing up for work, or any local board that has to make decisions based on today’s vote.” Vice President Reginald Ballantyne, sounding oblivious to the growing outcry among parents and teachers, said he was “really getting weary of this conversation.” “I don’t think this is philosophical, I think this is political, I’m growing tired of this nonsense,” he continued. Apparently it would be better if everybody would just shut up and accept Common Core, which [even the two subject-matter experts on the controversial scheme’s Validation Committee refused to approve](#).

But, of course, no matter how much Ballantyne and other Common Core apparatchiks rage against the public’s concerns, the escalating outrage over Common Core is not going anywhere. In fact, in the years since the public first became aware of the secretive plot to finalize the nationalization — [and even globalization](#) — of American schooling, the outcry has continued to get louder and louder. And as the radical standards continue to be implemented, parental concerns are only growing more pronounced and urgent. Meanwhile, [polls consistently show](#) that as parents and voters become more familiar with Common Core, they become even more alarmed and opposed to it. In recent years, some of America’s most popular comedians [have taken to ridiculing Common Core](#), too.

In conservative Arizona, where politics is dominated by the GOP, political leaders have come under even more pressure to battle Common Core. In 2013, the Republican National Committee [unanimously adopted a resolution](#) slamming the controversial “one size fits all” educational scheme. Calling the standards “an inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children so they will conform to a preconceived ‘normal,’ ” the national GOP said it rejected the effort to impose “a nationwide straitjacket on academic freedom and achievement.” Still, opposition to Common Core crosses party lines, with state Democrat parties also approving resolutions blasting the scheme. Multiple left-leaning teachers’ unions have [also declared war on Common Core](#), saying it harms children and usurps control over education from local communities.

Essentially, the trans-partisan opposition has left close to zero real support for the Obama-backed standards, aside from the support purchased by the estimated \$2 billion that statist billionaire Bill



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Gates has sunk into the scheme so far, and the billions handed out in stimulus-funded “Race to the Top” grants from the Obama administration. If Arizona does decide to take back control of education policy from the Obama administration, the U.S. Department of Education is likely to threaten federal funding for Arizona schools. Extremist Education Secretary Arne Duncan, [who boasts of using the “weapon” of education to turn American children into “green” and global citizens](#), even [threatened government schools in Illinois when not enough students took the federally funded Common Core tests](#).

Because government-funded “charter” schools that must submit to federal decrees have proliferated across Arizona, crowding out many privately funded independent schools, Common Core has tainted much of the schooling in the state. In other words, if the Obama-backed education schemes remain in place, Arizona parents have few options to avoid Common Core other than homeschooling. But with State Superintendent Douglas leading the way — she recently reiterated that she opposes Common Core “with all my fiber” — activists have not given up hope that Arizona can still take back control of its education policies from Washington, D.C., and the [out-of-control education establishment](#). Douglas is also fighting to [reduce standardized testing and protect student privacy](#).

While Arizona may have taken an important step toward improving education and removing the terrible Common Core scheme from schools in the state, the standards remain in place. And, as illustrated by the experiences of states ranging from [Oklahoma](#) and [South Carolina](#) to [Louisiana](#) and [Indiana](#), the scandal-plagued K-12 takeover will not be going anywhere — unless parents, teachers, and voters remain engaged in the process until Arizona schools are finally free of Common Core and the [broader scandals](#) associated with it.

Photo of State Superintendent of Public Instruction Diane Douglas: AP Images

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