



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 11, 2014

## National Opposition to Common Core Continues to Grow

As parents and educators become increasingly vocal against Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the national movement against the federal standards continues to gain power.

And there is arguably no place where opposition is stronger than in Florida, where Common Core has only intensified the number and difficulty of standardized tests for students.



An October parents' meeting at a high school in Royal Palm Beach, Florida, provided critics of the standards an opportunity to air their numerous concerns with Common Core testing, including the emotional and physical stress it has imposed on their children. "My third grader loves school, but I can't get her out of the car this year," asserted Dawn LaBorde, who has three children in Palm Beach County schools. She said that her son, a junior, had become so anxious that she had to take him to a doctor. "He can't sleep, but he's tired. He can't eat, but he's hungry."

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During the meeting, parents bemoaned that some of their children have had to begin taking medications to help cope with the stress, including Xanax. Students are reportedly feeling particularly anxious over the standardized testing, as those who fail can be held back. One father, who stated at the Royal Palm Beach meeting that he will be pulling his second grader out of school, declared, "Teaching to a test is destroying our society."

The furor in Florida over its version of Common Core, which makes testing even more strenuous, is brimming as the state will see an increase in the number of tests this year in order to fulfill federal grant obligations on teacher evaluations. The *New York Times* explained just how much testing Florida students are required to complete:

The concerns reach well beyond first-year jitters over Florida's version of Common Core, which is making standards tougher and tests harder. Frustrations also center on the increase this year in the number of tests ordered by the state to fulfill federal grant obligations on teacher evaluations and by districts to keep pace with the new standards....

As part of the federal Race to the Top grant obligation, the state will require end-of-the-year tests for every subject to help evaluate teachers whose pay and job will be tied to scores. In Miami-Dade County, there are 1,600 courses....

On top of routine classroom tests, students face an increase in district-led diagnostic tests to keep tabs on student progress. Some teachers are testing children biweekly. This is in addition to high school Advanced Placement, SAT and ACT tests.

Florida has ordered that all standardized tests be computerized this year, even as the technology to meet this requirement is scarce. Meanwhile, the state has not provided the money for districts to purchase the computers. As a result, testing is scattered throughout the day in Florida schools. The *New York Times* writes that this translates to "more hours spent administering tests and less time



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teaching.”

Even Education Secretary Arne Duncan begrudged the emphasis on standardized testing in August, when he wrote that “testing issues today are sucking the oxygen out of the room in a lot of schools.” This is particularly true in Florida, where an average of 60 to 80 days out of the 180 day-school year are spent on standardized testing.

“This is the proverbial perfect storm of testing that has hit not only Florida but all the states,” declared Alberto Carvalho, superintendent of Miami-Dade County schools. “This is too much, too far, too fast, and it threatens the fabric of real accountability.”

As Carvalho observed, Florida is not the only state to feel the weight of the increased exams. Ohioans have also raised concerns regarding over-testing as the first wave of new state exams aligned with Common Core standards approaches.

The *Columbus Dispatch* reports that school district leaders in Ohio state have argued that there are already a number of tests throughout the year to measure student learning and that the new state tests not only duplicate those efforts, but also take longer to repeat and require more technology than the state can provide.

Likewise, parents in Bossier City, Louisiana [voiced](#) their concerns at a town hall meeting on November 6. “I cannot believe the amount of homework that first graders are coming home with. It is insanity,” said one parent.

According to a report on the number of tests students are administered yearly entitled “Testing Overload in America’s Schools,” students across the country take as many as 20 standardized tests per year and for those in grades three through eight, an average of 10. Keep in mind that “standardized tests” are not merely the tests students are given at the end of a particular textbook unit, but nationwide testing on various subjects.

The negative consequences and human toll of the standardized testing are only one problem of Common Core. Allowing the federal government this much control over education, via Common Core, which is administered by progressive liberal government bureaucrats and progressive left-leaning educators, is also a frightening concept to many people. For many concerned parents, giving such individuals the power to dictate every question, and every answer to every question, in American public schools is a clear and present threat to the liberty our Founders left us. As parents, teachers, and others already know, it is a threat that could destroy our way of life and our society, and even precipitate a change in our form of government.

The battle has just begun. Numerous states are standing in opposition to the new scheme, but state changes to eliminate Common Core have been superficial in many cases, or eviscerated in “committee,” sometimes (as in Indiana) ending up simply in a cosmetic relabeling of what is still CCSS. Other states debate endlessly without effectively removing this threat from our schools, or delaying any change until after damage has already been done. Such has been the experience in Florida and New York.

Oklahoma is one state that has made some good progress. Jason Nelson, a Republican state representative in Oklahoma, sponsored a bill to withdraw his state from Common Core, declaring that he and his colleagues wanted to “break any kind of nexus where any private organization or the federal government would exert control over our standards.” Oklahoma officially repealed Common Core in June. Jenni White of Restore Oklahoma Public Education, a parent advocacy group, argued, “When you have national standards, it becomes very hard for a state school board to control what exactly your



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child is learning. Local control really produces the best educational results.”

The *New York Times* has reported that opposition to Common Core has grown so dramatically that parents are now threatening to pull their children from school, and some teachers are even retiring early in opposition.

Many concerned parents are turning to homeschooling, as this gives them more control over what their children are learning. There are a number of good programs available to give children a quality education in a homeschool setting, such as Freedom Project Education (FPE). FPE is an online K-12 curriculum program offering a classical, Judeo-Christian education and is completely independent of any government funding.

The U.S. Constitution nowhere authorizes the federal government to be involved in education, and Department of Education ought to be abolished as well. As opposition to Common Core mounts, perhaps Americans will repudiate the notion that the federal government needs to control education in America and return schooling to the control of local communities and parents.





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