



Obama Education Chief Sparks Fury with Common Core Comments

Obama administration Secretary of Education Arne Duncan (shown) unleashed a firestorm of outrage after claiming that opposition to the nationalization of schooling through "[Common Core](#)" standards, foisted on states via taxpayer-funded federal bribes, was coming from "white suburban moms" whose kids are not as smart as their parents thought. The false statement sparked an outcry for a variety of reasons, but opponents of the deeply controversial standardization scheme are seizing the opportunity to go on the offensive against Common Core and the establishment's broader "education reform" agenda. Calls to remove the administration's top education bureaucrat are growing louder, too.



U.S. Education Secretary Duncan was speaking at a meeting with state education bosses late last week when he dropped the bombshell that quickly morphed into the embattled administration's latest scandal. "It's fascinating to me that some of the pushback is coming from, sort of, white suburban moms who — all of a sudden — their child isn't as brilliant as they thought they were and their school isn't quite as good as they thought they were, and that's pretty scary," Duncan claimed at the meeting. "You've bet your house and where you live and everything on 'my child's going to be prepared.' That can be a punch in the gut."

As if the [out-of-control Education Department](#) was hoping to throw fuel on the fire, a spokesman went on to demonize opponents of the radical scheme even more. "The far right and far left have made up their minds," the bureaucracy's taxpayer-funded mouthpiece Massie Ritsch was [quoted as saying](#), implying that parents and teachers concerned about their children's education could be dismissed by falsely trying to marginalize their views yet again. "But there's angst in the middle — which includes many open-minded suburban parents — that needs to be addressed." So far, however, other than skills on the Common Core payroll — [either receiving funds from taxpayers, billionaires, or Big Business](#) — backers of the dubious standards have mustered virtually no support. Outrage is still growing, too.

With most school officials across the country under overwhelming public pressure to reject Obama administration bribes and bullying aimed at imposing the standards on students, Duncan was trying to keep state authorities onboard with the agenda, the spokesman said. Duncan also suggested to reporters later that his goal was to prod education officials into defending Common Core from the escalating uprising. When his "white suburban moms" remark was first reported, however, the outcry was swift and brutal — and it came from all demographics. By the next day, a [petition on the White House website](#) was demanding that Duncan be removed from office. Even his strongest allies were speaking out.



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on November 21, 2013

“Secretary of Education Arne Duncan consistently and flagrantly disregards the concerns of the parents and teachers of America’s schoolchildren,” states the petition, which has already been signed by thousands of concerned parents and educators across America. “He dismisses their concerns in favor of corporate interests.” Duncan’s racially charged remark, the petition continues, “clearly demonstrates the complete lack of understanding he has and his utter contempt for the American people. He is both unqualified and unfit to lead the Department of Education and should be removed immediately.”

Of course, aside from being untrue — critics of the radical standards come from all races, genders, and points on the political spectrum — analysts say the top federal education bureaucrat’s controversial remarks were divisive, antagonizing, inappropriate, racially charged, and more. Plus, parents are outraged about the dumbing-down of their kids, not, as Duncan falsely suggested, that they aren’t “brilliant.” Even if Duncan’s statements had been semi-grounded in reality, however, critics say marginalizing and dismissing the serious concerns of a massive cross-section of the American population is indicative of how the administration governs: Perpetually seeking to create and hype artificial divisions on the road to lawlessly imposing its will on everyone.

Incredibly, with Duncan’s ploy backfiring in spectacular fashion, even some of the nation’s most zealous administration and Common Core supporters were up in arms about the remarks. In a [Twitter post](#) aimed at Obama’s education chief, for example, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Winegarten told Duncan he should “walk this back.” Calling the comments “very insensitive” and “not right,” Winegarten also noted that “moms care about their kids!!” The union chief’s remarks were especially stunning considering the fact that AFT has [received](#) many millions of dollars [to push the standards](#) from billionaire Common Core financier and population-control crusader Bill Gates.

Education officials were outraged, too. Dr. Joseph Rella, for instance, the Superintendent of Schools for New York’s Comsewogue School District, sent a [stinging letter](#) to Duncan suggesting that while the education secretary’s remark may not have been racially motivated, it was almost certainly meant to divide. “You need to know that if the Common Core initiative has succeeded at anything, it has succeeded in uniting all the disparate groups throughout our state and country — white and nonwhite, urban and suburban, mothers, fathers, educators, and politicians of all parties,” Dr. Rella wrote. “Ignoring our real concerns and engaging in divisive rhetoric will not make the issue disappear.”

Aside from the fact that gender and skin color should not be cited to discount public parental complaints, Dr. Rella also said parents were not fighting against Common Core because they suddenly realized their children were not brilliant. Instead, he wrote, the public is outraged about the “miserable implementation” of the standards and children’s overwhelming negative experience with the abusive changes. Students are increasingly experiencing a wide range of problems, and Rella said it has gotten so bad that some are now calling it “Common Core Disorder.”

“The growing outrage of parents and educators across our state is the result of the purposeful deafness of the educational leadership at the state and federal levels to our legitimate concerns,” Dr. Rella concluded. “As a practical matter, student achievement has not improved anywhere this initiative has been introduced,” he added, citing the disastrous effects already observed in multiple major cities. “We will do everything in our power to prevent it from happening here in New York,” the district superintendent said. “We will not be silent. We need responsive leadership, not sound bites.”

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, supporters of local control and proper education also lambasted Duncan for his remarks. “Just when you thought the Obama administration couldn’t antagonize America any further, along comes Education Secretary Arne Duncan,” [wrote](#) popular columnist Michelle Malkin,



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on November 21, 2013

calling Duncan a “corrupt and bankrupt bigot” in remarks that have since been [picked up in the national media](#). “He didn’t just attack ‘white suburban moms’ and children over their criticism of the Common Core ‘standards’/testing/data-mining program. The feds’ top educrat also managed to insult every one of the nation’s minority families and educators who oppose Fed Ed’s threat to academic excellence, local control and student privacy.”

Already, 45 state governments have accepted federal funds extracted from taxpayers in exchange for [implementing the full Common Core regime](#). The scheme includes dubious math and English standards that experts say are beyond terrible — so bad, in fact, that both of the subject-matter experts on the Common Core Validation Committee refused to sign off on them. While technically separate, the same forces behind the controversial English and math agenda are also working to foist [even more controversial](#) “science,” sex-education, and “history” standards on American children as well.

Another key component of the administration’s “education reform” agenda is a [federally funded national testing regime](#) to ensure that all students are learning and absorbing the controversial standards. Then there is the [data-mining component](#), which requires that vast amounts of information on children be shared with the federal government. Some of the data gathering is not technically part of Common Core — many elements are — but all of it is intimately linked to the administration’s deeply controversial education machinations.

As the uproar was growing louder and it became obvious that the divisive and misleading ploy backfired, Duncan finally apologized on Monday for his half-baked comments — sort of. “My wording, my phrasing, was a little clumsy and I apologize for that,” he said. However, as administration officials, and state authorities collecting federal Common Core bribes, continue with their failing efforts to demonize supporters of proper education and local control, the grassroots uprising against the standards is sweeping the country even faster.

All of the federal bribes and billionaire grants to support Common Core are starting to backfire, too. Parents and teachers are increasingly realizing that this has become a battle between [citizens on one side, and out-of-touch Big Government and Big Business](#) interests on the other. With opposition to the radical standards making headlines nationwide after Duncan’s comments as public awareness grows quickly, activists are increasingly hopeful that the entire Common Core agenda can and will be scrapped — even if it takes an election or two to unseat the out-of-touch officials still pushing it in defiance of the public. The future of America depends on the outcome of the battle.

Photo of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan: AP Images

Alex Newman is a correspondent for The New American, covering economics, politics, education, and more. He can be reached at anewman@thenewamerican.com.

Related articles:

[Common Core: A Scheme to Rewrite Education](#)

[Orwellian Nightmare: Data-mining Your Kids](#)

[Under Pressure, Largest N.H. School District Looks Beyond Common Core](#)

[Common Core National Education Outrages Teacher Coalition](#)

[At Wisconsin Hearing, Educators Blast Common Core Education](#)

[Educators Expose Dangers of Common Core National Education](#)



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on November 21, 2013

[Lawmakers and Activists Rally to Stop Obama-backed "Common Core"](#)

[GOP Blasts Obama-backed National Education Standards](#)

[Parent Dares Challenge Common Core, Hauled Away in Handcuffs](#)

[Debunking Myth of Common Core Education as "State Led"](#)

[Common Core: People vs. Big Government, Big Business, and Billionaires](#)

[Top Catholic Scholars Slam Common Core](#)



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.

Subscribe