

How NOT To Argue with Parents About Common Core

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As an outspoken critic of the federal academic standards scheme known as Common Core, I'd like to offer some friendly advice to opponents. Stop insulting. Stop digging. Stop projecting. Start listening.

Central planners in Washington have been caught off-guard by the grassroots revolt against the national standards/testing/curriculum juggernaut. Real input from the hoi polloi was never a part of the grand implementation process. So when parents and educators in dozens of states started challenging the privacy intrusions posed by and the constitutionality, cost, quality and validity of Common Core, its architects went on the attack. And now, the education control freaks are freaking out.

Former GOP Florida Gov. Jeb Bush accused moms and dads who've vigilantly fought dumbed-down curricula firsthand of foisting "mediocrity" on their own kids. Bush, Mike Huckabee, Chamber of Commerce types and Gates Foundation promoters routinely have insulted Glenn Beck and his listeners as conspiracy-mongers for raising red flags about Common Core's data-mining agenda.

A Fordham Institute "expert" arrogantly suggested that actively involved parents like me were somehow confused about which materials have been "aligned" to Common Core, even though we're the ones sitting down with our kids to help with incomprehensible homework and error-riddled texts every night in our own homes.

Heavy-handed school-board members and state educrats are taking cues from these elitist leaders. When they're not mocking dissenters, they're stifling them. Maryland parent Robert Small was threatened with arrest and falsely accused of assaulting a police officer because he dared to challenge a Common Core Kabuki forum.

In North Carolina, a parent writes that her principal refused to meet with a group of moms and dads concerned with dumbed-down Common Core math lessons. Moreover, the parent told the Truth About Education blog, the principal issued an effective gag order when she "outright told me to stop communicating with other parents about the Common Core because I was generating 'unrest.'"

In Colorado, parent Natalie Adams was slapped with a no-trespass order by Jefferson County officials last week after challenging her district's new boondoggle expenditures on Common Core-tied technology marketed by inBloom (a nonprofit school data-sharing conglomerate funded by the Gates and Carnegie Foundations, with architecture built by Wireless/Amplify, a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation).

In a classic case of psychological projection, New York Education Commissioner John King sneered at parents and teachers who attended his Common Core dog-and-pony show as "special interests." After droning on uninterrupted for an hour and a half, King finally allowed two-minute statements from the audience.

Parents balked at their kids being used as "guinea pigs" for untested teaching methods; educators challenged Common Core's assessment-obsessed, one-size-fits-all approach. King petulantly cut off testimony only 20 minutes into the feedback session to filibuster and grandstand — and then proceeded to cancel future forums.

King dug his hole further by accusing parents of being "manipulated." But Leonie Haimson, a New York City public school parent, pointed out: "So far six out of nine states have pulled out of inBloom or put their plans on

hold because of protests from privacy experts and parents in Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Delaware and Massachusetts."

"Commissioner King's claim is not only insulting to parents; it reveals how out of touch he is," Haimson wrote this week in an assessment that sums up the problem with countless Common Core mouthpieces. "He seems unable to comprehend how parents' desire to protect their children's privacy is rational and to have the right to decide with whom their children's most sensitive information, including their names, addresses, test scores, disabilities and disciplinary records, is being shared is completely justified."

In my home state of Colorado, dissent from both conservative and liberal parents forced Jefferson County to allow individual "opt-outs" from the inBloom data-mining machine. The Gates Foundation responded by pouring \$5 million into the district for "innovative professional development systems to create personalized learning systems for teachers." How do you spell special interest payoff?

Not only do these education emperors have no clothes. They have tissue-paper thin skin. Their arrogant, contemptuous and vengeful treatment of dissenting parents and teachers gets a world-class "F." Listen up:

We parents of school-age children are all Robert Smalls and Natalie Adamses and Leonie Haimsons. We, not the Obamas or the Bushes or the Gateses or educrats in Washington, are our children's primary educational providers. Control over our children begins and ends with us.

It is not easy to stand up and challenge sovereignty-undermining, curriculum-usurping, privacy-sabotaging education orthodoxy, especially when it is plied with a toxic alliance of both big-government and big-business interests.

But if we don't do it, who will?

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