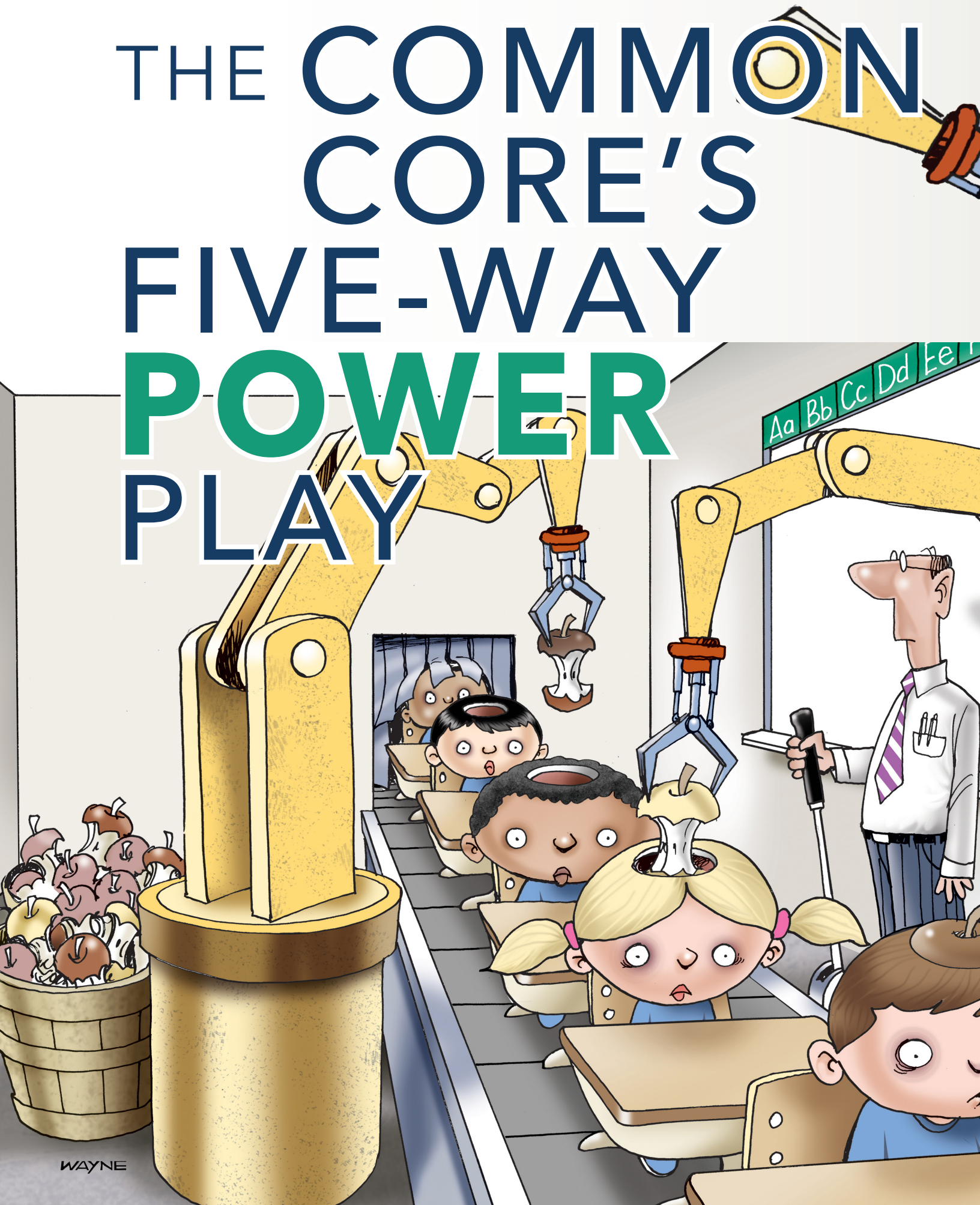
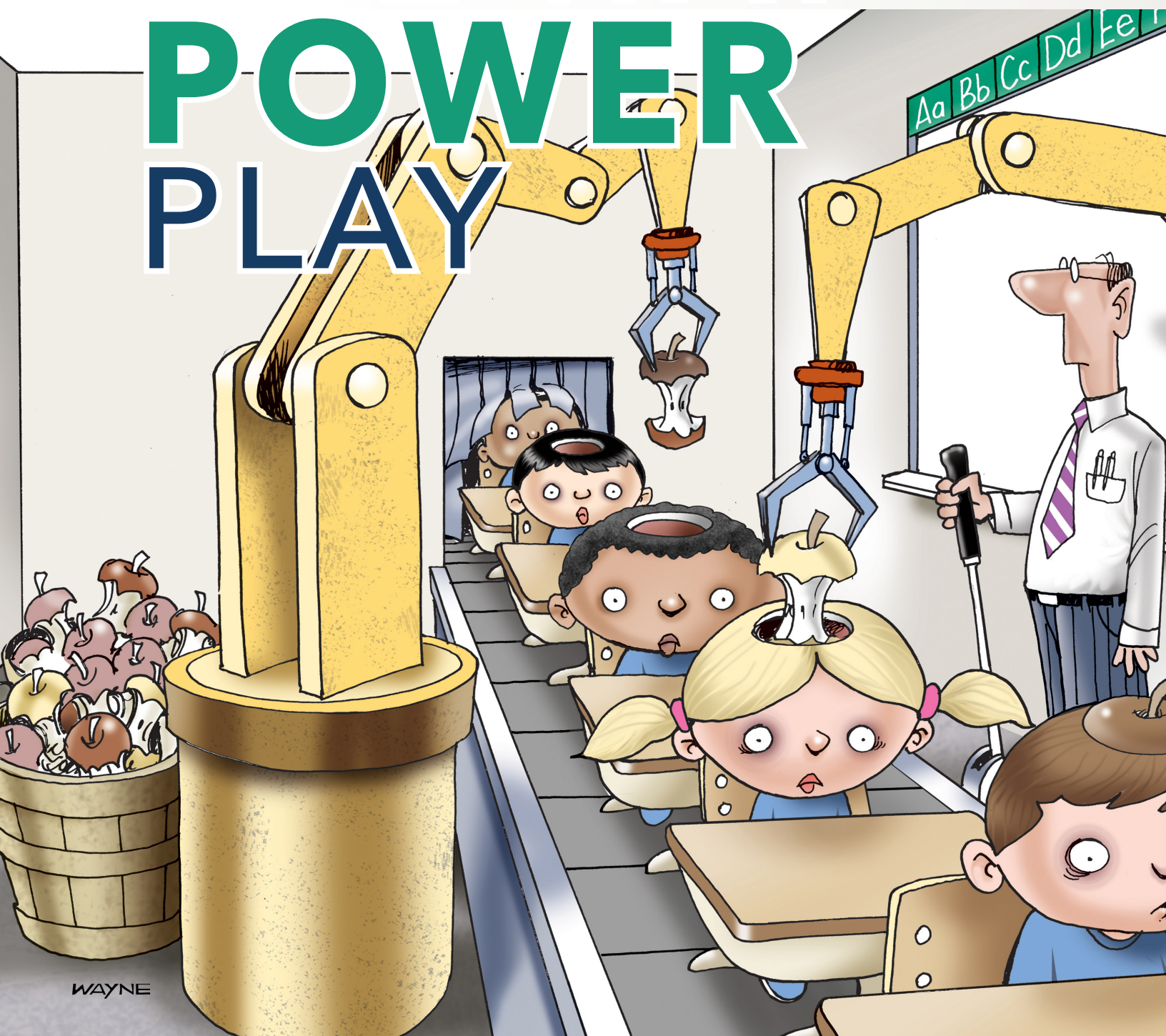


# THE COMMON CORE'S FIVE-WAY POWER PLAY

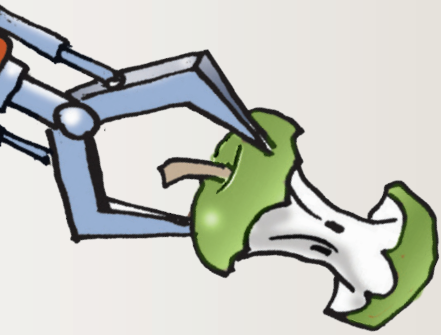




# THE COMMON CORE'S FIVE-WAY POWER PLAY



# BIG CHANGES AFOOT

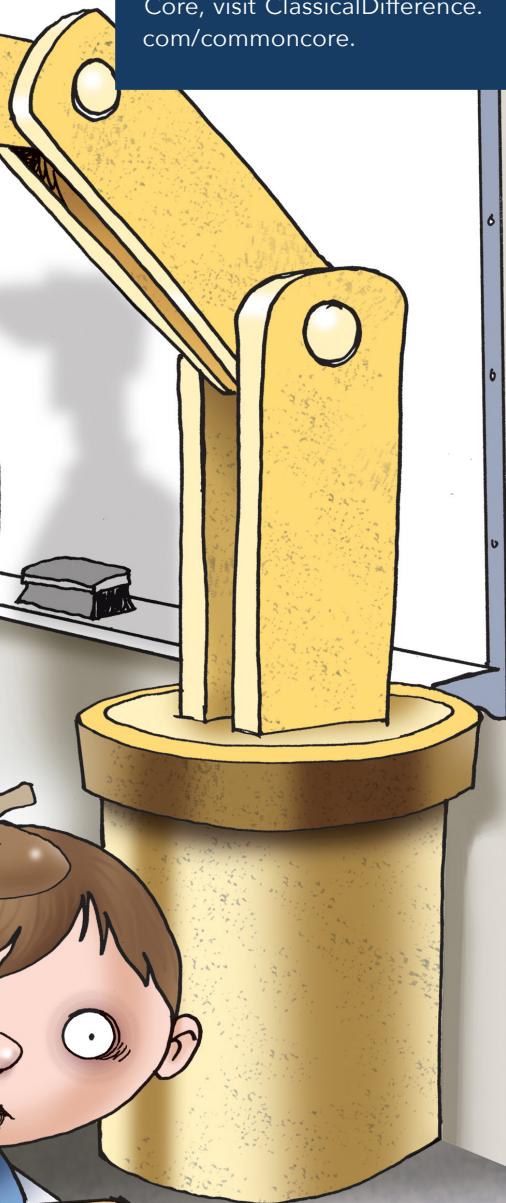


Common Core, AdvancED Accreditation,  
The College Board, Textbook Publishers,  
and the U.S. Department of Education



## More Info

For more on the Common Core, visit [ClassicalDifference.com/commoncore](http://ClassicalDifference.com/commoncore).



COMMON CORE CAME OUT WITH A BANG—over 40 states adopted it. What few realize is that the Common Core's impact is not limited to educational standards. The real story is in the widening net the Common Core is casting.

### ADVANCED ACCREDITATION— CONSOLIDATED POWER IN AMERICAN SCHOOLS

At the same time Common Core was rewriting standards, the most significant K-12 accrediting change in over 50 years emerged. Accreditors visit state and private K-12 schools to verify that they meet certain standards and then typically grant recognition so students can transfer between schools, play in state athletic leagues, apply for grants from some organizations, and meet state graduation requirements. In 2006, AdvancED, a private accrediting body for K-12, was formed by merging most of the nation's K-12 regional accrediting organizations to form one massive accrediting powerhouse, officially recognized in over 37 states and through reciprocity agreements in all 50 states.

While private, AdvancED carries the power of law in most states because state statutes specifically refer to the regional accreditors that AdvancED acquired. AdvancED includes Common Core in its standards—if not officially, through the accreditation instruments and the enforcement of state standards. One classical Christian educator who underwent AdvancED accreditation put it this way: "AdvancED desires to standardize teaching and learning and is a natural partner

with other standardization efforts like the controversial Common Core Curriculum. By definition, classical Christian education rejects the progressive model of education used in the vast majority of public and private schools today."

Never before in American education has one organization had so wide an influence and control over standards, federal funding, accreditation, and college entrance testing. They will form the beliefs and attitudes of tomorrow's leaders, and a nation of citizens.

### IMPOSING COMMON CORE THROUGH THE SAT AND STRINGS-ATTACHED FEDERAL GRANTS

In 2016, the nation's oldest and most accepted college entrance exam, the SAT, was redesigned from the ground up with the Common Core in mind. The College Board (publisher of the SAT) is now headed by David Coleman, the former pioneer of the Common Core. Finally, the federal government, which



spends \$154 billion on education through local district and state grants, now makes it clear that the money will follow the Common Core. This alignment of accreditation, common core standards, college entrance exams, and federal dollars will inevitably reshape the face of American education.



## Common Core: Facts & Fiction

In 2008, Janet Napolitano, who later served in the Obama Administration and as the president of the University of California system, launched the Common Core initiative. In its early years, Napolitano worked to build a coalition of states to sign on to the standards. The Obama Administration officially backed the standards in 2012. His “Race to the Top” program earmarked \$4.35 billion, in part, to promote Common Core. The U.S. Department of Education, which controls billions more in educational funding, encourages states to adopt the Common Core. The U.S. Department of Education runs programs that influence 99,000 public schools and 34,000 private schools, and the 56 million students who attend them.

The Common Core covers reading and math, but not science or other subjects. However, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are a companion set of standards, provided by another organization, that dovetails with the Common Core to provide standards in science and social studies. We believe these will roll into the Common Core eventually.

The primary sponsor of the organization that governs the Common Core is the National Governors Association—a non-government agency. The standards are copyrighted and controlled by this group and another, the Counsel of Chief State School Officers. This non-government status is important because a number of U.S. laws prohibit the federal government from directly implementing standards in schools.

David Coleman, successor to Napolitano at the Common Core, became the shepherd ▶

Conventional standardized tests used in K-12 are also feeling the pinch. The storied Stanford Achievement Test, published since 1926, is being retired. The equally well-accepted Iowa Basics Test is aligning to the Common Core. Terra Nova, used by many Christian schools, is aligning to the Common Core. Because states are adopting the Common Core, they are adopting tests that test Common Core skills. This will shape the curriculum of thousands of Christian schools.

### THE TEXTBOOK COMMON CORE GOLDRUSH

With about 35 states implementing Common Core and about the same in AdvancED, we will see nearly the entire textbook industry follow. Even Christian private schools that traditionally conform to state standards will be impacted by the textbooks. Several major textbook publishers aligned to the Common Core early. Pearson announced its support in 2012. Since then, publishers like McGraw-Hill, Houghton Mifflin, and Scholastic News have begun development of texts that conform to the Common Core. Indirect control of the textbooks will

make the Common Core’s influence spread to nearly every school in America.

Once a single set of standards, governed by an unaccountable private organization, become widely accepted, the future will lead to new standards, politically imposed.

### WHY SHOULD THIS CONCERN CHRISTIAN PARENTS?

The Common Core’s narrow, protected control of K-12 educational standards in the US is unprecedented. For the past 100 years, progressive educators sought the holy grail of power in America—universal control of education. John Dewey, Charles Potter and a host of other progressives made a play for universal educational control and standards in the early 20th century. Charles Potter’s statement in the 1930s reveals this progressive intent: “What can theistic Sunday School, meeting for an hour once a week, do to stem the tide of a five day program of humanistic teaching?”

## Cutting to the Core

### WHAT THE PLAYERS ARE SAYING

To understand the direction that Common Core will likely take, we can look at the careful language in their mission.

“The standards were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live.”

—From the Common Core

“The College Board has played an active role in the development of the

Common Core, and we are confident the Standards will make a profound contribution to equity and excellence and serve to level the playing field for all students to have access to college and career readiness.”

—Paul W. Sechrist, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the College Board (SAT)

We can see that, as noble as the inclusion of all students and a level playing field may be, the standards are not about excellent education. The focus is on political ends. How do math or language standards ensure a ‘level playing field’ or address ‘where they live’? They can only achieve this goal if they are political rather than educational in nature.

Lawrence Cremin, an historian at Columbia University, says it this way:

"If education was to be the principal engine of an intentionally progressive society, then the politics of education would have significance far beyond the control of schools.... It would hold the key to the achievement of the most fundamental political aspirations—in effect, the key to the American Paideia." The progressives were about making a new Paideia—not one based in Christ, but one based in America, specifically, progressive America.

You have scholastic anesthesia. Watch the teachers become technicians. Watch the students go to sleep.

The Common Core organization has protected the standards using copyright law so that they may not be altered or edited without permission. One unelected, unchecked organization will soon have the power to enforce standards in K-12 education nationwide. This will inevitably lead to more controversial enforced standards in the

future once the standards are embedded in America's educational fabric. Never before in American education has one organization had so wide an influence and control over standards, federal funding, accreditation, and college entrance testing. They will form the beliefs and attitudes of tomorrow's leaders, and a nation of citizens.

We believe that neutrality in educational content has proven impossible. In the spring of 2016, we saw the Obama Administration's willingness to force school districts across the US to broaden non-discrimination requirements, originally meant to apply only to gender, to include LGBT protections. This "force" was applied through billions of dollars in federal grants to state and local educational districts.

The U.S. Constitution impedes direct federal control over what is taught in America's schools. Architects of the Common Core, using a five-way power play, have positioned the Common Core as the single controlling force in American education

through money, testing, accreditation, and textbook control. We encourage Christian parents to be vigilant. Now, more than ever, parents should reconsider sending their students to public or charter (which are also influenced through the federal earmarked dollars) schools. ■■

► and champion who was responsible for the Common Core development between 2009 and 2012. In May of 2012, Coleman took his Common Core experience with him to become the president of the College Board, the organization that administers the SAT, AP, and other subject-level tests. His role at the SAT drew concern. Coleman openly set out to reformulate the SAT away from its reasoning roots, toward measurements in line with the Common Core. This move had many concerned that the test would inevitably become politicized. Stanley Kurtz of the National Review put it this way: "Once the AP U.S. History test demands blame-America-first answers, public and private schools alike will be forced to construct an American history curriculum that 'teaches to the test.' "

The Common Core is not a curriculum. Rather, it is a set of standards. "What should students know and what should they be able to do?" is the question answered by the standards. When teachers or parents refer to "the new Common Core curriculum," they are not accurate. Many curriculum providers are now producing textbooks that are aligned to Common Core standards. These employ a variety of new and relatively untested methods.

Forty-two states were initially members of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. At least four states have since withdrawn.

The supporters of Common Core include the Gates Foundation, The Carnegie Foundation, George Soros, and Rupert Murdoch's corporation. In the early years, Jeb Bush and Mike Huckabee signed on. Why do some conservatives support the standards? Early on, the idea of higher educational standards drew the support of a few conservatives. Over time, this support has eroded. ■■



Learn more...

...about Paideia at [about.ClassicalDifference.com/the-paideia-factor](http://about.ClassicalDifference.com/the-paideia-factor)

## Why textbooks fail

### THE PLATONIC IDEAL IN HIS OWN WORDS

By all means marry. If you get a good wife you will become happy, and if you get a bad one you will become a philosopher.

—Socrates

### BY THE BOOK...

Socrates was a Greek philosopher who observed societal patterns.

—The Textbook





# THE COMMON CORE AND THE CLASSICAL TRADITION



LET ME OFFER FROM THE ONSET WHAT I think describes the entire exercise of the Common Core (CC) in our national schools: Educational fatigue and weakness. The entire proposal betrays our lack of vision, health, and confidence to educate our children. Why do I think this?

The CC focus is almost entirely on efficiency—the sure sign of weakness.

“When everything about a people is for the time growing weak and ineffective, it begins to talk about efficiency. So it is that when a man’s body is a wreck he begins, for the first time, to talk about health. Vigorous organisms talk not about their processes, but about their aims.”

—G.K. Chesterton

The extent of our Common Core vision of educational health is “career and college readiness.” This, frankly, spells the end. With no robust vision for the end of education, education ends. What do we have in its place? Technical training. Technical training never

was, and never will be, an education. I recall a friend of mine, a physician, standing up before a group of parents joining together to start a classical school and saying, “I am very highly trained and very poorly educated.”

The Common Core program is likely the largest “process program” in the history of education. Are standards evil? No, they are not. Some standards are worth articulating to guide teachers who are masters of their art or discipline (best set by the master teachers themselves). But without a vision for education,

standards are all that’s left; they become our focus, and thus they subdivide and multiply. You have scholastic anesthesia. Watch the teachers become technicians. Watch the students go to sleep.

In another vein, Chesterton said, “When you break the big laws you do not get freedom. You do not even get anarchy. You get small laws.” We have broken one big law of education. The big law says “you shall cultivate and nourish a human being on truth, goodness and beauty.” We have said, “we shall train workers for the global economy” (career readiness). and “we shall train them to get further training” (college readiness). What do we get? Many, many small laws that we call “standards.” Clipboard ready?

Whatever else CC is, it certainly is an attempt to institute a national and consistent set of standards amounting to a national curriculum. It is all legal, despite the fact that various acts of Congress expressly prohibit the enactment of a federal curriculum (see in particular the Department of

Education Organization Act of 1979). How is this possible? It is possible because it was the states (via the states’ Depart-

ments of Education) that adopted the standards. All this has been meticulously documented and hotly contested, with “Stop Common Core” organizations working in almost every state in the union (only five states—Alaska, Virginia, Nebraska, Texas, Minnesota—have not adopted CC; about 30 states have

*I am very highly  
trained and very  
poorly educated.*

pending challenges to all or part of CC).

As someone within the classical education renewal, I can only add a few observations springing from my ongoing study of the classical tradition.

- Common Core is just the latest move by thoughtful, intelligent people who are not able or interested in educational solutions from the classical tradition. For the progressives who dominate the educational conversation, any solutions must be in the future not the past.

- Excessive analysis becomes an autopsy. It is possible to analyze something... to death. Great teachers know how much analysis a student can take, and know when to switch back to the big picture that inspires students with beauty, purpose, and the point of it all. What's lost, even if inadvertently? The

love of math, history, literature, science—and the ability to encounter them and experience them as wonderful facets of truth, goodness and beauty.

- Too much poor teaching drives the push for CC. One legitimate cause for CC: pervasively bad teaching in too many schools (not all of them—some have managed to be admirable in many ways). Our nation's teachers, for example, are not generally trained to be well-rounded masters of several disciplines, but specialists who cannot integrate say biology with history or literature with music. Fragmented themselves, they can offer only a fragmented education to their students.

- Implementation of CC will produce less of what it seeks. The great irony: while this response to increase learning and accountability seems rational and under-

standable, I believe it will produce precisely the opposite effect. Why? Because teachers as dissectors and inspectors cannot inspire learning, and without inspiration, students cease being students. More and more students must be compelled to academic work, because they

**The classical conception holds true, and is a rock that the tide and waves cannot diminish.**

lack an internal drive to seek after truth, goodness, beauty, and knowledge.

Again, why? Because the CC architects do not understand what education truly is. To them education is a science—the right application of a tested method to produce predictable results. We don't need a “master”—we just need someone who can apply the tested techniques consistently upon a group of humans. The CC organization responds that they do not specify HOW teachers teach just WHAT they are to teach. But that is verbal gobbledygook.

The classical conception of education holds true, and is a rock that the tide and waves cannot diminish. Human beings are above the animals as conscious beings capable of apprehending and knowing truth, goodness, and beauty as eternal realities. They are best taught by wise, eloquent and virtuous teachers who have themselves been cultivated by a study of language, history, literature, mathematics, music, natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and theology.

Teaching is an art and relationship (of love and kindness) in which teachers impart themselves to their students, so

## The Classical Christian SAT Advantage

### WILL IT CONTINUE?

About a quarter of ACCS graduates attend the Top Colleges in U.S. News and World Report's list. Our graduates are sought after, particularly at the finest Christian institutions. In part, this has been due to our “incredible” averages on the PSAT and SAT. The word “incredible” is used carefully here. At first blush, the ACCS averages seem so good, they are statistically unlikely. But they have been consistent over time. ACCS SAT averages in 2015 were 85 points higher than independent schools. “Independent schools” are made up of some of the finest private prep-schools in the country. By comparison, these independent prep schools outscore public schools by about this same margin—86 points. So, the ACCS is 171 points above public schools, and 85 points higher than independent schools. If you add in the writing component, the numbers are even more impressive for the ACCS. Put another way, if we believe the test score statistics, ACCS graduates are twice as advanced as those who attend schools that, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, charge around \$20,000 per year. Our average tuition is around \$7500. Our college readiness index seems equally improbable: our students average 237 points above the benchmark. Independent schools? 99 points above the benchmark. Religious schools? 46 points above the benchmark. Our students also disproportionately earn National Merit Scholar status. Dollar for dollar, it's hard to beat the value of classical Christian education for college preparation.

While the SAT has been radically changed from a test that measured a student's reasoning ability to a test that measures their knowledge of Common Core standards, our students will likely continue to have an advantage. Reasoning and language skills will continue to help our students succeed on the tests and in college. For example, even though the ACT is more of a content (achievement) test, our students still score an average of 26.2 (vs. 21 nationally) on the test.



## Wait! There's more...

This article is an excerpt from his full article “The Common Core and the Classical Tradition.” To see the full article, visit [ClassicalDifference.com/commoncore](http://ClassicalDifference.com/commoncore)

that after being fully trained, students will become like their teacher. Is CC the roar of a tide coming in or going out? I

am not sure, but classical education will remain steadfast and intact, as it has for 2000 years. ■■

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CHRISTOPHER A. PERRIN, PhD. President  
of Classical Academic Press



Cary Christian School, Cary, NC

## The Good News...

### YOUR SCHOOL AND THE COMMON CORE

IF YOU RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE, you're probably already enrolled in an ACCS (Association of Classical Christian Schools) member school. The ACCS, the accrediting body for classical Christian schools, is joining with other organizations to provide an alternative to the Common Core:

**1** ACCS accreditation does not require conformance to state standards, and therefore the Common Core. We deliberately avoid "regional accreditation" reciprocity agreements that would require our schools to compromise their independence by conforming to state graduation standards. Our schools will remain free to practice classical Christian education independent of the Common Core.

**2** The ACCS recently joined forces with the Classical Learning Test (CLT), an alternative to the SAT that is rapidly gaining acceptance as a wide range of educators join forces

to support excellence in collegiate education. While we anticipate that ACCS students will continue to do very well on the SAT, we're excited to see the development of an alternative to the Common Core test, and it is already available. We're also encouraging our members to take the ACT as an alternative to the SAT. While both are achievement tests (they test knowledge more than reasoning), the ACT has not fully aligned to the Common Core.

**3** ACCS member schools annually confirm that they do not accept government funds in such a way that their educational independence is compromised. This helps protect our schools from "strings attached" Common Core requirements by the federal government.

**4** Teachers in classical Christian schools are insulated from the Common Core. Education colleges, which are involved in licensing nearly all public and many Christian school teachers, are beginning to train to the Common Core. Member schools within the ACCS are independent of these licensing requirements. As an alternative, we have a teacher certification program for accredited member schools.

**5** Textbooks in classical Christian schools are generally original works from the past, or they are written by classical Christian publishers. In either case, the Common Core, directly or indirectly, has no impact on our textbooks. In fact, most of our textbook authors purposely reject the Common Core.

ACCS graduates  
are twice as  
advanced as  
those who attend  
schools that  
charge around  
\$20,000 per year.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR STUDENTS AT ACCS CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS?

We reject the Common Core because it distracts from true education. Without too much detail, it emphasizes modern, data-driven learning work rather than well-rounded studies to promote logic, analysis, depth, and wisdom—classical literature, history, philosophy and theology are silenced. Thus, the Common Core standards drive priorities and content that are incompatible with Christianity and with classical education as a whole. (See "Common Core and the Classical Tradition" by Dr. Chris Perrin in this issue.) For these reasons, ACCS member schools are among the most independent schools in the nation. ■■