

# Top Ten Things Parents Hate About Common Core

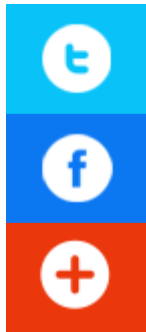
*It's the first school year most parents have heard about Common Core. And they don't like it one bit.*

By Joy Pullmann

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This is the year new national Common Core tests kick in, replacing state tests in most locales, courtesy of an eager Obama administration and the future generation's tax dollars. It's also the first year a majority of people interviewed tell pollsters they've actually heard of Common Core, four years after bureaucrats signed our kids onto this complete overhaul of U.S. education.

Common Core has impressed everyone from Bill Gates to U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan. So why do **62 percent of parents think** it's a **bad idea**? For one, they can count. But their kids can't.

## 1. The Senseless, Infuriating Math

Common Core math, how do we hate thee? We would count the ways, if Common Core hadn't deformed even the most elementary of our math

abilities so that simple addition now takes dots, dashes, boxes, hashmarks, and foam cubes, plus an inordinate amount of time, to not get the right answer.

There are **so many examples of this**, it's hard to pick, but a recent one boomeranging the Internet has a teacher showing how to solve  $9 + 6$  the Common Core way. Yes, it takes nearly a minute.

Despite claims to the contrary, Common Core does require bad math like this. The Brookings Institution's Tom Loveless **says the curriculum mandates contain "dog whistles"** for fuzzy math proponents, the people who keep pushing ineffective, devastating, and research-decimated math instruction on U.S. kids for ideological reasons. The mandates also explicitly require kids to learn the least efficient ways of solving basic problems one, two, and even three grade levels before they are to learn the traditional, efficient ways. There **are ways for teachers to fill in the gaps and fix this**, but this means a kid's ability to get good math instruction depends on the luck of having an extra-savvy teacher. That's especially a downer for poor and minority kids, who **already get the greenest and lowest-quality teachers**.

## 2. The Lies

The American Enterprise Institute's Rick Hess **recently wrote about Common Core's "half-truths,"** which Greg Forster **pointedly demonstrated he should have called "lies."** These include talking points essential to selling governors and other state leaders on the project, such as that Common Core is: "internationally benchmarked" ("well, we sorta looked at what other nations do but that didn't necessarily change anything we

did”); “evidence based” (“we know there is not enough research to undergird any standards, so we just polled some people and that’s our evidence”); “college- and career-ready” (“only if you mean community-college ready”); “rigorous” (as long as rigorous indicates “rigid”); and “high-performing nations nationalize education” (so do low-performing nations).

### 3. Obliterating Parent Rights

Common Core has revealed the contempt public “servants” have for the people they are supposedly ruled by—that’d be you and me. Indiana firebrand Heather Crossin, a mom whose encounter with Common Core math turned her into a nationally known activist, went with other parents to their private-school principal in an attempt to get their school’s new Common Core textbooks replaced. “Our principal in frustration threw up his hands and said, ‘Look, I know parents don’t like this type of math because none of us were taught this way, but we have to teach it this way because this is how it’s going to be on the new [standardized] assessment,” she says. “And that was the moment when I realized control of what was being taught in my child’s classroom — in a parochial Catholic school — had not only left the building, it had left the state of Indiana.”

A Maryland dad who stood up to complain that Common Core dumbed down his kids’ instruction was arrested and thrown out of a public meeting. See the video.

Parents regularly fill my inbox, frustrated that even when they do go to their local school boards, often all they get are disgusted looks and a bored thumb-twiddling during their two-minute public comment allowance. A New Hampshire dad was also arrested for going over his

two-minute comment limit in a local school board meeting parents packed to complain about graphic-sex-filled literature assignments. The way the board treats him and his fellow parents is repulsive.

The bottom line is, parents have no choice about whether their kids will learn Common Core, no matter what school they put them in, if they want them to go to college, because the SAT and ACT are being redesigned to fit the new national program for education. Elected school boards pay parents no heed, and neither do state departments of education, because the feds deliberately use our tax dollars to put themselves in the education driver's seat, at our expense. So much for "by the people, for the people, of the people."

#### 4. Dirty Reading Assignments

A red-haired mother of four kids read to our Indiana legislature selections from a Common Core-recommended book called "The Bluest Eyes," by Toni Morrison. I'm a grown, married woman who enjoys sex just fine, thank you, but I sincerely wish I hadn't heard her read those passages. I guess some people don't find sympathetically portrayed rape scenes offensive, but I do. So I won't quote them at you. If you have a perv-wish, Google will fill you in. Other objectionable books on the Common Core-recommended list include "Make Lemonade" by Virginia Euwer Wolff, "Black Swan Green" by David Mitchell, and "Dreaming in Cuban" by Cristina Garcia.

There are so many excellent, classic works of literature available for children and young adults that schools can't possibly fit all the good ones

into their curriculum. So why did Common Core's creators feel the need to recommend trash? Either they want kids to read trash or they don't think these are trash, and both are disturbing.

## 5. Turning Kids Into Corporate Cogs

The workforce-prep mentality of Common Core is written into its DNA. Start with its slogan, which is now written into federal mandates on state education systems: "College and career readiness." That is the entire Common Core conception of education's purpose: Careers. Job training. Workforce skills. There's not a word about the reasons our state constitutions give for establishing public education, in which economic advancement is largely considered a person's personal affair. ([Milton Friedman takes the same tack](#), by the way.) State constitutions typically mimic [the Northwest Ordinance's vision for public education \(the ordinance was the first U.S. law to discuss education\)](#): "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

Common Core makes no promises about fulfilling public education's purpose of producing citizens capable of self-government. Instead, it focuses entirely on the materialistic benefits of education, although human civilization has instead long considered education a part of acculturating children and passing down a people's knowledge, heritage, and morals. The workforce talk certainly tickles the ears of Common Core's corporate supporters. Maybe that was the intent all along. But in what world do corporations get to dictate what kids learn, instead of the parents and kids themselves? Ours, apparently.

## 6. The Data Collection and Populace Management

Speaking of corporate cronyism, let's talk about how Common Core enables the continued theft of kids' and teachers' information at the behest of governments and businesses, furthering their bottom lines and populace-control fantasies at the expense of private property and self-determination. Well, I coauthored [a 400-footnote paper on this very topic](#). I'll just summarize the list of direct connections between intrusive data-mining and Common Core from my favorite passage (in the section starting on page 52):

1. The documents that 'created the (dubious) authorization for Common Core define the initiative as curriculum mandates plus tests. The tests are the key instrument of data collection.
2. Common Core architect David Coleman has confirmed that special-interests deliberately packaged data mining into Common Core.
3. Common Core creates an enormous system of data classification for education. It's probably easiest to think of it as an enormous filing system, like the equivalent of the Dewey Decimal System for lessons, textbooks, apps, and everything else kids learn. That's by design.
4. States using the national, federally funded Common Core tests have essentially turned over control of what data they collect on children to private organizations that are overseen by no elected officials. Those organizations have promised complete access to kids' data to the federal government.
5. Common Core and data vacuuming are philosophically aligned—they both justify themselves as technocratic, progressive solutions to human problems. The ultimate goal is using data to “seamlessly integrate”

education and the economy. In other words, we learned nothing from the USSR.

## 7. Distancing Parents and Children

A recent study found that **the Common Core model of education results in** parents who are less engaged in their kids' education and express more negative attitudes about schools and government. Does it need to be noted that kids desperately need their pre-existing, natural bond with their parents to get a good start in life, and anything that attacks this is bad for both the kids and society?

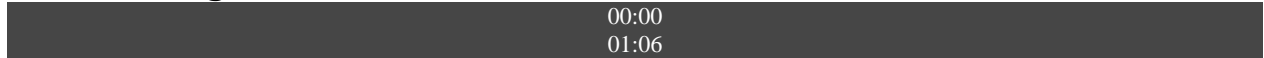
In addition, math even highly educated engineers and math professors can't understand obviously has the effect of placing a teacher and school between a child and his parent. Parents are rife with stories about how they tried to teach their kids "normal" math, but it put pressure on the tots because teacher demanded one thing and mom demanded another, which ended up in frustration, confusion, and resentment. That won't make a kid hate school, right?

## 8. Making Little Kids Cry

It's one thing to teach a child to endure life's inevitable suffering for a higher purpose. It's another thing to inflict children with needless suffering because you've got a society to remake, and "it takes a few broken eggs to make an omelet." One is perhaps the essence of character. The other is perhaps the essence of cruelty.

There have been reports nationwide from both teachers and a litany of child psychologists that Common Core inflicts poorly designed instruction on children, thus stressing them out and turning them off

academics. The video below, [courtesy of Truth in American Education and a Louisiana mother](#), shows a second grader crying over her math homework. A SECOND GRADER. You know, when the little people are still learning addition?



Below, find a picture from a New York mother and photographer Kelly Poynter. This is her second-grade daughter, utterly frustrated at her math homework. The little girl is a cancer survivor, [Poynter explains](#), so she doesn't lack persistence or a fighting spirit. Incomprehensible math



problems downed a child that cancer couldn't.



## 9. The Arrogance

So imagine you're a mom or dad whose small child is sobbing at the table trying to add two-digit numbers. Then you hear your elected representatives talking about Common Core. And it's not to offer relief. It's to ridicule your pain—no, worse. It's to ridicule your child's pain.

Florida Senate President **Don Gaetz said of Common Core**: “You can’t dip [Common Core mandates] in milk and hold them over a candle and see the United Nations flag or Barack Obama’s face. They’re not some federal conspiracy.” Ohio House Education Chairman Gerald Stebelton (R-Lancaster) **called Common Core opposition** a “conspiracy theory.” Wisconsin state Sen. John Lehman (D-Racine) **told a packed audience** state hearings on the topic were “crazy” and “a show.” Delaware Gov. Jack Markell (D) has **called opponents** a “distract[ing]” “fringe movement.” Missouri Rep. Mike Lair **put \$8 into the state budget for tinfoil hats** for Common Core supporters.

Since when is it okay for lawmakers to ridicule their employers? Aren’t they supposed to be “public servants”? What part of “this math is from hell” sounds like “I think Barack Obama wrote this math curriculum”? Those lawmakers must have encountered an early form of Common Core in school, because they can’t comprehend their way out of a paper bag.

It gets even worse. I thought racial slurs were wrong, but Education Secretary Arne Duncan has no problems slinging those around in his disdain for people who disagree with him on Common Core. You may recall that **he dismissed them** as “white suburban moms who—all of a sudden—their child isn’t as brilliant as they thought they were.” So only *white* moms hate crappy curriculum?

And then parents have to endure a litany of pompous, sickeningly well-paid experts all over the airwaves telling us it’s a) **good for them that our babies are crying at the kitchen table** or b) not really Common Core’s fault or 3) **they don’t really get what’s going on because this newfangled way of adding  $8 + 6$  is so far above the average parent’s ability to understand.**

## 10. The Collectivism

It's easy to see Common Core appeals to those anal-retentive types who cannot function unless U.S. education has some sort of all-encompassing organizing principle.

But there's more. Common Core supporters will admit that several states had better curriculum requirements than Common Core. Then they typically say it's still better for those states to have lowered their expectations to Common Core's level, because that way we have more curricular unity. That's what the Fordham Institute's Mike Petrilli told Indiana legislators when he came to our state to explain why, even though Fordham graded Indiana's former curriculum requirements higher than Common Core, Indiana should remain a step below its previous level. One main reason was that we'd be able to use all the curriculum and lesson plans other teachers in other states were tailoring (to lower academic expectations, natch). Yay, we get to be worse than we were, but it's okay, because now we're the same as everyone else!

Tech companies are uber excited about Common Core because it facilitates a nationwide market for their products. Basically every other education vendor feels the same way, except those who already had nationwide markets because they accessed pockets of the population not subject to mind-numbing state regulations such as home and private schools. But the diversity of the unregulated private market far, far outstrips that of the Common Core market. There are, you know, actual niches, and education styles, and varying philosophies, rather than a flood of companies all trying to package the same product differently. The variety

is one of substance, not just branding. In other words, it's true diversity, not fake diversity.

What would you rather have: Fake freedom, where others choose your end goal and end product, but lets you decide some things about how to achieve someone else's vision for education, which by the way has to be the same for everyone everywhere; or genuine freedom, where you both pick your goals and how to achieve them, and you're the one responsible for the results? Whoops, that's a trick question, moms and dads. In education, no one can pick the latter, because our overlords have already picked for us. Common Core or the door, baby.

Photo By: [Runar Pedersen Holkestad](#)

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