

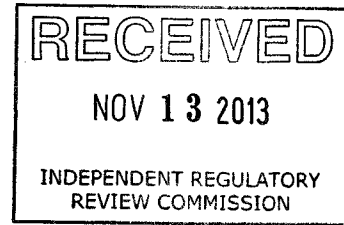
**Cooper, Kathy**

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**From:** ContactForm@state.pa.us  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 13, 2013 1:05 PM  
**To:** Help  
**Subject:** IRRC Website - New Message



A new message has arrived from the IRRC Website



**First Name:** Alan

**Last Name:** Walter

**City/State:** Chester Springs, PA

**Email:** [alan.walter@comcast.net](mailto:alan.walter@comcast.net)

**Subject:** Common Core Indoctrination

**Message:**

It is not surprising that many people have no idea what Common Core is, even our State Representatives like Duane Milne are sending out Newsletters that are totally erroneous and misleading. See the below letter (A look at Common Core Education Standards) I sent to him in response to his September newsletter. -----

----- October 21st 2013 State Representative Duane D. Milne, Ph.D. 70 Lancaster Ave, Suite B Malvern, PA 19355 Dear Representative Milne: Below is the text from a page of your Newsletter in September 2013 answering questions posed to you about Common Core. I have solicited the answers to these same questions that you answered of Cheryl Boise who was the Director of the Commonwealth Education Organization in Pittsburgh and now she is an adviser for the Pa Against Common Core advocacy group. Cheryl Boise's answer these questions are provided in italics after your response. When studying these responses, I must conclude that your answers either are incomplete or misleading when compared to those of a respected expert that has been studying and following Common Core for years. -----

----- From Representative Duane Milne Newsletter: A Look at Common Core Education Standards As we start the new school year, including Jean and I who are sending Alex off to second grade, many in the community, parents, educators and additional interested parties alike have approached me about the new Common Core standards being discussed nationally and in Pennsylvania. What follows is a dialogue with the community about the main questions I am receiving, and my "top line" answers to the requests for clarification and concerns being raised. Community Question #1: Just what is this idea of Common Core? Rep. Milne: First let me set the framework of the conversation with the comment that Common Core is not a federally mandated program, and that is a very important piece of information to know. The program is a voluntary decision on the part of each state to participate. Common Core is a set of educational standards that was established as an initiative of the National Governors Association and the National Council of Chief State School Officers (the Secretary of Education, or equivalent in each state) These education baselines were developed because various individuals and groups concerned about educational progress and problems believe it necessary to set some baseline standards of educational achievement for all American students, regardless of where in the country they live. Cheryl Boise: The idea is a national framework of education standards and testing in core subject

areas. It stems from the national talking points that supporters say our students are not college/workforce ready or internationally competitive. When listening to people like our Intermediate Units in Pa -when promoting this concept- they refer to countries like Germany where everything is standardized, and children are placed in career paths very early on in school. This concept is more than just standards, it is also called school to work. Some people support this because they feel this equalizes the playing field for all students whether they are in a suburban district or the inner city. Other people promote the Common Core because education in this country is a multi-billion dollar industry, and they will make a great deal of money by standardizing the education system and controlling things like textbooks, technology, professional development for teachers, etc. The best analogy of this national movement is it is like corrective shoes. One student in a classroom needs corrective shoes but under this movement all the students get corrective shoes. The standards are those corrective shoes, and this is now not only limited to individual schools but all schools across the country.

Community Question #2: Is Common Core actually a national curriculum? Rep. Milne: No, and this gets into the distinction between standards and curriculum in terms of how education is delivered. If a given set of standards is reached, it means that a student and/or a school has successfully learned a certain body of knowledge. Standards are generally set by entities above the level of a local school district. Curriculum is essentially done at the local school district level. This process determines the tasks, assignments and steps that students need to do in order to successfully reach a standard. Think of standards as your summer vacation destination: curriculum is the exact road you choose to take to get there. Common Core is a set of standards. In Pennsylvania, we actually have had our own standards for many years. The questions we face at this point is whether to use the Common Core standards in lieu of our own state standards, decline to opt in to them at all, or pursue some kind of middle-ground approach. Regardless, under Common Core, the curriculum used to meet the standards will remain a decision made by each school district.

Cheryl Boise: No one handed each state a copy of a curriculum. However, the states aligned their existing standards to the NATIONAL common core framework. Those national standards were not developed by the states using their existing standards which could have been done. Instead those existing state standards were ignored, and organizations and people like Achieve, and David Coleman ( now the head of the College Boards) created their own national standards framework. Many people involved with the writing of Common Core were not education specialist, which is obvious in areas like early learning where early childhood educators were not included in the standards process. The Common Core standards in the early grades are not considers developmentally appropriate for early elementary students. Pennsylvania's State Board of Education had the University of Pittsburgh take the existing state standards, which had been promoted as being rigorous, and aligned them to the Common Core. In the University of Pittsburgh documents, they indicated this was an attempt at having all state standards aligned to one another, and they were required to align our standards 85% to the Common Core with 15% flexibility. Standards and testing have a direct impact on the curriculum. One influences the other. Also when the textbooks- which is what is happening right now- are aligned to the Common Core then clearly there is a direct influence on local curriculum. The Pa. Dept of Education also indicated in their Race to the Top grant application, that due to the cost of these current Chapter 4 changes, they would be providing curriculum on their website to help the districts. Also if districts are using online computer programs for their students- and most of those programs are now written around Common Core- then again the curriculum is being influence by Common Core objectives and standards.

Community Question #3: Does Common Core include a required reading list? R. Milne: No, Common Core creates no such list. Currently, specific texts that students read are selected as part of curriculum designed by local school districts, and that prerogative will remain so under Common Core.

Cheryl Boise: Did each school district receive a specific list of required titles of books the students must read? The answer is no, but again the standards define what type of materials the students will be required to read in order to pass the class, and also the tests. Those who influence the standards, and tests define the direction of materials the students will have to read. There is a definite shift in the required reading materials moving more from classical literature to informational texts like documents. Language Art's specialists like Dr. Sandra Stotsky has outlined in detail the problems with this type of change in literature and reading. Do we want to move students from reading " To Kill A Mockingbird" to reading a government regulation?

Community Question #4: Will Pennsylvania students be required to take a national test under Common Core? Rep. Milne: No. Pennsylvania Department of Education has stated that no national test will be administered as part of Common Core. What will continue is

the already existing Pennsylvania State System of Assessments (PSSAs) and, at some future point the Keystone Exams. The story of Keystones is that these can be done in conjunction with the PSSAs at some future point. Regardless of their ultimate use, which is a matter of continued debate in Harrisburg, they are Pennsylvania state exams and unrelated to Common Core. However, this question does tap in to one of my primary concerns about education: the proliferation of so much standardized testing. I continue to believe that whatever might ail our education system, expanded emphasis on standardized testing is hardly the answer. I see a status quo in which schools already must devote undue time, effort and resources to deal with the realities of the PSSAs, to the detriment of other facets of the curriculum. National tests would only exacerbate this problem. Again, though, Common Core does not call for such, and I for one would object if these were pushed for Pennsylvania.

Cheryl Boise: Good question, because Pa Dept of Education says no. However, Pa received Race to the Tops (RTTT) funds, and are currently applying for further RTTT Funds for Early Learning. Pa. also asked for, and received a waiver over the past summer getting the districts out of some of the No Child Left Behind requirements. Based on the requirements for the funds, and waiver it appears PA is obligated to the national testing. Based on our recent inquiries to the actual national testing consortia, PA is still listed as participating on their websites and has not been dropped as participating. Four letters were sent from our college and universities in Pennsylvania to U.S. Secy. of Education Arne Duncan outlining our involvement. To date no one has seen letters to Secy. Duncan indicating our withdrawal from our being involved at any level with the national testing consortia.

Community Question #5: Will Common Core collect massive amounts of data about children and families? Rep. Milne: No more than is currently done. At the state and federal levels, some information on students is already kept. But all of it is done with an identification number and the students names remain anonymous. Furthermore, the only data kept and tracked is testing scores that allow districts to track a student's growth throughout school careers and also to track classroom performance in order to evaluate teachers. This current collection will continue under Common Core, but will not expand. No personal information, such as behavior traits, will be kept on students and no family information will be tracked.

Cheryl Boise: Again the Pa Dept of Education is saying no, but their involvement in Race to the Top and their acceptance of the waiver for No Child Left Behind indicates otherwise. People have to realize when the Pa Dept of Education says they are not involved in data collection that is again semantics. Pennsylvania has 29 Intermediate Units across the Commonwealth, and many times they are the ones doing the data collection. Currently a request for any contracts or agreements pertaining to anything to do with the Chapter 4 changes has been made through the Senate to the State Board of Education, Dept of Education, and the Intermediate Units for all documents and grant applications pertaining to the standards, the testing and the data collection. They currently only received information related to 2 contracts for a total of \$27 million for 2013-2014. The devil is in the details of the actual documents.

Community Question #6: Does Common Core weaken state standards? Rep. Milne: No, as long as responsible adults look out for our children and do not allow such to happen. In the final analysis, Common Core is a "template" baseline of standards, and states can do with it what they want. Even if Common Core eventually is opted in for the state, Pennsylvania education officials will be instructed to make sure that Pennsylvania's standards are the minimum standard expected (in deciding what to incorporate from Common Core standards and what to retain from Pennsylvania standards.) In many instances, Pennsylvania's current standards actually are already more rigorous of higher than those in Common Core. Our children deserve the best education possible, and I will not stand for our state standards being weakened and the quality of education undermined just so some can roll our political statements touting how wonderful it is that the state is "in" Common Core. A large part of the impetus behind Common Core is about trying to induce better results in the worst-performing areas of the nation (which, thankfully do not include Pennsylvania for the most part.)

Cheryl Boise: Based on the analysis of national experts the Common Core Standards are not rigorous, internationally benchmarked, and are not college ready. When saying college ready that does not mean a community college, but rather what is necessary for a 4 year college or university. The University of Pennsylvania did an analysis of the actual CCS framework and has said this will not give the students the foundation they will need in order to move towards a 4 year college program. We had the Pennsylvania version of the standards analyzed, and were told that we not only weakened our own standards, but revised them several times causing them to decrease in rigor with each change. Pa. also aligned our original standards to some of the weakest and worst of the Common Core standards. We have been closely monitoring what is going on in local school

districts, and it has just come to our attention that some districts are having a great deal of difficulty with the Language Art standards and how they are written and also how they are to be implemented. Common Core is not only about standards, but also how those standards are to be taught. Community Question # 7: Is there Federal Funding tied to Common Core? Rep Milne: No. This is because, as described, Common Core is neither a federal program nor required of the states to participate. Cheryl Boise: Yes, To date we know we received \$43 million 2-1/2 years ago. That was the carrot that caused the states to get involved in the first place. At a time when states were having budget issues due to the economy, the stimulus money was dangled in front of them. One of the conditions to take the money was Common Core. The competitive grant application process for Race to the Top again required Common Core, testing, a teacher evaluation system, and data. Even though no money was involved with the waiver from No Child Left Behind, that was also a motivation for a state like Pennsylvania to get involved with the National Common Core Initiative. Right now we are not clear on what this current Race to the Top application for early learning will mean in the way of obligations for the Commonwealth. Community Question #8: How much, then, will Common Core cost? Rep. Milne: Good question. I continue to have worries as to what costs will be involved with implementing these new standards. There have been conflicting reports of exactly how much the implementation will cost the Commonwealth, and some of the becomes a matter of exactly how various aspects of this program are "counted". Nonetheless, you have my assurance that until the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides the Legislature with a more detailed line-by-line projection of exactly how much Common Core will cost taxpayers, I will continue to raise these critical questions. I want not only what is best for our students and the future of our Commonwealth and country, but also seek that such be accomplished in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. Cheryl Boise: The cost projection done by the Pioneer Institute gave a total for Pennsylvania of over \$650 Million dollar. The Pa. Dept of Education denies that amount, yet when asked by the Senate and House Education Committee about the cost, they could not give a figure or answer the questions related to expense. The Independent Regulatory Review Commission of the State of Pennsylvania wrote in their review summary of these Chapter 4 changes (standards and testing, etc) that none of this was cost neutral as indicated by the Pa. State Board of Education. Clearly the cost for remedial help for students is a factor, there is a graduation project in lieu of the Keystone Exam and no cost has been indicated yet, technology costs are the largest part of the cost associated with these changes, and the list goes on. That is why it is critical ,at a time when many school districts are having budget issues, that our legislators see the contracts and commitments the Pa Dept of Education, State Board and Intermediate Units have made related to these changes. In light of the failure of the PA State Department of Education to provide the legislative committees with the budget information that they requested, I researched the budget figures that PA's DOE provided to the federal government in their initial requests for RTTT funding for the CCS. In these documents, the PA DOE stated that, along with the federal dollars being requested, it would require an "ongoing phase-in of \$2.6 billion to districts in new state monies," to implement Common Core. The PA DOE stated specifically to the Feds that these amounts are both necessary and sufficient to meet and sustain the ambitious goals summarized in our application. Community Question #9: What is next for Common Core? Rep. Milne: Because of concerns put forth both from me personally and many of my constituents, I am pleased that Gov. Tom Corbett decided to delay implementation of Common Core from July 1 until a point to be determined later this fall. This is to allow more time for these ongoing questions and concerns to be thoroughly vetted and dealt with. The Legislature will make some final determination about the entire situation this fall. Cheryl Boise: The History and Social Studies standards have not been fully released yet, and Science standards were completed and released this past year. The College Board alone indicated over the summer they may well eliminate the AP Calculus test indicating that Calculus no longer follows the Common Core Math sequence. This appears to be very much like the current healthcare issue. As things unfold we will find out more and more about what is going on with these standards, and the impact it will have on the students, school district budgets, and the over all quality of what is being pushed. Unfortunately, many of the groups involved in this standard movement have no level of accountability. The Gates Foundation has given the Pa Partnership for Children over \$900,000, the Pa Business Coalition over \$250,000 and the Pa Dept of Education close to \$250,000 towards the Common Core in Pennsylvania. Most of this money has been for lobbying purposes. Why would Gates give so much money for lobbying purposes in Pa, if this was only about Pennsylvania changing their own standards and testing? If people like Gates, David Coleman at the College

Board, and the CEO of Exxon are wrong about this then they get to walk away while wasting years of the students' academic lives along with billions of taxpayer dollars, and jeopardizing the students' rights to privacy.

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---- In summary Representative Milne, I as well as thousands of other Pennsylvania citizens are concerned that our legislature, as well as our general public, has very little understanding of what has come upon us in the way of Common Core. That is understandable, in that the Common Core advocates brought it in the "back door" without any elected officials voting it in. But now is the time for the facts to be exposed for what Common Core really is, a colossal government takeover of our educational system. And we have just touched the tip of this iceberg as Common Core has connections to Agenda 21 and is similar in nature to Obama-care in that the Federal Government has been involved since the very beginning and will have a direct hand in controlling the educational standards for the country. In the coming months as our legislature begins to take up Common Core, I trust that you will become well educated to the pluses and minuses of Common Core. I believe you will discover that the minuses and risks of Common Core far outweigh the wishful thinking that just by creating an elusive goal of "higher standards" our educational problems will be solved. Sincerely; Alan Walter 3084 Merlin Rd Chester Springs, PA 19425 484-678-5767 -----

----- It is by design that the people that have slyly brought Common Core to each of 45 States, because if the truth be told, it would never have gained entrance to any of the States. We have heard this one before. "You will have to pass the bill, before you find out what is in it." However, the good news is that some people like Senator Andy Dinniman have taken an active role to stop this madness. From a recent letter (Let's Stop Common Core's Graduation Exams) Senator Dinniman wrote: "The Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania State Board of Education have proposed the Keystone Graduation Exams to the Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission, which is set to vote on them on Nov. 21. If approved, Pennsylvania would usher in new high-stakes tests in Algebra 1, biology and literature that students must pass in order to graduate, regardless of their grade point average. These Keystone Graduation Exams are being tied to Common Core, the new curriculum whose advocates say will better prepare students for college and 21st century careers. By combining the exams with Common Core, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and State Board of Education have made it impossible to reject one while supporting the other. Thus the only way to stop the high-stakes exams – and this new unfunded mandate on local schools – is to have the IRRC reject the entire proposed Final-Form Chapter 4 regulations and send them back to the Pennsylvania State Board of Education for further review and changes." A coalition of Pennsylvania's Public School Superintendents and Intermediate Unit Executive Directors has signed a letter in opposition to Common Core testing by more than 56 School Districts including most of the districts that we live in. (see Oct 21st Superintendent Letter As more and more people discover the implementation of Common Core with their own students at school they will become more and more outraged. I have a Grandson in our local school kindergarten program and he has already begun Common Core math. I spoke about this with the Principal of our school and although he is also against Common Core, he as well as most of the teachers are afraid to voice their objections for fear of reprisals against them. Make no mistake, this is all about money. Contrary to what the proponents of Common Core would like you to believe, the Federal Government is behind Common Core having offered a bribe to each state with millions of dollars if they will commit to implement Common Core. The PA Department of Education has passed the mandate for Common Core with no oversight from the legislature. In fact they agreed to a 128 page agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services of the US Government that stipulates the new mandates in exchange for forgiveness to the stipulations of the No Child Left Behind Act. According to Senator Dinniman it will cost more than \$300 Million per year and guess who will be paying for it? There were only 5 lead writers for the Common Core Standards: David Coleman, Susan Pimentel in English, Jason Zimba, Phil Daro, and William McCallum in Math. David Coleman, lead "architect" for the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the Common Core, is not an educator, but a businessman. And he was recently promoted to president of the College Board, for which he has promised to align SAT with the Common Core he has built. He plotted education for K-12 students, and now he's plotting it for postsecondary students, too. The Atlantic published an article by Dana Goldstein about Coleman the MicKinsey consultant turned education entrepreneur, who is one of the school reform movement's most idealistic believers in the power of the traditional liberal arts as a social justice tool. [http://www.danagoldstein.net/dana\\_goldstein/2012/09/notes-on-my-atlantic-profile-of-david-](http://www.danagoldstein.net/dana_goldstein/2012/09/notes-on-my-atlantic-profile-of-david-)

coleman.html I dare you to look into the other big government liberal thinkers that have been involved in the planning of Common Core. And then – surprise- surprise, the publishers of the Common Core standards are the same as those that are writing the Common Core Curriculum and textbooks. No, the school districts are not dictated to use these Curriculum or books, but being the only game in town guess what materials the schools are using. There is very big money to be made by big business and therefore it is being promoted with large sums of money to make sure that Common Core stays on track. But proponents don't want you to look behind the curtain to see how the Federal Government has been involved and the strings they have attached once you buy in. That brings us to what the Common Core is teaching our kids. You think, what could possibly be wrong with Math or English? We received an example of a third grade Common Core English assignment which includes statements such as: #4 He (the US President) makes sure laws of the country are fair. (really, since when did the executive branch take over the judicial branch?) #5 The commands of government officials must be obeyed by all. (exactly what country is the author of this sentence describing?) #6 The wants of an individual are less important than the well-being of the nation. (this is blatant liberal propaganda.) This is an example of how the writers of the Common Core Curriculum have laced the documents with their own liberal political slant to indoctrinate our children. Wait till we see what they will roll out with History and Science! And now the Federal Government will now have complete control to “tweak” what is being taught. Regards; Alan Walter  
3084 Merlin Rd Chester Springs, PA 19425 484-678-5767 Ps: Can you say Obama-CORE?