

The Truth About the WDE Timeline

The Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) published and distributed Memorandum 2013-099 to all District Superintendents and Principals throughout the state on August 14, 2013. The following 10 points refer to discrepancies between what WDE claims and what original source documents establish as facts regarding the implementation of common core. We provide both so you can be the judge.

1) WDE says that the common core Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) “allows” Wyoming to participate. Then why does the MOA itself say it “commits” Wyoming to the “adoption of” common core (CCSS)? **Signing a legal document that commits WY to a process that leads to common core is much different than simply allowing WY to participate in the process because a commitment is a binding agreement.**

2) WDE says, “the state could leave the process at any time.” So where in the MOA is the clause allowing WY to leave? **WY voluntarily entered into this commitment, but upon signing the MOA, WY was committed. If there is no exit clause, WY simply cannot exit.**

3) State law gives authority to set educational standards to the Wyoming State Board of Education (SBE). Why then, without any authority, did Gov. Freudenthal and Sup. McBride commit WY to standards, especially when those standards weren’t even released yet? **Two individuals, without authority from parents and citizens of WY, should not commit our children to national standards that weren’t even finalized.**

4) WDE says that common core sets standards and doesn’t affect curriculum. Why then, does WDE itself state that Wyoming “must” “align curriculum materials and instructional methods to CCSS?” **The claim that there is still local control over what is taught is true so long as what is taught aligns with CCSS. Does that sound like local control? WDE is clearly saying CCSS controls curriculum materials and instructional methods. To prove it, can a teacher choose to teach curriculum that doesn’t align with common core? No. And, there’s your answer.**

5) WDE says that on June 16, 2010 the SBE voted to “consider” common core. So why do SBE meeting notes state that a board member “moved the Board approve the adoption of the common core state standards” and that the “motion carried”? **Voting to “consider” common core is much different than voting to “adopt” common core. The vote was to adopt common core. That vote, by the State Board of Education, occurred June 16, 2010.**

6) WDE points out that, “The decision to adopt the CCSS in Wyoming was made following its state-initiated standards review process.” Why then, did WDE host review committees and public hearings in 2011-2012 when common core had already been adopted by the SBE in June 2010? **Public hearings and review committees appear to be after-the-fact formalities. (Furthermore, not a single change was made to common core from its original adoption in June 2010 to its “final” adoption in April 2012.)**

7) WDE consistently denies federal government involvement in common core. Why did WY receive ARRA (stimulus bill) dollars in exchange for an agreement to enhance education standards (i.e. common core)? Why did the federal government tie Race to the Top (RTTT) grants, Title I funding, and No Child Left Behind waivers to the adoption of CCSS? **The facts speak for themselves.**

8) WDE claims, “Wyoming currently receives no federal dollars as a result of its adoption of the CCSS.” Why did WDE leave out of their 2010 timeline the fact that on January 4 school districts were given only 4 days to sign commitments to common core? On January 14 Sup. McBride told the SBE that WY has a great chance of receiving \$162M in RTTT money. And on January 19 WY submitted their RTTT grant application, which required a commitment to common standards that weren’t finalized yet. **Although it is true that WY’s RTTT application was turned down, inferring federal dollars was not a primary driver in the decision to adopt common core is hard to prove when facts are lined up in their chronological order.**

9) WDE says states, like Wyoming, were invited to “provide input into the drafting of the common core.” Why then, did WY never provide input into the drafting of common core? **Common core is copyrighted by the National Governor’s Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers and legally can not be changed.**

10) WDE says, “The adoption and implementation of the CCSS do not require any new data collection.” Why does the cooperative agreement between Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the US Department of Education say, “The Grantee must provide timely and complete access to any and all data collected at the State level to ED” [US Department of Education] **Although, technically it may be true that CCSS may not require any new data collection, as evidenced by the quote above, the SBAC (the assessment arm of CCSS) does require data collection and that it be shared with the federal government. It is misleading to claim otherwise. Such omission of information is akin to the federal government claiming they aren’t collecting data. Technically, that is true, but they require “complete access to any and all data collected at the state level.” So, even though they aren’t “collecting” data, they still have it in the end.**

It is plain to see that omissions, word changes, and a distinct shortage of the “whole truth” characterize the message of state officials “informing” the public about the path of education in Wyoming. Come now...if this much must be hidden about the Common Core State Standards Initiative, citizens should be beyond wary. Let us inform our Superintendents and Principals of the facts behind the WDE timeline. Let us demand integrity in this process, retention of complete control over education in Wyoming, and standards truly befitting of our children, the most precious of any resource.

For full document is posted at <http://wyomingcitizensopposingcommoncore.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/WDETimelineDiscrepanciesFullDoc.pdf>