

An Open Letter to Governor Walker: No More Games on Common Core

Delivered by hand to the Governor's Office
July 6, 2015

Governor Walker,

It is time for some hard questions...and the truth.

On April 20th of this year, you were directly asked during a major media interview if you would repeal Common Core should such a bill land on your desk. You replied affirmatively, adding, "Absolutely! I proposed it in my budget."

Yet, contrary to claims you stand against the Common Core standards, you are effectively entrenching those standards in Wisconsin via Common Core-aligned, high-stakes assessments.

For months, you have justified taking no definitive action against Common Core, insisting that local school districts have the power to decide for themselves what standards they will use.

However, in a statement to the press on January 17th of this year, you demonstrated clear understanding that Common Core-aligned assessments effectively coerce school districts into retaining the standards.

For this reason, many of us were initially encouraged when you indicated that you would defund Wisconsin's participation in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) via your proposed 2015-2017 biennial budget. We hoped for substantive movement, at long last, on an issue that affects most children, parents, and teachers in Wisconsin. However, as we read the actual budget language, we became troubled. Despite the defunding of SBAC, nothing in the budget language prohibits the selection or implementation of another Common Core-aligned assessment. Nor does it propose any fiscal plan for the creation or adoption of non-Common Core standards.

As it turns out, we were right to be skeptical.

On April 23rd, the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DoA) issued a Request for Bids (RFB) to replace the SBAC assessments that your proposed budget would ostensibly defund. The RFB was so vague as to which academic standards bidders should use to construct the new assessments that it took two rounds of questions to pin down a definitive answer. On June 5th the truth was irrefutably revealed: For mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA), the State of Wisconsin is telling bidders to write assessments based on the Common Core. Even then, there was clearly an effort to make it difficult to get to the truth. The links provided to the math and ELA standards did not directly contain the standards. Bidders and interested citizens, such as us, had to chase a rabbit trail of links and pages finally to arrive at PDF documents that contained the standards—clearly labeled as Common Core.

Please tell us, then, Governor Walker, how you can say you are doing anything to rid this state of the false reform initiative that is Common Core?

Please also share with us how you can say, as you did to a national radio audience, that you have proposed repealing Common Core in your budget?

Moreover, please explain to us how the language “the state superintendent may not give effect to any academic standard developed by the Common Core State Standards Initiative” can possibly be true in light of the new Common Core-aligned assessments your administration is now pursuing?

Even most legislators were sadly fooled by this gambit. Experience has taught us to be far more measured.

We’re tired, Governor Walker. We’re tired of excuses and half-truths. We’re tired of misleading and hollow rhetoric that repeatedly amounts to nothing more than political loopholes and broken promises. And most of all we’re tired of watching while the education of the children of Wisconsin takes a backseat.

To whom are you listening on this issue, Governor? It certainly isn’t people who actually care about the individual lives of Wisconsin children, the rights of parents, the livelihoods and freedom of teachers, or the proper authority of the average citizen over education.

Here are some measures that would make a true difference, Governor, in dispensing with Common Core—items that remain completely unaddressed in this state:

- Prevent the wholesale collection, mining, storage, and sharing of personally identifiable student data.
- Prohibit the Common Core initiative, anything based on it, and any standardized assessments aligned to it.
- Provide for the immediate adoption of temporary model standards completely unaligned to Common Core.
- Propose an operational plan, budget, and timeline for Wisconsin to create its own standards and assessments, with direct input from classroom teachers and university professors possessing both actual subject-matter and instructional expertise.
- Ensure that high-stakes, standardized assessments—the results of which have long been known to correlate to little more than ZIP code—can no longer be leveraged as a principal means of gauging teacher, school, or district accountability.
- Reduce the fiscal role and oversight of the state in education, so that citizens in a local district once again become the principal agents of accountability and may more truly be masters of their own affairs.

We’re not going away.

We are waiting and watching, Governor...and with your ambitions for higher political office on full display, so is the rest of the nation.

Will you finally lead on this issue? Or is that up to someone else?

Sincerely,

The undersigned

Brian Medved
President
**Protect Your Child’s
Future**
Wisconsin

Dr. Timothy D. Slekar
Co-Founder **United Opt
Out** & Creator of
BustEDpencils.com
Madison, WI

Jeffrey Horn
Organizer
Prairie Patriots
Sun Prairie, WI

Debra Kadon
Wisconsin Administrator
**Badass Teachers
Association (BATs)**
Green Bay, WI

Sara Lehman
Leader
Opt Out Fox Cities
Appleton, WI

Ken Van Doren
Education Coordinator
**Wisconsin Campaign
For Liberty**
Mauston, WI

Eric Shimpach
Wisconsin Coordinator
**Young Americans for
Liberty**
Baraboo, WI

Savannah Bartel
Leader
**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW Madison**
Madison, WI

Shane Otten
Leader
**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW
Whitewater**
Whitewater, WI

Kirsten Lombard
Organizer
Wisconsin 9/12 Project
Editor
*Common Ground on
Common Core*
Madison, WI

Wendy Muckerheide
Leader
**Kewaskum Against
Common Core**
Kewaskum, WI

Todd Welch
**Wisconsin Campaign
For Liberty**
Menomonie, WI

Tracie Happel
Parent & Educator
Onalaska, WI

Ryan McMorrow
Leader
**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW La Crosse**
La Crosse, WI

Levi Broadnax
Leader
**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW Oshkosh**
Oshkosh, WI

Dr. Duke Pesta
Academic Director
**FreedomProject
Education**
Appleton, WI

Alan Scholl
Executive Director
**FreedomProject
Education**
Appleton, WI

Mary Black
Student Development
Director
**FreedomProject
Education**
Appleton, WI

Kristi LaCroix
Parent
Kenosha, WI

Brad Hanson
Leader
**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW Eau
Claire**
Eau Claire, WI

Eric Hodkiewicz
Leader
**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW Stevens
Point**
Stevens Point, WI

Matt Sama

Leader

**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW
Milwaukee**
Milwaukee, WI

Cassidy Sather

Leader

**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW Superior**
Superior, WI

Dexter Robson

Leader

**Young Americans for
Liberty – Carthage
College**
Kenosha, WI

Andrea Lombard

Leader

Sauk County Tea Party
Baraboo, WI

Greg Luce

Leader

La Crosse Tea Party
La Crosse, WI

Kody Guden

Leader

**Young Americans for
Liberty – UW River
Falls**
River Falls, WI

James Murphy

Treasurer

Green Bay TEA Party
Green Bay, WI

Arlene Frelk

Organizer

Merrilan TEA Party
Merrilan, WI

Ronald Zahn

Leader

**Northeast Wisconsin
Patriots**
De Pere, WI

James Leist

Leader

**Manitowoc TEA
Movement**
Manitowoc, WI

Ed Willing

FoundersIntent.ORG
Caledonia, WI

Nathan Dietsche

Leader

**Western Wisconsin
TEA Party**
Altoona, WI

Joana Briggs

Leader

Greendale Tea Party
Greendale, WI

Earl Hoffman

Leader

Clark County Tea Party
Greenwood, WI

Cynthia Narance

Leader

**Christians United in
Truth**
Green Bay, WI

Steve Welcenbach

Leader

**Conservative
Insurgency &
Menomonee Falls
Taxpayers Association**
Menomonee Falls, WI

Karl Koenigs

Leader

**Wisconsin TEA Party
Committee on State
Sovereignty**
Peshtigo, WI

Paul Lembrich

Leader

**Southern Wisconsin
Alliance of Taxpayers**
Beloit, WI & Rock
County Patriots
Janesville, WI

Shirley Kufeldt

Secretary

Northwoods Patriots
Eagle River, WI

Oriannah Paul

Leader

**Sheboygan Liberty
Coalition**
Sheboygan, WI

Marv Munyon

Leader

Rock River Patriots
Fort Atkinson, WI

Edward Perkins
Leader
Fox Valley Initiative
Appleton, WI

Georgia Janisch
Facilitator
Rock County Voter Education Forum
Janesville, WI

Joanne Terry
Leader
Ozaukee Patriots
Mequon, WI

Andy Craig
Chair
Libertarian Party of Milwaukee County
Milwaukee, WI

Matt Augustine
Former Chairman
Republican Party of Kenosha County, WI
Kenosha, WI

David Stertz
Organizer
Fox Valley Conservative Forum
Appleton, WI

Mike Zoril
Facilitator
Rock County Voter Education Forum
Janesville, WI

Dan Curran
Leader
Eagle Forum of Wisconsin & Concerned Citizens of Iowa County
Dodgeville, WI

Phillip Anderson
President
Libertarian Party of Dane County
Madison, WI

Andrew Kolberg
Chairman
Republican Party of Columbia County, WI
Portage, WI

Jackie Johnson
Chairman
Republican Liberty Caucus – Wisconsin Chapter
Madison, WI

Michael Hintze
Wisconsin State Coordinator
Tea Party Patriots
Brookfield, WI

Darin Danelski
Leader
Lake Country Defenders of Liberty
Oconomowoc, WI

Sandi Ruggles
Chapter President
Eagle Forum of Southeast Wisconsin
Menomonee Falls, WI

Michael Murphy
Treasurer
Wisconsin Liberty Movement
Milwaukee, WI

Richard Church
Chairman
Republican Party of Adams County, WI
Friendship, WI

Press Contact:

Jeffrey Horn
jeffreydhorn@gmail.com
608.347.9577