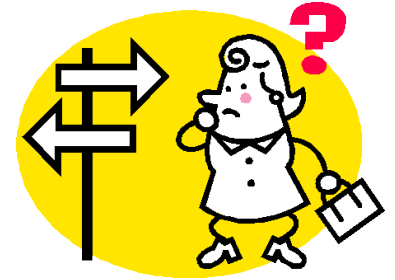


THE STRANGELY UNFOUNDED ROLE OF NEA IN CCSS

Navigating the NEA website section [Common Core State Standards \(CCSS\)](#) gives the impression of reading a paid promotional brochure. There are several subsections, articles, and informative videos explaining and promoting CCSS.

Contrasting with the CCSS presence in the NEA website, the institution of public education receives minor attention. There are no references or even links to its centennial history, social value, or considerable significance, just two specific subsections: “[Education Funding](#)” and “[Raise your hand public education.](#)” All it takes is a short visit to its webpage to recognize the stark disparity of prominence between public education and CCSS. The 150 year old institution which gave birth and still sustains NEA is barely acknowledged, while an unproven plan created barely six years ago commands exceptional attention.



Everything on the NEA section seems all right or innocuous; after all, it is information for NEA members. The CCSS “highlights” subsection stands out with a [tool kit](#) with links to CCSS materials; a [Student Achievement Partners](#) website full of free materials to better understand and implement CCSS; a list of propaganda explaining the worthiness of CCSS, and how already parents and teachers are cooperating to make CCSS work; and a new section about materials available in iTunes and through the [ASDC website](#), among other links. In addition, there is a selection of articles and multimedia giving a positive spin to CCSS. But is this just information, what could be wrong about NEA’s CCSS page?

There are two major concerns about the CCSS promotional page in the NEA website. One is that the existence of this CCSS page itself is inappropriate: there is an evident influential campaign section for CCSS in NEA’s website for no valid reason! Interestingly, no one has deemed appropriate to inquire about its existence. But a more important question is: Why does NEA show such an inordinately vested interest in promoting CCSS in the first place?

To put things in context is necessary to know relevant information about CCSS. First of all, [CCSS is copyrighted](#) by the [NGA](#) Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) (CCSSO); CCSS was not an NEA initiative or the product of a partnership with these entities. Secondly, there never was a serious debate on the issue of NEA supporting CCSS in the committed way it has been doing it. As a matter of fact, the disconcerting official NEA position on CCSS is based on information from three privately funded entities: ASCD, [The Economy Policy Institute](#) (EPI), and [The Hunt Institute](#), and appears in a [policy brief](#) signed by NEA president Van Roekelⁱ. Thirdly, against proper procedure, CCSS has not even been properly tried or piloted! This oversight alone raises reasonable doubts about the unwavering and expensive support the largest teachers association offer to CCSSⁱⁱ.

What makes it even more difficult to comprehend is that despite two years of serious criticism and protests against CCSS, the NEA leadership had remained firm in supporting the implementation of CCSSⁱⁱⁱ. To sum up, if after two years of being implemented, with no academic or anecdotal evidence, or any valid reason to commit millions of dollars and the trust of its millions of members to CCSS, why is NEA still doing it?^{iv} A plausible explanation for NEA's unyielding support of CCSS requires a context.

Corporate Reformers Are Opportunistic Edupreneurs

For a veteran educator, the long and short term [consequences](#) of the CCSS [problematic](#) implementation –confusion, sinking scores, lack of support and materials, students and teachers frustration, unreliable systems of evaluation, and so forth-- would be good enough reasons to request a cautious and vigilant approach from its association. However, there is yet another less examined concern that should be comprehensively considered: the undue influence of [Bill Gates in the creation and promotion of CCSS](#).^v



Record shows that from its inception the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (B&MGF) has sponsored and promoted CCSS in a impenetrable fashion.

Undeniably, its influence has been, and still is a most serious factor in how every stakeholder and the public in general perceive CCSS^{vi}. For that reason, all NEA members should share the primal concern of NEA compromising its autonomy and integrity.

Conceivably, given the fact that the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has bankrolled](#) or heavily supported all companies connected with the creation and advancement of CCSS, NEA could have been swayed as well. For instance, NEA has associated itself with strategic companies funded by the B&MG. From the NEA webpages, one reads that:

1) the company [ASCD](#), whose materials NEA promotes in its website, was awarded [\\$3 Million](#) to aid nationwide in implementing common core standards.

2) [Student Achievement Partners](#), a non-profit organization founded by David Coleman, Susan Pimentel and Jason Zimba, lead writers of the Common Core State Standards, received a [grant of \\$4,042,920](#) in order to support teachers nationwide in understanding and implementing the Common Core State Standards. Prior to that, Achieve had received \$23.5 million in Gates's funding. Another \$13.2 million followed after CCSS creation, with \$9.3 million devoted to "building strategic alliances" for CCSS promotion.

3) NGA received \$23.6 million from the Gates Foundation from 2002 through 2008. After June 2009, [NGA received](#) an additional \$2.1 million from Gates expressly to work with state policymakers on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and later \$1,598,477 for "rethinking state policies on teachers' effectiveness."

4) [For CCSSO](#), Prior to June 2009, the Gates Foundation gave \$47.1 million (from 2002 to 2007), with the largest amount focused on data "access" and "data driven decisions." Later, the B&MGF gave CCSSO \$31.9 million, with the largest grants earmarked for CCSS implementation and assessment, and data acquisition and control.^{vii}

5) [Hunt Institute](#)^{viii} played an instrumental role with the 5 million dollars from the B&MGF. According to the Washington Post, the Hunt Institute "coordinated more than a dozen organizations — many of them also Gates grantees — including the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, National Council of La Raza, the Council of Chief

State School Officers, National Governors Association, Achieve and the two national teachers unions.”

Evidently, the convergence of these companies was in no way altruistic or motivated by a desire to help public education. These are not independent entities spontaneously cooperating for a common cause. As a matter of fact, the B&MGF strategically positioned each one of them to do a specific job for the concluding purposes of creating and promoting CCSS! As noted, all edupreneurs in these misunderstood non-profit corporations actually have managed millions of dollars courtesy of the B&MGF. But, what about NEA and the B&MGF? Inconsistently, in what could be considered a logistic central role played by NEA in validating CCSS to millions of teachers, it has not received a cent, has it?

Market Values, Association Values, or Union Values?

Perhaps NEA members may think that Mr. Gates funding CCSS from its inception to date is not relevant or important enough to demanding NEA leaders for information about their support for CCSS. After all, [NEA](#) holds values like democracy, equal opportunity, professionalism; and advocates for having a just society. Moreover, everyone knows that NEA has internal mechanisms to deal effectively with relevant decisions, like supporting presidential candidates in political races, or promoting CCSS in this case. In short, NEA is not a company like Achieve, ASDC, or the others; it is inherently different. NEA leaders take their own decisions based on what is best for NEA members regardless of CCSS, not on what the B&MGF promotes with its grants, right?



However, it could be argued that the formidable influence of the B&MGF driving CCSS would warrant NEA members’ request for transparency and explanations. If

the B&MGF funded each of the mentioned companies in order to support the cause of CCSS, would it ask the same from NEA?^{ix} According to the B&MGF records, [NEA had been the recipient of more than seven million dollars since 2009](#) for the purpose of advocating for CCSS.

Has this unsolicited money influenced leaders' decisions in this, and perhaps, other matters? Or perhaps it didn't, and even without that money NEA leaders would have approved having that well designed CCSS section anyway. Would have NEA leaders organized those several workshops and events to help teachers with CCSS? Possibly, and they would have covered the expenses by asking their members an increase in their dues.

It is undeniable that CCSS is the major national shift in public education in decades. For that reason alone, it would be reasonable to expect teachers scrutinizing CCSS to satisfaction. But that did not happen. Only a systematically ignored minority of teachers has raised voices against CCSS.

When years ago, the respective leaders of NEA and CTA unexpectedly became devoted agents for CCSS, these organizations gave a new and unwarranted project an [undeserved validity](#). That legitimacy by association indeed exempted and protected CCSS from the authentic, valid, and probably [devastating scrutiny](#) from rank and file members. Furthermore, a collateral damage was done to the image and reputation of dissenters and protesters. By NEA becoming a pro-CCSS agent, all dissidents were automatically disqualified and swiftly destined into isolation in their own associations.

Oddly, that exclusionary move did not dissipate the opposition. In fact, while many dutifully accepted CCSS at face value, some courageous teachers looked for alternatives to express their discontent. That reaction explains that thousands of non-conforming teachers formed fringe group such as the BATs ([Badass Teachers Organization](#)), which devotes itself to question and challenge the new orthodoxy.

It could be considered unconscionable that by becoming agents for CCSS, teachers' associations' leaders practically took away their members' prospect for dialogue, debate, or complaint. Without the objective guidance and expected

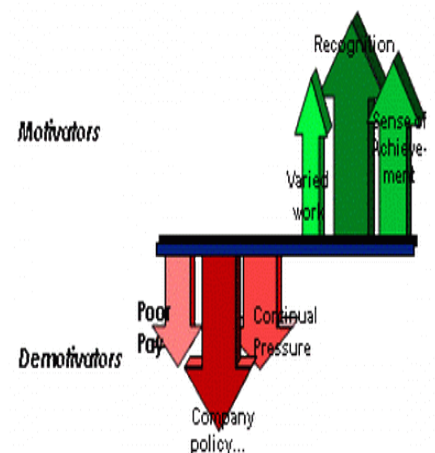
protection of an association, every teacher was basically trapped in a frame where CCSS had to be thought of as right, good, and necessary. With the associations themselves reciting the reformers CCSS doctrine, unsuspecting teachers had no option but to obey, comply, and conform. Strangely, when teachers could have put an [end to feeling demoralized](#) after a decade of NCLB, having NEA reinforcing CCSS mandates continued an even more frustrating path.

Arguably, for public school teachers and public education in general, when NEA leaders prematurely embraced CCSS, they made more than a misleading mistake, a colossal blunder. [Even NEA President Van Roekel](#) acknowledged that teachers asked NEA to oppose it due to the many problems with CCSS. If NEA's idea was to help teachers and public education through supporting CCSS, the attempt was counterproductive. As it happened, the confusing and frustrating process of implementing CCSS in [New York](#), [Chicago](#), and now in progress in [California](#), does not seem to validate NEA's faith in CCSS.

Considering implausible a significant improvement of the CCSS implementation, NEA members would be correct in asking for a revision and a moratorium. NEA members may question their leaders' decisions and request time to actually learn about CCSS through other means. The serious issues about CCSS manufacture and its implementation make a strong case for NEA members to redirect their efforts from CCSS toward rescuing and rebuilding our public education system^x.

No Contest Between Corporate Reformers vs Public School Teachers

After learning how CCSS came about, one has to admire Bill Gates's brilliance in selling [the CCSS's promotion](#) to teachers. From the beginning, teachers were taught through induction that CCSS were necessary standards and that in order to apply them properly teachers needed to accept a serious change, a [new paradigm](#). Unlike NCLB with its prescriptive, dry, lessons



and bubble tests, [the sales pitch presented CCSS as a teacher friendly, collaborative, and fresh approach to teaching!](#) The pedagogical part of CCSS took center stage. Appropriate teaching methods were introduced by districts and teachers associations. Teachers will be in charge of planning, designing lesson, evaluation –everything. CCSS was wonderful!^{xi} Additionally, thanks to the grants offered by the B&MGF every stakeholder would [vouch for CCSS](#) -- billionaires, politicians, administrators, board members, PTA's, and the teachers' associations' leaders. As teachers were concerned, CCSS was a gift from heaven. NCLB was dead, long live CCSS!

Bill Gates and all the corporate reformers involved in CCSS could not be more pleased --- the way the implementation was progressing meant good news for business^{xii}. [Privatizing](#) policies were firmer in place than ever. Consequently, there would be more opportunities for profit and control^{xiii}. As a matter of fact, some corporate reformers were already lobbying for the potential billions of dollars in revenue in computer [data collection](#) and testing alone. Clearly, corporate reformers know what they want and work diligently to succeed^{xiv}.

In a glaring contrast, despite public education being privatized, teachers showed neither goals nor interest to stop it. Understandably, teachers seemed to be content about CCSS being better than NCLB! In fact, [NEA's poll in 2013 showed that teachers strongly supported CCSS](#). After all, teachers had only read the selling points in bold letters, and not the hidden obligations in fine print.

What corporate reformers conveniently kept for themselves was that CCSS is an all included and expensive package -- It has standards, [curriculum](#), and a convoluted [testing plan](#), all in a package that included even more arbitrary accountability. In short, NCLB had been a road, and now CCSS was the highway to the [privatization of public education](#). Indeed, later teachers found out that reality differed sharply from rhetoric, as the [2014 Gallup survey](#) showed when more than 60% of teachers responded that they felt frustrated or worried about CCSS. But since teachers had no other direction or drive, they could not articulate opposition^{xv}.

If NCLB taught teachers a lesson, it was to distrust the corporate reformers when they tell them how to do their jobs. Indeed, they should not take any claim at face value^{xvi}. No one would criticize teachers if [they did not believe corporate reformers this time](#). Arguably, CCSS is not about solving the problem of [identifying effective or ineffective teachers](#), or the need of [standards](#) to improve imaginary problems, or about giving those good and wise teachers something new and better to take from CCSS trainings. [Certainly, it is not about the ludicrous international competition](#). What is certain is that there is so much more corporate reformers do not share with teachers about CCSS, as the [Chicago Teachers Union](#) realized a year ago when it passed a resolution opposing it^{xvii}.

[According to its short and hectic record](#), CCSS seems to be more the corporate reformers' next and final step to take over public education, than a tool to fix and improve education. Public school teachers, who have been overworked already, will be even busier. They will spend extra hours learning anything that they are told need to be in place for CCSS to be properly implemented. By design, teachers would be too busy and scrutinized to pay attention to the structural changes brought upon them. In the meantime, the responsibility of this bold project would be as always solely on teachers' shoulders. As in the past, when the poor scores come, corporate reformers will criticize even more harshly public schools and teachers, and will come up with more [privatizing solutions that would find no opposition](#). [Following recurrent patterns, corporate reformers will keep this CCSS trend of controlling the direction of public education](#) while being unaccountable and making profits in every possible way --consultants, materials, books, charter schools, and so on, while teachers do all the work for even less money in an arbitrarily imposed accountability system.

Perhaps by learning more about CCSS than what they are taught, NEA and CTA members would find reasons to care enough about their public schools and their profession and less about CCSS. Maybe, with the revelations about CCSS, and after more than twenty years of looking at the reformers demonizing, underfunding, and privatizing public education, NEA and CTA rank-and-file

members would find appropriate to stop validating and promoting CCSS, and organize themselves to save our schools as [Alfie Kohn has suggested](#). I for one find NEA supporting CCSS unethical, outrageous, and self-destructive. It is contemptible to support CCSS so resolutely while deserting public education when it is being privatized^{xviii}. This shift from CCSS to defending public education would be a step in the right direction.

CCSS or Public Education

One clear conclusion can be drawn from watching at [corporate reformers'](#) interactions with teachers in recent past and in particular in looking at their alliance to support CCSS: Corporate reformers do want to privatize public education, and teachers do not want to stop them. Unlike corporate reformers, who have the ultimate goal of dismantling and privatizing public education motivated by potential huge profits, teachers in general and their teachers' associations' leaders have no inherent motivations or particular goals. Interestingly, many teachers do not feel obligated to defend public education against privatization, or to defend their livelihoods or profession even when corporate reformers employ biased or unsound arguments.

We can't
feed the
poor but
can fund
war

Incredibly, NEA members show no pride for their noble struggles or their remarkable accomplishments^{xix}. Those are stories used to spice speeches. Never mind the sacrifices of tens of [thousands of teachers](#), mostly women, who through [history](#) organized and fought for their rights and their students'. Regardless of their rich union history, teachers' associations' leaders in this century have not found intrinsic motives to rally teachers in defense of public education from privatization, but they did find worth it to use NEA's power to implement CCSS.

An explanation for this apparent paradox must include the corporate reformers' ideology. An anti-public education [ideological](#) campaign has been carried out for

decades. Neoliberalism asks for schools to be managed as business competing to succeed or fail in free-markets. Indeed, it has rendered teachers unable to appreciate the public education' social value or their own role as stakeholders.^{xx} [Civic values](#) –democracy, solidarity, justice, fairness, and the common good-- which shaped the attitudes and norms that sustained America's public schools have been eroded. Slowly, these values [have been crowded out by market values](#) like profit, efficiency, competition, and choice. Corporate reformers use these effectively to criticize, cut, fire, dismantle, and privatize. As a result, public education has been devaluated even in the eyes of teachers, while CCSS has been placed as a chief piece of the reforms. Privatization is accepted because teachers have been conditioned to think and act less as citizens and more as consumers.

According to the corporate reformers' narrative, schools have been failing to their students, and it is the teachers' fault. Oddly, they have been declaring that for decades already without serious questioning from teachers^{xxi}. Hence, corporate reformers have shown absolute confidence instructing teachers in how to fix the problem time after time, despite their record of consistent failure. After their poor record, it is incredible that corporate reformers still control teachers so powerfully that they do not question or challenge their unwarranted alternatives, or let alone defend their own public schools from being privatized. Now, they proposed the notion that high standards is the missing factor to finally get the reforms right. They are wrong! As the late Gerald Bracey explained in 2009,

Higher standards as a curative for school ills have been actively promoted for over 100 years. It seems to have had no effect, at least from the perspective of the public school critics. Secretary Duncan spoke of the "education crisis" in virtually all of his early speeches, coupling it to the economic crisis. Thus, after 100 years of cries for higher standards, we are still in an education crisis. The push for higher standards has not worked. Perhaps it is time to try something else. The Sidwell approach looks good to me. Can it work in schools such as the one Linda Perlstein describes in *Tested*? She thinks so, but not while high-stakes testing displaces true education. This is the critical issue. As Yong Zhao pointed out in the *Detroit Free Press*, "President Barack Obama and national education officials appear to be moving the United States toward national K-12 standards—a mandate that would cause irreversible damage to an education system already suffering from No Child Left Behind."^{xxii}

In closing, I cannot remember the last time any stakeholder seriously defended or advocated for public education in public! Disturbingly, with a well-funded and motivated group of profiteers attacking it now with CCSS, and nobody devoted to defending it, public education in America seems to have its days numbered.

Who wins, who loses, who cares?

In solidarity,

Sergio Flores

ⁱ The policy brief repeats the talking points made by CCSS promoters: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Campaign for the Whole Child resources at www.wholechildeducation.org Economic Policy Institute. Broader Bolder Initiative resources at www.boldapproach.org The Hunt Institute. Blueprint for Education Leadership, Numbers 3 and 4, June 2009 and June 2010, www.hunt-institute.org Common Core Standards Initiative. The standards and resource materials. www.corestandards.org <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB30CommonCoreStateStandards2010.pdf>

ⁱⁱ The NGA/CCSSO common core standards should be subjected to extensive validation, trials and subsequent revisions before implementation. During this time, states should be encouraged to carefully examine and experiment with broad-based school-evaluation systems. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/PB-NatStans-Mathis.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Not surprisingly the protests were centered in the abysmal results in the testing associated with CCSS, and not by the implementation. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2015/03/27/as-testing-opt-out-movement-grows-so-does-pushback-from-schools/>

^{iv} <http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/PB-NatStans-Mathis.pdf>

^v Lindsey Layton wrote in the Washington Post: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation didn't just bankroll the development of what became known as the Common Core State Standards. With more than \$200 million, the foundation also built political support across the country, persuading state governments to make systemic and costly changes. Bill Gates was de facto organizer, providing the money and structure for states to work together on common standards in a way that avoided the usual collision between states' rights and national interests that had undercut every previous effort, dating from the Eisenhower administration.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-bill-gates-pulled-off-the-swift-common-core-revolution/2014/06/07/a830e32e-ec34-11e3-9f5c-9075d5508f0a_story.html

^{vi} Mercedes Shneider writes: The four principal organizations associated with CCSS— NGA, CCSSO, Achieve, and Student Achievement Partners— have accepted millions from Bill Gates. In fact, prior to CCSS "completion" in June 2009, Gates had paid millions to NGA, CCSSO, and Achieve. And the millions continued to flow following CCSS completion. <https://deutsch29.wordpress.com/2013/08/27/a-brief-audit-of-bill-gates-common-core-spending/>

^{vii} Researcher Mercedes Schneider explains better than anybody the intricate web that Mr. Gates' philanthropy has made around CCSS http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mercedes-schneider/a-brief-audit-of-bill-gat_b_3837421.html

^{viii} The foundation, for instance, gave more than \$5 million to the University of North Carolina-affiliated Hunt Institute, led by the state's former four-term Democratic governor, Jim Hunt, to advocate for the Common Core in statehouses around the country. http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-bill-gates-pulled-off-the-swift-common-core-revolution/2014/06/07/a830e32e-ec34-11e3-9f5c-9075d5508f0a_story.html

^{ix} NEA has a section titled "NEA's involvement in the Common Core State Standards? It reads: NEA decided to join the partnership for two major reasons. First, it is clear that that there is broad support from many groups of

stakeholders for common standards. Second, NEA wanted to be sure that the concerns and voices of teachers were considered as these standards were developed. That has happened as the project staff met with groups of mathematics and English language arts teachers who were NEA members and National Board Certified. There is evidence that they listened carefully to our members and incorporated many of their suggestions into the subsequent drafts of the standards. Three of our teachers from the review group were on official review committees for the standards. <http://www.nea.org/home/46665.htm>

^x Diane Ravitch points out a devastating flaw in the CCSS' creation: The Common Core standards cannot be considered standards when judged by the ANSI (The American National Standards Institute) requirements. According to ANSI, the process of setting standards must be transparent, must involve all interested parties, must not be dominated by a single interest, and must include a process for appeal and revision."

<http://dianeravitch.net/2014/03/24/the-fatal-flaw-of-the-common-core-standards/>

^{xi} In the CTA webpage, one reads: "We will be spending much of this year dealing with the implementation of [Common Core Standards](#). They put teachers back in control of crafting and tailoring the education of their students. Critical thinking skills can now be part of our students' educational foundation, and we can decide how to best teach that. <http://www.cta.org/en/Issues-and-Action/Testing-and-Standards/Common-Core-State-Standards.aspx>

^{xii} In 2012, Jeff Paux explains : You start to see entire ecosystems of investment opportunity lining up," Rob Lytle, an business consultant earlier this year told a meeting of private equity investors interested in for-profit education companies. According to Stephanie Simon of Reuters, who reported on the event, investment in for profit education has already jumped from \$13 million in 2005 to \$389 million in 2011. Among others, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase have created multimillion-dollar funds for education investments.

<http://www.epi.org/publication/education-profiteering-wall-street/>

^{xiii} As Diane Ravitch explains: Reform" is really a misnomer, because the advocates for this cause seek not to reform public education but to transform it into an entrepreneurial sector of the economy. The groups and individuals that constitute today's reform movement have appropriated the word "reform" because it has such positive connotations in American political discourse and American history. But the roots of this so-called reform movement may be traced to a radical ideology with a fundamental distrust of public education and hostility to the public sector in general. <http://billmoyers.com/2014/03/28/public-education-who-are-the-corporate-reformers/>

^{xiv} Education privatization would not, per se, create a net new stimulus for the economy. But by diverting large existing flows of money from the public to the private sector it would create new profit-making ventures that could be capitalized and transformed into stocks, derivatives and leveraged securities. The pot has been sweetened by a 39 percent federal tax credit for financing charter school construction that can double an investor's return in seven years. The prospect of new speculative opportunities could well recharge the animal spirits upon which Wall Street depends. <http://www.epi.org/publication/education-profiteering-wall-street/>

^{xv} NEA has only a small section regarding privatization. It relates mainly about ESP (non-teachers) whose positions are vulnerable to outsourcing. <http://www.nea.org/home/16355.htm>

^{xvi} In "Campaign for America's Future: Get Ready for the Next Wave of Education "Reform," Jeff Bryant warns teachers: As anti-democratic pressures appear to be easing on the federal front, they are ratcheting up in states across the country. In fact, the next form of education "reform" may be as bad as or worse than what NCLB imposed. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/blog/get-ready> .

^{xvii} Jim Horn argues in a post for EdWeek that the Common Core standards are essential to the long-term strategy of leaders in business-industry-and-government to eliminate unions, to replace experienced teachers with Teach for America, and to hand public schools over to private management. He warns: The Common Core deskills the teaching profession by turning the teaching into a delivery machine. Relationships with students are to be ignored and replaced by the mechanical delivery of scripted lessons in a particular sequence. In effect, the teacher craftsman will be forced to work on an assembly line. Evaluations will be based on a standard Charlotte Danielson rubric that has its origins in Kaplan's "Balanced Scorecard" and "Value Added Measures" based on student test scores.... http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/living-in-dialogue/2014/02/paul_horton_why_the_common_cor.html

^{xviii} Noam Chomsky explaining privatization in a nutshell: Manufacture Crisis —> Privatize Public Resources

1) Manufacture Crisis: budget, edu-performance and/or consequences of NCLB/grant compliance failure (often measured against known unattainable standards)

2) Fail close/take over public schools

3) Replace with charter schools linked to private CMOs (Charter Management Organizations), corporate eduservice providers (Pearson) and for-profit online learning. Staff with Teach for America temps who are indebted recent college graduates. Done.

^{xix} Teachers unions have been part of important and noble events in its long history: “In 1857, one hundred educators answered a national call to unite as one voice in the cause of public education. At the time, learning to read and write was a luxury for most children—and a crime for many Black children. One hundred and fifty years later, public education and the profession of teaching are transformed. In 1966 we joined forces with the American Teachers Association. Since then, our voice has swelled to 3.2 million members, and what was once a privilege for a fortunate few is now an essential right for every American child, regardless of family income or place of residence.” <http://www.nea.org/home/1704.htm>

^{xx} It is time to open debate on the premises and goals for public education. “Markets are useful instruments for organizing productive activity. But unless we want to let the market rewrite the norms that govern social institutions, we need a public debate about the moral limits of markets.” — Michael J. Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?*

^{xxi} Professor Steven Krashen provided substance to challenge corporate reformers’ premises for their reforms. He exposed that: (1) Our schools are not broken. The problem is poverty. Test scores of students from middle-class homes who attend well-funded schools are among the best in world. Our unspectacular overall scores are due to the fact that the US has the highest level of child poverty among all industrialized countries (now over 21%, compared to high-scoring Finland’s 5%). Poverty means poor nutrition, inadequate health care, and lack of access to books, among other things. All of these negatively impact school performance. (2) Existing evidence strongly suggests that improving the economy improves children’s educational outcomes. Yes, a better education can lead to a better job, but only if jobs exist. (3) There is no evidence that national standards and national tests have improved student learning in the past.

http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/our_schools_are_not_broken.pdf

^{xxii} Gerald Bracey (RIP) was a harsh critic of the so called reforms and became a true champion for public education. This piece is an excellent read for those who want to understand the fallacies behind the reformers’ alternatives. <http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/bracey-report>