

Naples Daily News Guest Commentary- By Deirdre Clemons

### Collier Schools Failing Our Children?

Collier County Schools Vision Statement- “All students will complete school prepared...for community and global responsibilities.”

In 2004, UNESCO collaborated with the Gates Foundation developing standards for a global ‘master curriculum’. These were promoted in America as Common Core through the National Governor’s Association (a lobbying group) and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Last year, coalitions from 21 countries met in Dubai to discuss their own implementation of Common Core. In 2015, Congress passed the Every Student Succeeds Act mandating UNESCO’s ‘universal design for learning’- measurements for non-academic learning. The idea is that by focusing on non-academic social and behavioral development, children will be prepared for life as global citizens- considered much more important than good reading, writing, and math skills. After 40 years of reforms, Common Core is the final stage of a complete shift away from traditional academics consisting of objective fact conveyed through history, classical literature, and traditional math.

The new standards ensure an ‘education of equity’ designed to instill certain attitudes and behaviors. Teachers use social and emotional methods, rather than rational thought. Project-based learning activities pursue the goal of ‘shared understanding’ and consensus over factual knowledge and individual thought. Climate change is the unifying universal principle, along with themes of social justice, equitable economic systems, and sustainability. The standards demote American values, undermine the Constitution, and detach children from faith and family in order to produce global citizens for the 21st century. Materials are rife with anti-American/pro-socialist themes. Contemporary literature is soaked in relativism, undermining traditional values. False science teaches children they came from apes (without mentioning the words ‘theory’ or ‘evolution’) and History is rewritten (claiming Gorbachev initiated tearing down the Berlin Wall)- all in Collier schools.

Schools are no longer teaching foundational academics. So, employers are not seeing proper workforce development in our graduates. Our young adults are functioning at a minimal level. We have ‘A’ students in ‘A’-rated schools, and yet, Florida has the dismal rating of being 45th of 50 states in ACT scores. This is at an expense of \$22k per child in Collier, while in Lee county it costs \$14k and Seminole \$11k. Mason Classical and Marco Academy charter schools are doing a superior job at \$7k per child. According to US News and World Report, 46% of Collier County high school graduates cannot read at the 12th grade level, and although 47% of Collier children tested for college readiness (take AP courses), only 25% of those passed. That means that 75% of AP students essentially wasted their time, not to mention, taxpayer money! Educators blame shifting standards, but the truth is they are teaching concepts, not academic fact. Historically, classical studies formed a solid base for creative and critical thinkers, unleashing individual potential. We measured knowledge through tests like the Iowa Basics, making comparisons easy and transparent.

The purpose of the new 'assessments' is to measure the change in the child's perceptions and values, while psychologically profiling her/him through computer-based tests. Obama's Race to the Top money came with the stipulation that each state create a longitudinal data system for collecting every child's complete life in data from Pre-K to the workforce. The reason parents are prohibited from seeing these 'formative' assessments (like last year's failed FSA test- though it will never be used again), is that we would see that much of what is being tested is non-academic. The goal is to change the child on an internal level and track that. Rather than teaching how to think, children are taught what to think.

This explains why the Common Core writers were so secretive, and why the top standards writers in the country for Math and English, James Milgram and Sandra Stotsky, would not sign off and validate the Common Core standards. Both stated the standards would only prepare the brightest student for a 2-year, non-select junior college. Milgram said Common Core Math will collapse our STEM programs and empty engineering colleges of American students. Deleting classical literature means there will be no transfer of the knowledge of Western culture, specifically Judeo-Christian culture. Great literature has the power to instill truth and virtue which contribute to the structure and cohesiveness of a civil society.

This conformist global 'education' creates a low ceiling and grim future for all. It does not develop intelligence, unleash individual potential and ingenuity, nor does it promote virtue, patriotism, love of country, or traditional family life. Parents want a solid academic education, found in classical curriculum, which prepares children for a future where their potential is the only limit. Globalist brainwashing in public schools is un-American, and does not respect the freedom, nor reflect the values, of individual families and their children.