

A PARENTS' PROCLAMATION: ASSERTING OUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO DIRECT OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

A call to restore the traditional purpose of American education – October, 2014

Recent education reforms have changed the purpose of American education—from knowledge building to skills training—in an effort to “align education to the needs of the workforce.” This shift in the purpose of education is antithetical to individual liberty and agency, and elevates the state’s needs above the needs of the individual. This will prove destructive to the family unit, to our children, and to society.

In order to protect our children and our liberty interest, parents assert that our rights include, but are not limited to, the following:

WHEREAS, Parents have the fundamental right to direct our children’s educations.¹

WHEREAS, Parents have the fundamental right to contribute to the education standards set for our children.²

WHEREAS, Parents have the fundamental right to see our children’s curriculum.³

WHEREAS, Parents have the fundamental right to see our children’s test questions.⁴

WHEREAS, Parents have the fundamental right to protect our children and family’s privacy.⁵

WHEREAS, Parents have a liberty interest in protecting our great, local teachers.⁶

WHEREAS, Parents have a fundamental right to control our children’s school attendance.⁷

WHEREAS, Parents have the fundamental right to:

- Refuse tests for our children that we cannot review
- Refuse that our children receive 1:1 technology, and refuse 1:1 technology programs and curriculum that we cannot review
- Refuse that our children’s educations be tied to standards, appendices and curricula frameworks that are not locally controlled
- Refuse that our children participate in any school assignment or test that opens the door to federal and third party data collection without parental consent
- Protect our great teachers against accountability measures that threaten their financial livelihood, and eliminate their ability to teach our children as they are inspired to do
- Refuse compulsory preschool and adherence to mandatory attendance rules that undermine family time and family bonds

WHEREAS, The family is the fundamental unit of our society

NOW, THEREFORE, PARENTS PROCLAIM THAT:

- OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITY
- IT IS OUR RIGHT TO PROTECT THEM FROM THOSE FORCES THAT WOULD REALIGN THEIR EDUCATIONS TO SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE STATE
- PARENTS ARE THE SOLE STEWARDS OF OUR CHILDREN’S EDUCATIONS AND DO NOT FORFEIT THAT STEWARDSHIP TO “STAKEHOLDERS” WHO INCREASINGLY CONTROL FEDERAL AND STATE EDUCATION POLICY

WE CALL UPON STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS TO UPHOLD THE RIGHTS OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES BY RESTORING AMERICA’S TRADITIONAL PURPOSE FOR EDUCATION SO THAT CHILDREN WILL BE EMPOWERED TO FOLLOW THEIR INDIVIDUAL DREAMS AND FULFILL THEIR LIFE MISSIONS.

(Side 1)

A PARENTS' PROCLAMATION (detail)

1. Parents have the fundamental right to direct our children's educations. The state's role is secondary to and should be supportive of parents.

2. Parents have the fundamental right to contribute to the education standards set for our children. National standards that are designed as data tags to track children's skills, values, behaviors and beliefs via classwork and tests are opposed to individual liberty. This design makes it impossible for parents and local communities to alter the standards to any significant degree in order to elevate local values above global agendas. Further, standards with Appendices written by special-interests groups who are profiting from the teaching reforms tied to those Appendices, are in conflict with local education control and parents' rights.

3. Parents have the fundamental right to see our children's curriculum. 1-to-1 technology programs that upload real-time, updatable curricula—that increasingly pursues global education values in conflict with the values of American families—are undermining the parents' role and authority to direct our children's educations. Further, many of these technology programs are designed to turn our great teachers into facilitators, requiring them to use curricula that upholds globalist values, rather than allowing them to be inspiring mentors who empower children to uphold local and national values.

4. Parents have the fundamental right to see our children's test questions. Teachers and schools have traditionally been accountable to parents for helping our children succeed. But, recent tests, school grading metrics and federal accountability requirements have turned accountability upside down. Teachers and schools are now accountable to federal entities and private-interest groups that profit from making accountability rules for testing and school grading. They believe that parents, teachers and schools will “cheat the system” if we are allowed to see our children's tests. This shift in accountability is an affront to families and harms our relationship with our children because we can no longer help them by using our own reasoning—instead, we must rely on data from outside test groups that, in many cases, do not share our values for education. New, non-transparent, computer-adaptive tests further marginalize parents' rights and elevate testing groups above parents as these groups control the data used to control teachers, schools and parents' decisions about what our children should learn.

5. Parents have the fundamental right to protect our children's privacy and family's privacy. Federal privacy laws were stripped in Dec. 2011. They now allow the federal government and third parties to collect meta-data, including behavioral data from our children's classwork and tests, without parental consent in order to “individualize” instruction. This includes tying existing databases together for third party research, ie; health data, workforce data, criminal data, census data and family information, etc. Information collected in this manner, enables third parties instead of teachers and parents to control what our children learn.

6. Parents have a liberty interest in protecting our great, local teachers. As school grading and school accountability measures are controlled by federal and private-interest groups, parents' rights are diminished. Teachers are forced to teach to the test. This removes their ability to teach with the compassion that is deserved by individual children who have varied personalities, family backgrounds and learning styles. Teachers, parents and children's humanity is harmed by this flawed power structure that seeks to tie teacher pay to student test scores and to reassign teachers to schools based on test data.

7. Parents have a fundamental right to control our children's school attendance. As testing mandates and school grading metrics have empowered federal and private interest groups, these groups have sought to further mandate children's school attendance requirements. These mandates feed the data collection requirements of those groups to increase their profits and do not protect the individual needs of children and their families. These groups increasingly call for compulsory preschool, longer school days and longer school years, as well as mandatory “seat time” that dictates absenteeism requirements. But our children are not wards of the state. They belong to families. And, parents can and will assert our natural authority to protect them from school reform measures that take them away from quality and quantity family time—which time has valuable impacts on family bonds and builds children's characters.

(Side 2)