

Eagle Forum



DATE: Tell Gov. Walker to Stand AGAINST Common Core!

[Back to January 2014 Ed Reporter](#)

Microsoft's Race to the Bottom

Microsoft, whose founder Bill Gates has spent hundreds of millions of dollars funding and promoting Common Core, has now thrown away the very model Common Core is based upon at his own company. "Stacked ranking," the now "former" Microsoft model, allows for only a certain percentage of employees to rank at the top, another group to be good performers, and so on down to poor performers. Hooray for Microsoft, which finally realized that putting such restrictions on employees caused them to become dispirited, unproductive, and unhappy at work. In a Vanity Fair article titled, "Microsoft's Lost Decade," the author states that in the "last decade Microsoft's stock barely budged from around \$30, while Apple's stock is worth more than 20 times what it was 10 years ago." (8-2012)



Gates has used his vast fortune to force his stacked ranking system onto the U.S. school system. He gave grants, influenced policymakers, and promoted Common Core using his failed company model. In order to receive Race to the Top money from the Obama administration, states competed against each other using stacked ranking, allowing only those states who successfully jumped through specific hoops to receive money. Innovation was not rewarded. Answering questions in a prescribed manner on a test of sorts was the only way for states to get the money.

This “high stakes testing” and promotion of competition rather than collaboration among Microsoft workers “effectively crippled Microsoft’s ability to innovate,” according to the Vanity Fair article. Many say it is now crippling the nation’s schools. Students are stressed by high stakes testing and failing to learn how to think because of an overwhelming focus on “teaching to the test.” Teacher job satisfaction is at a low point and teachers are leaving the profession as they are scripted, controlled, and judged in an unprecedented manner.

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The public school system can’t turn on a dime and it will take years to recover from the damage done so far. It may take years for the educrats in charge to even realize that the risky, untried, and untested systems put in place are destroying the creativity of students and teachers. As one blogger recently commented: “So let me get this straight. The big business method of evaluation that now rules our schools is no longer the big business method of evaluation? And collaboration and teamwork, which have been abandoned by our schools in favor of the big business method of evaluation, is in?” (OnTheCommons.org, 11-29-13)

Apple founder, the late Steve Jobs, said of Bill Gates, “Winning business was more important than making great products. Microsoft never had the humanities and liberal arts in its DNA.” Job’s organization, Apple, won the decade and kept its focus on what it knows — technology. Wouldn’t it have been great if Gates had focused on his own business and kept his nose out of education?

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