

## Concerns with Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards, Assessments, & Programs

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The federal government, whose involvement in education is already unconstitutional, is pushing a move away from academics and toward an expansion of fuzzy social emotional learning (SEL) and invasive assessment. This is evident in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that passed at the end of 2015, the Strengthening Education through Research Act (S 227 - SETRA)<sup>1</sup> that seeks new social emotional research, mindset profiling in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),<sup>2</sup> and the new Head Start Performance Standards<sup>3</sup> that enshrine social emotional standards for our youngest and most vulnerable children.

In addition, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) announced this summer that it had chosen eight states to collaborate on creating K-12 SEL standards. All K-12 students would be measured on five “noncognitive” factors: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Despite Tennessee and Georgia having withdrawn from the initiative within two months, CASEL has joined the liberal Aspen Institute’s new National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development,<sup>4</sup> led by CASEL board member Linda Darling-Hammond (the radical whom terrorist Bill Ayers recommended to be Obama’s Secretary of Education). This commission is funded by the same gallery of rogues, including the ubiquitous Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that have funded recent pro-Common Core, pro-progressive education schemes.

Here are several reasons why these efforts are so problematic:

- 1) It is unconstitutional - There is *no* constitutional, statutory or moral authority for the federal government to create standards and norms for the attitudes, values and beliefs, for innocent American citizens, conduct psychological research on them and to keep this data in perpetuity in federally mandated state longitudinal databases.<sup>5</sup>
- 2) It goes against several Supreme Court precedents affirming parent’s inherent rights to direct the education and upbringing of their children.<sup>6</sup>
- 3) These types of standards and questions are highly subjective<sup>7</sup> as admitted by leading experts and organizations in the fields of education and mental health. These same types of questions are being used in school mental health screenings, sometimes without parental consent.<sup>8</sup>
- 4) Overworked, untrained teachers essentially become psychotherapists to their classrooms of patients.<sup>9</sup>
- 5) There is clear link to Common Core<sup>10</sup> and potential for both indoctrination and danger to student and family freedom of conscience covering such controversial topics as climate change, Buddhist mindfulness techniques,<sup>11</sup> social justice,<sup>12</sup> transgenderism<sup>13</sup> and the LGBT agenda
- 6) Subjective data endangering privacy that will be kept in perpetuity from assessments related to these standards and curricula are alleged to be predictive. Data may then well be used to make life altering decisions for children affecting college entrance, employment, etc.
- 7) Because of the weak and gutted federal privacy law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), this very sensitive data can be shared with various agencies of the federal government and third parties and re-disclosed and used for “predictive tests,” which are notoriously subjective and inaccurate.
- 8) According to information uncovered at recent US House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearings, the state of data security at the US Department of Education is appallingly bad, so this sensitive data that the government should not have in the first place, is not safe from hackers.

SEL is the embodiment of what government schools should not be doing to children. Parents and other citizens must stand and will be standing against this tyranny of the mind by vigorously opposing these programs so that America can continue to be the world’s refuge for, as Samuel Adams said, “...freedom of thought and the right of private judgment.”

<sup>1</sup> <http://bit.ly/2fDhKxm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://thefederalist.com/2015/06/30/its-official-the-feds-will-collect-psycho-social-data-on-your-child/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://truthinamericaneducation.com/federalized-education/enter-baby-common-core-new-head-start-performance-standards/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/national-commission-on-social-emotional-and-academic-development/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://edlibertywatch.org/2016/04/constitutional-statutory-privacy-concerns-with-assessing-mindsets-in-the-naep/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://edlibertywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Final-Ltr-NAEP-legal-and-privacy-concerns-06272016.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://edlibertywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/SEL-Child-Mental-Health-Quotes-and-References3.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <http://edlibertywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Rutherford-Report-Final-Redacted.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://truthinamericaneducation.com/common-core-state-standards/a-mental-health-professionals-perspective-on-the-common-core/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://bit.ly/1AEIlgkm>

<sup>11</sup> <http://1440foundation.org/who-we-support/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://novofoundation.org/advancing-social-and-emotional-learning/strategic-approach/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://bit.ly/1Qtj3xx>