

BUILDING THE MACHINE

WATCH THE FILM. BE INVOLVED.



A 3-part documentary about the Common Core:
The largest reform of American public schools ever seen

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Availability

The extended 3-DVD set is available through [commoncoremovie.com](http://www.commoncoremovie.com).
For public screenings, request a free copy of Disc 1 at
<http://www.commoncoremovie.com/host-a-screening>.

Run Time

Total runtime is approximately 2 hours (120 minutes)

Contents

Disc 1—The Original Documentary

Disc 2—The Parent Interviews

Disc 3—The Supplementary Episodes

Episode 1—What's in the ELA Standards (Part 1)

Episode 2—What's in the ELA Standards (Part 2)

Episode 3—What's in the Math Standards

Episode 4—Datamining

Episode 5—National Curriculum & High-stakes Testing

Episode 6—International Benchmarking

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About the Film

The Common Core is the largest systemic reform of American public education in recent history. What started as a collaboration between the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers to reevaluate and nationalize America's education standards has become one of the most controversial—and yet, unheard of—issues in the American public.

In 2010, 45 states adopted the Common Core States Standards Initiative (CCSSI), but according to a May 2013 Gallup Poll, 62% of Americans said they had never heard of the Common Core. Prominent groups and public figures have broken traditional party lines over the issue, leaving many wondering where they should stand.

Building the Machine introduces the public to the Common Core and its effects on our children's education. Parents, officials, and the American public should be involved in this national decision regardless of their political persuasion.

The documentary compiles interviews from leading educational experts, including members of the Common Core Validation Committee. After a year of research and production, we present the story of the Common Core through the voices of those who know it best.

We invite you to watch our film and then explore the issues for yourself.

Production

1. Early in 2009, Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) began researching the Common Core in depth to gauge its would-be effect upon homeschooling families. Our team realized the national significance of this reform not only for public schools, but also for private schools and homeschools. In 2013, HSLDA's in-house film crew set out to create *Building the Machine*, the first investigative documentary about the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

2. HSLDA's director of film and visual media, Ian Reid, traveled across the country with the HSLDA film team interviewing experts across the spectrum of opinions on the Common Core, including those who were part of the closed door meetings of the Common Core Validation Committee.

3. *Building the Machine* features original music by composer Benjamin Botkin. His official website is benbotkin.com.

Biographies: The Makers

1. Ian Reid—Director

As Director of Film & Visual Media at HSLDA, Ian Reid led the development of *Building the Machine* from inception and early research to final cut.

His past credits include working on multiple feature films and documentaries and directing national television and online spots for numerous organizations including the Heritage Foundation, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, and the Convention of States project. His work has taken him from the inner offices of Washington, D.C., to the glacial slopes of Mt. Rainier to the ancient corridors of old Jerusalem.

2. Suzanne Stephens—Producer

Home School Legal Defense Association Director of Communications Suzanne Stephens is privileged to work with an exceptional team of dedicated and talented people who together produce informative, engaging, and creative products across all forms of media. She is producer for HSLDA's audio and visual media projects, which include HSLDA's daily radio program *Home School Heartbeat* (1991-present), *You Can Homeschool* (2006), and *An Introduction to Policy Debate* (2012). Suzanne holds a B.A. in English Literature from Wheaton College.

3. Benjamin Botkin—Composer

Benjamin Botkin started composing for film and visual media in 2005, and has since composed the music for several feature, documentary, short, and promotional films, and has given lectures on film scoring. He is entirely self-taught in composition, arrangement, and orchestration.

Biographies: The Experts in the Film

WAYNE BRASLER

Veteran Journalism Teacher, University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

Wayne Brasler is the longtime journalism adviser for the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools' student paper, *The Midway*, and yearbook, *U-Highlights*. In addition to teaching journalism and advising publications for nearly half a century, Brasler has continued his own career as an investigative journalist. He also has been involved in the entertainment field all his life and is a well-known historian on education, radio and television, and public transportation in his hometown of St. Louis.

The Dow Jones Newspaper Fund has recognized Brasler as National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association has awarded him its Gold Key, and the National Scholastic Press Association honored him with its Pioneer Award. In 1996 the National Scholastic Press Association began awarding the Brasler Prize for the most outstanding piece of student work published in a high school newspaper every year. Recently the University of Missouri School of Journalism recognized Brasler with its prestigious Gold Medal for his highly vocal defense of student press rights and his history in scholastic journalism.

WILLIAMSON "BILL" EVERS, PHD

Research Fellow, Hoover Institution

Williamson M. Evers, a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of the Institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education, specializes in research on education policy especially as it pertains to curriculum, teaching, testing, accountability, and school finance from kindergarten through high school. Evers was the United States assistant secretary of education for policy from 2007 to 2009. He was a senior adviser to U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings during 2007. From July to December 2003, Evers served in Iraq as a senior adviser for education to administrator L. Paul Bremer of the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Evers to the California State Academic Content Standards Commission in 2010. In 1996, Governor Pete Wilson appointed Evers to the earlier California State Commission for the Establishment of Academic Content and Performance Standards. He is the only individual to have served on both standards commissions, both of which proposed the subject matter that students should learn in each grade.

Evers was elected in November 2004 to the Santa Clara County Board of Education, on which he served until February 2007. He is the immediate past president of the board of directors of the East Palo Alto Charter School on which he served from 1997 until 2004.

Source: Hoover Institution, <http://www.hoover.org/fellows/10136>

MICHAEL FARRIS, JD, LL.M.

Chancellor of Patrick Henry College and Chairman of the Home School Legal Defense Association

Michael Farris is the chancellor of Patrick Henry College and chairman of the Home School Legal Defense Association. He was the founding president of each organization.

Farris is a constitutional appellate litigator who has served as lead counsel in the United States Supreme Court, eight federal circuit courts, and the appellate courts of 13 states.

He has been a leader on Capitol Hill for over 30 years and is widely known for his leadership on homeschooling, religious freedom, and the preservation of American sovereignty.

At Patrick Henry College, Farris teaches constitutional law, public international law and coaches PHC's moot court team, which has won seven national championships.

A prolific author, Farris has been recognized with a number of awards including the Salvatori Prize for American Citizenship by the Heritage Foundation and has been recognized as one of the "Top 100 Faces in Education for the 20th Century" by *Education Week* magazine.

CHESTER FINN

President, Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Chester E. Finn, Jr., scholar, educator and public servant, has devoted his career to improving education in the United States. As senior fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, chairman of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education, and president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, his primary focus is the reform of primary and secondary schooling.

Finn has led Fordham since 1997, after many earlier roles in education, academe, and government. From 1999 until 2002, he was John M. Olin Fellow at the Manhattan Institute. In 1992-94, he served as founding partner and senior scholar with the Edison Project. He was professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University from 1981 until 2002.

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From 1985 to 1988, he served as assistant secretary for research and improvement and counselor to the secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. Earlier positions include staff assistant to the president of the United States; special assistant to the governor of Massachusetts; counsel to the U.S. ambassador to India; research associate at the Brookings Institution; and legislative director for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

For over 40 years, Finn has been in the forefront of the national debate about school reform. His participation in seminars, conferences, and hearings has taken him to colleges, education and civic groups, and government organizations throughout the world.

A native of Ohio, he holds an undergraduate degree in U.S. history, a master's degree in social studies teaching, and a doctorate in education policy, all from Harvard University.

Finn has served on numerous boards, currently including the National Council on Teacher Quality and the Core Knowledge Foundation. From 1988–96, he served on the National Assessment Governing Board, including two years as its chair.

Author of 20 books, Finn's latest (co-authored with Jessica Hockett) is *Exam Schools: Inside America's Most Selective Public High Schools*. Earlier works include *Ohio's Education Reform Challenges: Lessons from the Frontlines* (co-authored with Terry Ryan and Michael Lafferty); *Troublemaker: A Personal History of School Reform Since Sputnik*; *Reroute the Preschool Juggernaut*; *Leaving No Child Behind: Options for Kids in Failing Schools* (co-edited with Frederick M. Hess); *Charter Schools in Action: Renewing Public Education* (co-authored with Bruno V. Manno and Gregg Vanourek); and *The Educated Child: A Parent's Guide from Pre-School Through Eighth Grade* (co-authored with William J. Bennett and John Cribb).

A speaker and moderator at myriad events and frequent commentator in the national media, he has also penned more than 400 articles in such publications as *The Weekly Standard*, *National Affairs*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary*, *The Public Interest*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Education Week*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Harvard Business Review*, *TheAtlantic.com*, *NationalReview.com*, *Education Next*, and *The Columbus Dispatch*. He also writes regularly for the Fordham Institute's weekly, *Education Gadfly*.

Source: Fordham Institute, <http://edexcellence.net/about-us/fordham-staff/chester-e-finn-jr>

ANDREW HACKER, PHD

Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, Queens College

Almost every time **Andrew Hacker** walks down a New York City street, people approach him and say some variant of, “Dr. Hacker, Dr. Hacker, I had you for Government 101 and you changed my life.”

This happens almost every day, certainly once a week. That's because political scientist Hacker, in 110 consecutive semesters, has taught basic political science to thousands of students. He did this for 16 years at Cornell University and more recently at the Queens College of the City of New York, a public institution.

Many of his former students—federal judges, cabdrivers, physicians, law school deans, state senators, pharmaceutical saleswomen—claim him as the most memorable and interesting teacher they have studied with.

Beyond his teaching, Andrew Hacker is a frequent contributor to the *New York Review of Books*, where he often writes about issues in higher education. He has also authored numerous textbooks and nine trade books including the 1992 best-seller *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, widely hailed as one of the best American works about race. “Few people writing today for a general audience can make more sense of numbers,” wrote the reviewer for the *Wall Street Journal* of that work, “. . . Hacker has long wielded figures as old masters wield red, yellow and blue . . . to create a telling portrait of American life.”

More than a decade ago, Hacker resigned his tenured full professorship so that his department could hire two young professors with his senior salary. He continues to teach, however, as an adjunct.

PAUL HORTON

Veteran History Teacher, University of Chicago Laboratory Schools

Paul Horton teaches United States and world history to 10th–12th graders at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. He has taught history to grades 6–12 for over 30 years.

He has also presented over 35 papers at state, regional, national, and international history and teaching conferences. His work has appeared in peer reviewed history publications including *The Journal of Southern History* and *Civil War History*. His history reviews have appeared in *Social Education*, *The History Teacher*, and *The Alabama Review*. And his commentaries on educational issues have appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Education Week*, *Education News*, Diane Ravitch's blog, and the *Daily Kos*.

Horton has written roadside history markers, spoken at the European Union Parliament at a global education conference, and dug nine field seasons beside students and colleagues at Crow Canyon Archeological Center seasonal sites. He has served on the editorial board of a history journal, as an AP history reader, and as the director of the Illinois Council for History Education. He has received six National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships, three

Gilder Lehrman Fellowships, a William Robertson Coe Fellowship, and a State of Iowa University System Regents Faculty Research Fellowship.

Fourteen of Horton's students have won state History Day competitions in Iowa, Georgia, and Illinois, advancing to the National History Day competition in College Park, Maryland. Recently, one of his students placed fifth nationally in the research paper category. Six students have been published in the prestigious *Concord Review*, including one who won a coveted Emerson award.

NEAL MCCLUSKEY, PHD

Associate Director, Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom

Neal McCluskey is the associate director of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom. Prior to arriving at Cato, McCluskey served in the United States Army, taught high school English, and was a freelance reporter covering municipal government and education in suburban New Jersey. More recently, he was a policy analyst at the Center for Education Reform. McCluskey is the author of the book *Feds in the Classroom: How Big Government Corrupts, Cripples, and Compromises American Education*, and his writings have appeared in such publications as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and *Forbes*. In addition to his written work, McCluskey has appeared on C-SPAN, CNN, the Fox News Channel, and numerous radio programs. McCluskey holds an undergraduate degree from Georgetown University where he double-majored in government and English, a master's degree in political science from Rutgers University, and a PhD in public policy from George Mason University.

MICHAEL MCSHANE, PHD

Research Fellow, American Enterprise Institute

Michael McShane is a research fellow in education policy studies at American Enterprise Institute. He is coauthor of *President Obama and Education Reform: The Personal and the Political*, published by Palgrave MacMillan in 2012. His scholarship has been published by *Education Finance and Policy* and in various technical reports. He has contributed to more popular publications such as *Education Next*, the *Huffington Post*, *National Review*, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He is coeditor of the book *Common Core Meets the Reform Agenda: What It All Means for Politics, Policy, and the Future of Schooling* (with Frederick Hess), published by Teachers College Press in 2013. He began his career as an inner city high school teacher in Montgomery, Alabama.

JIM MILGRAM, PHD

Mathematician, Stanford University & Common Core Validation Committee Member

R. James Milgram is an emeritus professor of mathematics at Stanford University where he has been on the faculty since 1970. He has been a member of the National Board for Education Sciences (the presidential board that oversees the Institute for Education Research at the U.S. Department of Education) as well as the NASA Advisory Council and the Achieve Mathematics Advisory Panel, and is a member of the Reasoning Mind board of advisers. He was one of the members of the Common Grounds Project that included Deborah Loewenberg Ball, Joan Ferrini-Mundy, Jeremy Kilpatrick, Richard Schaar, and Wilfried Schmid. He served on the National Validation Committee for the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2009–10).

From 2002 to 2005, Milgram headed a project funded by the United States Department of Education that identified and described the key mathematics that K–8 teachers need to know. He also helped to direct a project partially funded by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation that evaluated state mathematics assessments. He is one of the four main authors of the California Mathematics Standards, as well as one of the two main authors of the California Mathematics Framework. He was also one of the main authors of the previous Michigan and Georgia mathematics standards.

Among other honors, he has held the Gauss Professorship at the University of Göttingen and the Regents' Professorship at the University of New Mexico.

He has published over 100 research papers in mathematics and four books, as well as served as an editor of many others. His main area of research is algebraic and geometric topology and he currently works on questions in robotics and protein folding. He received his undergraduate and master's degrees in mathematics from the University of Chicago and his PhD in mathematics from the University of Minnesota.

MIKE PETRILLI

Executive Vice President, Thomas B. Fordham Institute

Michael J. Petrilli is an award-winning writer and one of the nation's most trusted education analysts. As executive vice president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Petrilli helps to lead the country's most influential education policy think tank and contributes to its *Flypaper* blog and *Education Gadfly* weekly newsletter. He is the author of *The Diverse Schools Dilemma: A Parent's Guide to Socioeconomically Mixed Public Schools*, published in 2012. Petrilli is also a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and executive editor of *Education Next*. Petrilli has published opinion pieces in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Bloomberg View*, and *Wall Street Journal* and has been a guest on *NBC Nightly News*, *ABC World News Tonight*, *CNN*, and *Fox*, as well as several National Public

Radio programs, including *All Things Considered*, *On Point*, and the *Diane Rehm Show*. He is author, with Frederick M. Hess, of the Peter Lang Primer *No Child Left Behind*. Petrilli helped to create the United States Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement, the Policy Innovators in Education Network, and Young Education Professionals. He holds an honors-level bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Michigan.

JOY PULLMANN

Research Fellow, Heartland Institute & Managing Editor of *School Reform News*

Joy Pullmann is a research fellow of The Heartland Institute and managing editor of *School Reform News*, a national monthly publication. In that capacity, she has interviewed and produced podcasts with many of the leading figures in school reform. She previously was the assistant editor for *The American* magazine at the American Enterprise Institute.

She is also a 2013 recipient of the Robert Novak Journalism Fellowship for in-depth reporting on the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Pullmann has been published by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Examiner*, the *Weekly Standard*, the *Washington Times*, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Ricochet*, *National Review Online*, *RealClearPolicy*, and various other United States newspapers and outlets. Pullmann has written a series of Heartland Research & Commentary reports on the Parent Trigger, a new school reform idea sweeping the country, and is coauthor with Joseph L. Bast of "The Parent Trigger: Justification and Design Guidelines" (Heartland Institute, 2012).

Pullmann has taught middle and high school students history, literature, and debate, and has written high school public-speaking curriculum. She has traveled nationwide to speak at prominent venues including the Conservative Political Action Conference, the National Right to Life Convention, and statewide education conferences. She has been a guest on numerous talk shows, including *Fox & Friends* and the *Wall Street Journal's Opinion Journal Live*.

Pullmann graduated from the Hillsdale College honors program with an English major and journalism concentration, where she received statewide competitive collegiate honors for her reporting and commentary and ranked in the top 25 nationally in parliamentary debate.

JIM STERGIOS, PHD
Executive Director, Pioneer Institute

Jim Stergios is executive director of Pioneer Institute, a Boston-based think tank founded in 1988. Prior to joining Pioneer, Jim was chief of staff and undersecretary for policy in the commonwealth of Massachusetts' executive office of environmental affairs, where he drove efforts on water policy, regulatory and permit reform, and urban revitalization. His prior experience includes founding and managing a business, teaching at the university level, and serving as headmaster at a preparatory school. Jim holds a doctoral degree in political science from Boston University.

Jim has been interviewed on the BBC and MSNBC, and has appeared regularly on local television and radio news broadcasts, including *Chronicle*, WBZ, WHDH, WCVB, NECN, Fox 25, WGBH TV and radio, WBUR's Radio Boston, WBZ's *Nightside with Dan Rea*, WRKO's *Tom and Todd Show*, and *Pundit Review*. In addition to writing regular commentary as Boston.com's education blogger, Jim's opinion pieces have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Weekly Standard*, the *Washington Times*, the *Daily Caller*, and regional newspapers throughout New England. He has been quoted in hundreds of news outlets across the country, including the *New York Times*, the *Economist*, and the *Washington Post*, and speaks at national policy conferences.

SANDRA STOTSKY, EDD
Senior Associate Commissioner in Massachusetts (1999–2003) & Common Core Validation Committee Member

Sandra Stotsky is credited with developing one of the country's strongest sets of academic standards for K–12 students as well as the strongest academic standards and licensure tests for prospective teachers while serving as senior associate commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education from 1999–2003. She is also known nationwide for her in-depth analyses of the problems in Common Core's English language arts standards.

Her current research ranges from the deficiencies in teacher preparation programs and teacher licensure tests to the deficiencies in the K–2 reading curriculum and the question of gender bias in the curriculum. She is regularly invited to testify or submit testimony to state boards of education and state legislators on bills addressing licensure tests, licensure standards, and Common Core's standards (e.g., Utah, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, South Carolina, and Texas).

She currently serves on several committees for the International Dyslexia Association and on the advisory board for Pioneer Institute's Center for School Reform. She served on the National Validation Committee for the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2009–10),

on the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (2006–08), coauthoring its final report as well as two of its task group reports, on the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (2006–10) and on the Steering Committee in 2003–04 for the framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessments for 2009 onward.

Her major publications include *The Death and Resurrection of a Coherent Literature Curriculum* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012); *Literary Study in Grades 9, 10, and 11: A National Survey* (Forum 4, Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers, 2010); *What's at Stake in the K-12 Standards Wars: A Primer for Educational Policy Makers* (Peter Lang, 2000); and *Losing Our Language* (Free Press, 1999; reprinted by Encounter Books, 2002).

ZE'EV WURMAN

Member California Academic Content Standards Commission (2010) & former U.S. Department of Education official

Ze'ev Wurman is a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution. From 2007 to 2009, Wurman served as a Senior Adviser at the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development in the United States Department of Education. Throughout the development of the Common Core standards in 2009–10 he analyzed its mathematics draft standards for the Pioneer Institute and for the state of California. In the summer of 2010, he served on the California Academic Content Standards Commission that reviewed the adoption of Common Core for California. Wurman has published professional and opinion articles about education and about the Common Core in *Education Next*, *Education Week*, the *Boston Globe*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Austin American-Statesman*, and *City Journal*. In his non-educational life, Wurman is an executive with MonolithIC 3D, a Silicon Valley semiconductor start-up.

Source: <http://www.scpie.org/zeev-wurman-hoover-institution/>

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Cinematography/ Editing

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Sound Recordist

Jesse Eastman

Editorial Team

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