**[The Common Core](http://www.pheadigest.blogspot.com/2013/08/the-common-core.html)**

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*We have had several questions about the Common Core curriculum which is being put in place in many states and how it affects the home school community.  Below is Martha's response to some of those questions.*

I have been asked about my thoughts on the Common Core Standards.  All states have state approved standards that define what each class is supposed to cover. This defines the college prep level for the high school classes.  My understanding is that South Carolina is moving to put the Common Core Standards in place.  I have read (on HSLDA and Parental Rights websites) about the controversies associated with the standards.  Within the standards there are requirements that deal with what has to be taught.  One of the biggest concerns to home school parents is over being required to teach things that are politically correct at the moment - global warming, evolution, etc.  From what I have read, I believe that the home school organizations are concerned most about the Federal Government coercing the States into adopting the standards that they (the Federal Government) wants the States to have.  I do understand the organizations' concerns.  This is a continuation of a long line of laws meant to shift rights and responsibilities granted to parents and/or the States by the US Constitution to the Federal Government. Here is a link to a recent HSLDA letter expressing some of their thoughts (<http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/201305030.asp>). The other provisions that the federal government is putting in place with the Common Core are also problems which may eventually extend to home schoolers.. I agree with HSLDA in general and find this trend very disheartening.

As far as the standards themselves go, are two things to keep in mind.  First, these standards are for the public schools.  Home schoolers have never been required to meet the public school standards (though there are those who are pushing for that kind of regulation).  PHEA does ask parents to use the South Carolina standards (which when implemented will be the Common Core standards) to determine if their honors classes have exceeded those standards that are required for the college prep level of the class.  In doing this we expect parents to use their God-given wisdom and reasoning.  I want them to understand what level of work is required for the college prep level.  Based on information we receive from parents, I am certain that many do not know this.  If they want to designate a course as honors, I want them to be able to tell me how their course is more rigorous than the college prep level.  That does not mean that I am requiring that they follow every single point of the standard.  It is common knowledge that even the public school teachers (who are required to follow these standards) are not able to get in every point of the standards.

The second thing to keep in mind will sound heretical when I just state it - but I think my reasoning will make the statement make sense!  I believe that parents should teach those controversial subjects.  I have always taught them in my Biology classes.  I want my students to know 1) what the world has to say about the topic, and 2) how to think through the actual science and whether the current teaching is supported by the science.  We begin by learning what the scientific method is and then analyze the data and the conclusions.  A parent can (and I think should) teach their children many different worldviews and topics, teaching them how to apply the truth of the discipline (such as the scientific method) and even more importantly the truth of Scripture to their understanding of the topic.  There is a time for sheltering our children from the confusion and harm these views can do.  I believe that in early schooling children should be taught the basic values of the parents.  I also believe that as they grow into middle and high school the students must learn how to apply those values to all the other value systems they will meet in the world.  The parent who has not taught his child how to think through other points of view, leaves that child wide open to the attacks and seductions of the world once the child is out in it.

In light of these two thoughts, I do not see the Common Core Standards as something to be up in arms about.  Keeping in mind that they do not apply to us, we could easily comply with the requirements by teaching the topic and then doing the very typical home school method of thoroughly analyzing the topic to 'see if these things be so'.