

Phyllis Schlafly Understood the Dangers of Common Core-Imposing School Choice Programs

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Is school choice or Title I portability that imposes public school standardized (Common Core) tests on students, entire private schools, or potentially even home schools really that much of a choice? We don't think so. Education Liberty Watch has been warning about and fighting that kind of "choice" for years. Here is what we said [back in 2011](#):

"...private schools generally far out perform public schools on achievement tests, which is why so many parents of poor students are working so hard to get their children into these schools. To say that private schools need academic accountability compared to the public schools or that the accountability can only be provided via the state tests really makes no sense.

The only other logical reason for pushing this "accountability" via only one method of testing is an attempt to gain a foothold of control over the curriculum of private schools. This cannot be allowed to happen if the private schools are to be maintained as a viable alternative to the public schools."

In 2012, we published the [School Choice Freedom Grading Scale](#). States like New Hampshire and Georgia that had accountability directly to parents scored A+ grades while states like Indiana and Louisiana that imposed the state standardized tests on entire private schools received failing grades.

The ever brilliant education analyst and conservative icon Phyllis Schlafly instantly understood the dangers of both Common Core and these alleged school choice plans to private school autonomy. Shortly after having the honor of presenting our Grading Scale at her wonderful 2012 Eagle Council meeting, she wrote these insightful words in her weekly column, titled [Like ObamaCare, Obama Core Is Another Power Grab](#):

The Obama Core advocates are even planning to impose their standards on private schools. As the school choice movement grows, the attempt will be made to force any private or charter school that accepts public funds to adopt Common Core standards and have their students take the national tests. (Emphasis added).

President-elect Donald Trump's appointee to become the next Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, is undergoing her confirmation hearings starting on January 17th. Despite protestations to the contrary, the Michigan billionaire has a long history of supporting [Common Core and other education debacles](#) like social emotional learning (SEL), data mining, and charter schools that only teach and test the Common Core.

As pointed out in our [list of questions](#) that the U.S. Senate should ask DeVos, she is a strong proponent of both voucher programs and Title I portability. The Indiana voucher law that she and her organization, the American Federation for Children (AFC), [strongly supported and funded](#) requires voucher recipient

schools to [administer the public school Common Core-aligned tests](#) and submit to the grading system based on those same Common Core-aligned tests. The tests determine what is taught, which means that this law is imposing Common Core on private schools. Indiana “is the second-worst in the country on infringing on private school autonomy” according to the [Center for Education Reform](#) because of that and other onerous requirements, and the state received an F grade on our [Grading Scale](#). It is also important that she be asked if as Secretary of Education, if she would require the same public school, Common Core tests and the rest of the federal regulations for private schools under a Title I portability program as her close friend and colleague [Jeb Bush recommended](#) for [Mitt Romney in 2012](#) (p. 24).

President-elect Trump had incredible respect and admiration of Phyllis, saying at her funeral:

And she was incredible. She was so brave... And I will never forget that. [Her endorsement] had a huge impact. She was a great, great powerful woman with a tremendous heart.”

Heather Crossin, co-founder of Hoosiers Against Common Core, was so right when she said in her [recent excellent article](#) carrying the pleas of millions of grassroots moms and dads that supported Mr. Trump based on his strong promises to end Common Core and decrease or eliminate the federal footprint in education, to pick a good Secretary of Education:

“Phyllis was blessed with many gifts from God that allowed her to excel. She was brilliant, beautiful, graceful, a wonderful public speaker, a skilled debater, and she benefitted from an abundance of energy and good health. She chose to use these gifts for the good of the nation. While she will not be making the trek to Trump Tower to meet with you or be given a prominent role in your administration, there remains one way for you to show your gratitude and give honor to her legacy. Appoint a Secretary of Education that would make her proud. *She*, who was God’s gift to the nation, gave your presidency to *us* as her final gift. Don’t let her down. Don’t let us down.”

Let us hope and pray that Betsy DeVos understands Phyllis Schlafly’s insightful concerns about the dangerous intersection of Common Core and school choice shared by so many parents across the nation. Let us also hope and pray that Mrs. DeVos carries out the President-elect’s promises and becomes a secretary of which Phyllis would be proud after having given her support to Mr. Trump.