

Greetings!

I purposed in my heart that if the annual **Flood in the Valley** is a DUD that I would tell everyone I could about my theory regarding the flood that it was stayed by the hand of God because . . .

. . . because the 2013 Legislature passed 4 strongly **pro-life** bills that if allowed to take affect would send the only abortuary in N.D. slinking, scurrying, and skeedaddling from our state. Now I have told *you*. I am praising God for His deliverance from yet another Red River flood and I am thanking Him for the legislators who publically took a stand for life to stay the flood of abortions in N.D.

I guess there has been some hoopla over the latest educational fad to be forced upon government schools – **Common Core State Standards**. This has little to do with parent educators as there is absolutely no curriculum approval process in North Dakota. As per current law there is no way the DPI could force this latest ‘fix’ on N.D. homeschoolers. The problem, however, is the rewrite of standardized tests to align with the CCSS. Such rewrites may cause difficulties for students as material covered (English and math) on the tests may not have been covered in their homeschool. But I guess that is already true. The tests being used by homeschoolers were written based on certain standards using public school children as the test group. It is discriminatory no doubt, so the best fix would be to remove state-mandated testing for all, but especially for homeschoolers.

If CCSS is fully implemented it would give a final nudge to the development of a national curriculum. I’m pretty sure that would be a very bad idea which would lead to the dumbing down of the whole system (Yes, even more so than it is now!). Our office administrator has included a great article by Will Estrada on this subject and I have also included information and link to CCSS information from the Heritage Foundation. The third article on this subject shows that even public school officials are less than enthusiastic about this latest attempt to make it appear as though public school children are doing well academically in math and English. These articles will help you better understand the debate. I admit it is kind of a snoozer subject, but like Will Estrada writes in his article, “. . . our greatest worry is that if the CCSS is fully adopted by all states, policy makers down the road will attempt to change state legislation to require all students—including homeschool and private school students—to be taught and tested according to the CCSS.”

I can hardly wait until it is warm enough to weed in the garden without winter cap, scarf and mittens. My dear husband says, “Don’t worry, summer will come!” I’m going to trust him on this, but I haven’t seen much proof yet.

Grace and peace,
Gail



Family Fun Days

June 21 - 23, 2013

Come, bring your whole family, and join the **Wendell and Beth Sip** family for a weekend of fun, fellowship and encouragement!

Located at our farm, 5 1/2 miles NE of Ada, MN (45 miles NE of Fargo, ND)

Arrive anytime after 2 p.m. Friday

Activities include (but not limited to):

- Singing and Bible time in the morning and evening
- Egg toss
- wheelbarrow racing
- Obstacle course
- Volleyball, etc., (for young and old!)

Bring **tents or campers** - we have a couple extra tents, if needed. Indoor **bathrooms** as well as porta-potties available. **Meals are all provided** both Sat. and Sun. Fri. evening you are on your own with a bag supper. No charge for the weekend. More info: call 218-784-4804 or email at wbsp@loretel.net

RSVP by June 7th - the sooner the better, as we are already preparing food and accommodations. **(Editor's note: I know you are receiving this AFTER the RSVP date, but maybe you could beg for mercy.)**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. . . . the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. Hebrews 1:5; 3:17



Although some negative critics argue that homeschooling harms the common good and civic involvement, their actual concern may not be that adults who were home educated will not be civically involved or advance the common good but that those who were home educated *will* be civically engaged and advance values, beliefs, a worldview, and, social and political practice that is different from the one that the critics of homeschooling had envisioned for the United States.

Dr. Brian Ray, 2005-2006 *Worldwide Guide to Homeschooling*



The View from my Window

By Theresa Deckert, NDHSA Office Administrator

There has been much talk about the Common Core Initiative in the last few months. The board has received several emails from families expressing concern. The NDHSA board of directors officially went on record at our last board meeting stating **“the NDHSA board is opposed to the implementation of the Common Core Mandate.”**

If you are unfamiliar with the Common Core we have reprinted an article from HSLDA to give you a bit of background. It is important for homeschoolers to be aware of what is happening in the public school arena so that we do not wake up some day and find ourselves saddled with regulations that take away some of our hard-won homeschool freedoms.

Common Core State Standards Initiative: Too Close to a National Curriculum

William A. Estrada, Esq., Director of Federal Relations, Home School Legal Defense Association
December 17, 2012, featured at HSLDA website and used with permission.

Background

In 2010, the National Governors Association published their “Common Core State Standards” (CCSS). These were meant as voluntary math and English guidelines which individual states could adopt. HSLDA and numerous other organizations grew concerned about this push to standardize what public school students are taught. HSLDA wrote two articles outlining our concerns, one in [March of 2010](#), and one in [June of 2010](#). We explained that states were being enticed by the federal government—through the Race to the Top program—to align their state curriculum with the CCSS, resulting in de facto national standards. We were concerned that this would lead to a national curriculum and national test, and that the pressure would grow for homeschool and private school students to be taught using this national curriculum.

During President Obama’s 2012 State of the Union speech, the president stated, “We’ve convinced nearly every state in the country to raise their standards.” How were the states convinced to adopt the CCSS? The simple answer—[federal dollars](#). President Obama added adopting the CCSS as a criterion for states to gain points in the Race to the Top education federal grant program, regardless of whether the state already had comparable or superior educational standards. States with the highest points are more likely to win the competitive Race to the Top federal grants.

Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have adopted the CCSS since 2010. Only Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Virginia have not.

Are the Common Core State Standards a Good Idea for Public Schools?

Recently, there has been a growing controversy over whether the CCSS are even beneficial. Many states have spent years adopting their own state standards, only to throw them away in favor of the CCSS. Some commentators have said that the CCSS will [weaken English learning](#) and [reduce analytical thinking](#). Others point to a [weakening of math teaching](#). Still others point out that the CCSS will [cost billions of dollars](#) to implement—which could be deal-breaker for states struggling to implement the standards.

The CCSS by themselves are not necessarily controversial. They’re similar in certain respects to other state curriculum content standards for public schools. However, HSLDA believes that children—whether homeschooled, private schooled, or public schooled—do best when parents are fully engaged. And parents are most engaged when they know that they are in charge of their child’s education. Top-down, centralized education policy does not encourage parents to be engaged.

The CCSS removes education standards from the purview of state and local control to being controlled by unaccountable education policy experts sitting in a board room far removed from the parents, students, and teachers who are most critical to a child’s educational success.

Will the CCSS Affect Homeschools?

The CCSS specifically do not apply to private or homeschools, unless they receive government dollars (online charter school programs have no such protection). However, HSLDA has serious concerns with the rush to adopt the CCSS. HSLDA has fought national education standards for the past two decades. Why? National standards lead to national curriculum and national tests, and subsequent pressure on homeschool students to be taught from the same curricula. (Color emphasis added by editor.)

The College Board—the entity that created the PSAT and SAT—[has already indicated](#) that its signature college entrance exam will be aligned with the CCSS. And many homeschoolers worry that colleges and universities may look askance at homeschool graduates who apply for admission if their high school transcripts are not aligned with the CCSS.

HSLDA believes that a one-size-fits-all approach to education crowds out other educational options, including the freedom of parents to choose homeschools and private schools. A common curriculum and tests based off common standards could be very harmful to homeschoolers if their college of choice refuses to accept a student’s high school transcript if it is not based on the CCSS. Homeschoolers could also have trouble on the SAT if the test is fundamentally altered to reflect only one specific curriculum. And our greatest worry is that if the CCSS is fully adopted by all states, policy makers down the road will attempt to change state legislation to require all students—including homeschool and private school students—to be taught and tested according to the CCSS.

Common Core State Standards spreading

The National Governors Association first focused the CCSS on the general subject areas of math and English. However, there is now movement to create CCSS in [numerous other subject areas](#). The National Governors Association is also urging states to align [early education programs](#) for young children. This is also encouraged by the federal government’s [Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge](#), a program which causes [grave concerns](#) to HSLDA.

Due to laws prohibiting the creation of national tests, curriculum, and teacher certification, governors and state legislatures are the only policy makers who can actually decide whether or not to adopt the CCSS. While the federal government has encouraged the states to adopt the CCSS through federal incentives, the states are completely free to reject the CCSS.

Further Action

To find out whether your state has adopted the Common Core State Standards, you can visit this website’s [useful map](#). (Please note that this is the website for the common core state standards initiative.)

Contact your state legislators, including the governor, to discuss this issue with them. Ask them about their position on the issue. Find your [governor’s current information](#) here.

If you have a governor’s election coming up in your state, we encourage you to raise this issue with the candidates. Even if a state has already adopted the national education standards, a new governor will be faced with the costs of implementing these new standards and new accountability to the federal government. Numerous states that have already adopted the CCSS are considering rejecting the CCSS. Now is the time to help raise awareness of this issue and educate yourself about the CCSS.

Because this affects all parents, and will not currently affect homeschool freedom, it is not necessary to identify yourself as a homeschooler.

Resources:

[Math and Science Common Core State Standards](#)

Eagle Forum: "[Obama Core is Another Power Grab](#)" [Common Core State Standards](#)

Indiana Superintendent: "[Obama Administration Nationalized Common Core Standards Common Core Math Standards Fail to Add Up](#)"

Eagle Forum: "[Common Core Standards Aren't Cheap](#)"

Eagle Forum: "[Common Core Standards Dumbing Down the SAT](#)" "[Common Core Supporter: Maybe Opposition Not Paranoia](#)"



Author:

Will Estrada has been leading HSLDA's effort to defend homeschooling on Capitol Hill since 2006. As the oldest of eight children, and a homeschool graduate who married a homeschool graduate, he has a passion for protecting homeschool freedom. [Read more >>](#)

Editor's Note on Common Core State Standards Initiative: This is another example of why membership in HSLDA matters! Their attorneys are closely watching federal attempts to restrict parental rights in many areas of the law and actively lobbying against such activities. Your membership fees give you access to an attorney, if needed for your family, but it also supports the work on our behalf on Capitol Hill. My husband and I have been members since the '90s and consider it a privilege to financially assist in the continuation of HSLDA. Their work is vitally important. If you are a member of NDHSA you will receive a 'group discount'. Don't assume that other North Dakota homeschoolers will do their part so you don't need to! Your membership matters! Go to www.ndhsa.org and www.hslda.org

Join the Fight Against Common Core

5/29/13--From **The Heritage Foundation** (morningbell@heritage.org)

Two competing forces are pushing on America's K-12 education system today. One is an effort to infuse **education choice** into a long-stagnant system, empowering parents with the ability to send their child to a school that meets her unique learning needs. The other is an effort to **further centralize education through Common Core** national standards and tests. Read more: [Join the Fight Against Common Core](#)

Even Educrats Aren't Loving CCSS!

From *EdWeek Update*, June 4, 2013

[Into the Common Core: One Classroom's Journey](#)

A veteran teacher finds it tough going to lead her students toward mastery of the common standards in English/language arts.

• **Series:** [Common Core: A Steep Climb](#)

NDHSA Board Column

From our newest members, Troy and Kristin Durham, Fargo N.D.

My wife, Kristin, and I started homeschooling our children in 2001 as a result of a leading from God's Word that taught us it was our responsibility to teach our children not someone else's. The first NDHSA homeschool convention that we attended was held in Minot at the State Fair Grounds. I wasn't too

sure what to expect from that convention nor was I completely sold out on the idea of keeping our kids out of school and teaching them ourselves. After that convention I felt better about what we chose to do. I felt like we could actually do it (I knew my wife could do it because when she puts her mind to something she goes for it and does a great job!).

Over the past 12 years we have had many challenges but many highlights as well. I would have to say that the choice to homeschool our children was a positive one. We have learned that each child has a different learning style (My now 14 year old daughter would just sit there listening to my wife teach my son back in 2001 and she learned her letters and how to read by the age of 3 while my son is more of a hands-on kind of kid so we had to do things differently with him.) We learned that every curriculum teaches the same concepts differently and that each child likes certain curriculum better than others. We have learned that every family has a different idea of what homeschooling really is; no two families do it the same, just like no two kids learn the same.

As we have grown in our passion for homeschooling we have also developed a desire to share that passion with others in our community and our state. The last 6 years have been filled with getting involved with the North Dakota Home School Association's homeschool convention as *Vendor Hall Coordinator* and *Art Exhibit Coordinator*. We have also been involved with our local support group, R.E.A.C.H., by sitting on a panel sharing our experiences to prospective homeschoolers. We now have the privilege of helping promote our passion for homeschooling by serving the great people of North Dakota by being on the NDHSA Board.

It is our desire to help encourage people to keep going, to keep pressing forward in their homeschool adventure (and it is truly an adventure). While my wife and I will be the first to admit that we don't have it all put together, we have had many experiences and have tried many things that we feel can be helpful to many people. Just like the rest of the members of the NDHSA Board we are here to serve the people of North Dakota by sharing our experiences and encouraging those that have questions and doubts.

The best part of being part of a homeschool family though is the understanding that education doesn't just happen while in a structured setting or in a classroom. It happens every day, in the place that you are, and in any way. Whether at a grocery store and you give your kids a list of what is needed and tell them how much money they have to spend and let them shop, or while at a store and you ask your kids how much this certain item is if you have a coupon for an extra 20% off the sale price. My favorite is when your child takes the standardized achievement test and you are worried about the social studies part of the test. When you get the results back you find out that your child has done very well in that area even though you haven't done much with social studies. When you ask them how they knew so much they say, "I learned a lot by reading some extra books and then just listening to you and mom talk about things."

You will have highs and you will have lows. You will have fun and you'll want to cry. Most importantly don't ever give up on your children. Take advantage of the resources that are available to you through either the NDHSA, your local support group, or through HSLDA. Keep on going, keep pushing through and keep focusing on what God had called you and your family to do.

Tips for Successful Travel

From www.Homeschool.com: **FAMILY TRAVEL**

Join us at Homeschool.com/Travel where we will explore, with a bent towards the educational aspects of family travel. **Several times per week** we give you tips and tricks for successful travel. Read articles about stretching your dollar by traveling in off-



season. Learn about unique holidays, and how to celebrate them with travel. Investigate educational offerings in YOUR city and cities near you. Whether you are venturing down the road, across the country, or around the globe, Homeschool.com/Travel is the resource to add to your rucksack.

My name is Lesli and I'm the new Travel Editor; you can think of me as your **Tour Guide**. I'm a homeschooling mom to two young boys (and I'm a bonus mom to two teenagers, as well.) Our home base is Atlanta, GA. When we aren't on the road (10 states this year already), we're making our own cheese, raising chickens, and creating as much mischief as possible. I'm honored to be working with the Homeschool.com team and with you. I hope you will connect with the new Travel department; here are some ways to do that:

- Read articles at Homeschool.com/Travel, posted several times per week
- [Sign up](#) for Weekly Travel Updates so that articles are delivered right to your email (Travel Updates are different than Blog Reminders, so you must sign up to be added to the list!)
- Join the conversation on the new TRAVEL links at [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Homeschoolers and the Military

From Home School Legal Defense Association

New Changes to Military Enlistment for Homeschool Graduates

April 26, 2013 ... An amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act is producing good policies for homeschoolers looking to enlist in the military. [Read the entire article here: www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/201304260.asp](http://www.hslda.org/docs/news/2013/201304260.asp)
Join HSLDA today! It matters locally, nationally, and internationally: www.hslda.org

Prayer and Praise

- **Pray** for homeschool families learning about grief first-hand; pray for those who have lost spouse, parent, or child.
- **Praise** God for the ways Home School Legal Defense Assoc. has advanced homeschooling in America. **Praise** God also that HSLDA is a Capitol Hill watchdog particularly on issues about U.N. Treaties and parental rights.
- **Pray** for our board of directors: **Pas. Ken & Llor Knight, Jeff & Theresa Deckert, Pas. Jeff & Karol Kapelle, Sue Huntington, Neil Toman, Pas. Brian & Bev Skaar and Troy & Kristie Durham**. Praise God for these men and women who are servant-hearted, wise, generous in their encouragement, gracious in their lives, devout believers and live lives that mirror our dear Lord Jesus' command to love God with heart, soul and mind and love neighbors.
- **Pray** for and give **praise** for pro-life clinics in N.D. Help your local one.
- **Pray** for homeschoolers in foreign nations under hardship from their governments. **Praise** God for HSLDA's service to them.
- **Thank** God that we live in America.
- **Intercede** for moms who are exhausted, discouraged, and ready to give up homeschooling. **Ask** our dear Lord Jesus to send them a season of refreshing and renewal of purpose. Help them if you can.
- **Pray diligently** for your Pastor asking God to protect him, to give him wisdom, and to keep him unsullied by the world.

He knows exactly what He is doing. Let me remember that when I question God's dealings. I don't understand Him, but then I'm not asked to understand, only to trust. Bitterness dissolves when I remember the kind of love with which He has loved me—He gave Himself for me. He gave Himself for me. *He gave Himself for me.* Whatever He is doing now, therefore, is not cause for bitterness. It has to be designed for good, because He loves me and gave Himself for me.
Elisabeth Elliot, *Keep a Quiet Heart*

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Gail M. Biby is the publications editor for the NDHSA and has been joyfully working with parent educators for more than 20 years. She writes a regular column for *Eternal Encouragement* magazine (a magazine by and for Christian women), serves on the advisory board for Mark Hamby's Lamplighter Publishing, writes a women's newsletter for her church gals, and volunteers with Caring Hearts Jail Ministry. She lives a modestly agrarian lifestyle in the Red River Valley of the North with a prince of a man, her husband Bill, and right next door to their daughter Aimee, son-in-love, Ray, and their six children. Mrs. Biby has been homeschooling her grandchildren for more than 7 years. Oh, the stories she could tell! Contact her at: billbivy@msn.com

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NDHSA statement of faith

Trusting in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, we believe in Almighty God, the author of all creation; the Bible as the inspired Word of God, complete in 66 books and the basis of faith and practice; the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, the death of Jesus Christ for our sins, His bodily resurrection and His personal return; and regeneration by God, the Holy Spirit.

NDHSA Statement of purpose

1. Encouraging and assisting Christian families in the education of their children according to Biblical principles;
2. Providing to home educators and the general public information pertaining to the Biblical, academic and legal aspects of home education;
3. Entering into activities, in filling out contracts necessary, incidental or beneficial to the accomplishment of the nonprofit purposes of this corporation.

The Eclectic Report

Gail Biby, Editor

The Eclectic Report is published monthly by the NDHSA and is provided free to anyone who asks. The NDHSA is a Christian 501(c)(3) organization funded by the gifts of interested parties. No substantial part of the activities of the NDHSA is used for the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, promote any political campaign, or on the behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Legal

advice concerning homeschooling, contact Dewitt Black, HSLDA attorney of reference, if you are a member family, or contact an attorney familiar with homeschool law. Any comments or opinions are those of the editor and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NDHSA board or staff members. Bylined articles ditto! Advertisements likewise. If you have something that may be of interest to homeschoolers, or if you have comments or corrections, send them to the editor at billbivy@msn.com.

www.ndhsa.org

office@ndhsa.org

Not a member yet of NDHSA? Family membership fee only \$35. Once you have given your tithes and offerings to your local church, why not consider a donation to the NDHSA. All funds are used to continue the work of the Association and will be used with great frugality and wisdom. But even if God doesn't lead you to donate, we hope that you will pray for the work of the NDHSA, the board of directors, and staff. **CHECK OUT NEW features at our website.**

Join Home School Legal Defense Association to protect your right to homeschool in North Dakota and to support their work for us on Capitol Hill. Go to: www.hslda.org Receive an HSLDA discount if a member family of the NDHSA.

Membership MATTERS!