

More Power to Washington

- **Another Federal Takeover:** The Obama Administration's push for national standards is a federal overreach into yet another sector of American life. Banking, auto manufacturing, health care, and now education will be guided more by Washington's priorities than by the needs of the American people.
- **Rushed, and Without Public Debate:** This unprecedented federal overreach is taking place without Congress's—and citizens'—voices being heard. The Administration is moving as quickly as possible to get states to adopt national standards by August 2—before the next school year even begins.
- **Empowering Bureaucrats, not Parents:** National standards would give the federal government more power over education at the expense of parents and communities. Instead of petitioning their local school boards, parents would have to trek to Washington to lobby D.C. bureaucrats on their children's education.

National Standards and Educational Mediocrity

- **Standardizing Mediocrity:** Some argue that national standards are necessary because state standards vary in quality. But the same pressures that detract from the quality of many state standards are likely to plague national standards and would be entrenched in a less-responsive and less-accountable federal bureaucracy. As a result, the rigor and content of national standards would tend toward the average among states, undercutting states with higher quality standards like Massachusetts, California, and Virginia.



*National Standards =
National Mediocrity*

- **Educational Mediocrity Coming to a School Near You:** Curricula is typically designed around standards and tests. With the federal government now backing national standards and tests through federal funding, Washington is becoming increasingly involved in what ultimately determines curriculum. As a result, national standards would increase conformity in education, which would fail to meet the diverse learning needs of children.

A Better Plan for Raising Academic Achievement

- **Encourage School Transparency:** Some argue that standards are necessary so that parents can understand how their children compare to other students across the country. But the meaningful information that parents need is already available. What has been missing in some cases are clear reporting of data to parents and the ability of parents to act on it.
- **Empower Parents:** Information is useful to parents only when they can act on it. Empowering parents to hold schools accountable through school choice is a crucial element in improving educational outcomes. The U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Educational Sciences, for example, recently released a study on the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program that found important benefits in graduation rates and parental satisfaction.

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