



The Idaho Observer

“Students Come First” Coming September 2012 . . . unless we stop it.

By: Anne Wilder-Chamberlain, Idaho-Observer.com

On April 18, 2012, at a school board meeting in a rural town in Idaho, the technology department gave a presentation of its plans for School-year 2012-13, in adherence with the Idaho Department of Education/Bill Gates Foundation “Students Come First” Education Plan passed by Idaho legislature and 47 other states around the nation. In order to continue to receive federal funds, schools must comply with national assessment tracking and CCSSI, the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The program presented to the school board put into black and white what this program is expected to look like.

The Idaho Department of Education website, <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/studentsComeFirst/> states, “Technology for All: Through Students Come First, we will ensure a 1:1 ratio of students to computers in high schools so teachers can incorporate more technology into the learning process... It could be any mobile computing device such as an iPad or tablet PC, like a Nook, Kindle, etc.

“Beginning in 2012, we [i.e. the taxpayers] will invest in a mobile computing device for every 9th grader, including all the necessary tech support, maintenance and security. Within four years, every high school student will have one of these devices. Districts will develop local usage policies that will decide whether the students can take the devices home...

“Many concerns have been raised about care of the mobile computing device. ... if a student maliciously damages the device, then consequences will be considered, and the student may not be granted a new one... Parents will not be responsible for any costs associated with the device... Many have also asked about internet security. The state will embed requirements in the contract (as Maine does) to provide Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliant filtering software on all devices that will be enabled from any location... [emphasis added]

“The state will invest \$6,000 per classroom in technology...”

The presentation of “technology for all” included a report of GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs - a US Department of Education and Defense grant program to promote college readiness) funds used to purchase 21 iPods and iPads to teach Common Core Standards. The district plans to buy 19 more. They are used for student data collection, to monitor progress, and to help the disabled, especially those who don’t talk. The Plan calls for preschoolers and small children to have iPods and “iPad Touches.” A video was shown of a child of 7 or 8 with an iPad. He touches “I like books” and “pages” come up on the electronic device. The child can point to the device and read aloud and it will tell him if he is correct. Or he can choose to have the iPad read to him. These “book” applications sell for \$1.99 each.

The Plan provides 20 iPods and 10 iPads per classroom. Everything is connected to one school district tracking system. Students can access through their smart phones, SCF laptops, or Kindles. The system’s Voice Over Internet Protocol can contact parents by name. These computers will be replaced every 5 years, on a rotating basis – 1/5 of them each year.

Asked about privacy issues, board members were told that the programmers are looking to change district policy so audio recording of students is okay. “We will control what students are watching with system monitors. All units will have GPS so if they leave school grounds they can be found. Sets will be assigned to teachers. If a student or teacher wants to use his own iPad, he can log his iPad into the system, which will be under control of WBC Schools. The police are already asking to be brought in to the system.”

Textbooks are being phased out. Textbooks will be disposable workbooks to go with the device programs, and will have to be in compliance with Common Core Standards. Students will be one on one with their mobile devices as recommended by the State Plan.

The program continued with a demonstration of longitudinal tracking of Common Core Standards. 2500 ISATs (Idaho Standards Achievement Test) are given each year. The new technology scores them and returns the scores to the teachers overnight, assessing by “points” how “weak” the student is on each subject, and how much teacher assistance he must receive to attain the expected standard. If the student has already reached or progressed beyond the standard, his score is “0”. That means, in the areas in which the student excels, the teacher needs to focus somewhere else.

This is all in cohesion with “No Child Left Behind,” the failed Bush education plan continued by Obama. Critical thinking and focusing on students’ areas of expertise are completely abandoned with this program. The CCSSI Education System works to turn our unique children into homogenous techno-robots in the computer matrix called Public Education. Add to this Channel One NBC News, sponsored by the Pentagon and Alloy Media and Marketing, providing one TV for every 23 Jr. Hi and high school students in 8000 schools nationwide, - with the requirement that they must watch a 12-minute “news” program daily - and we have Brave New World on steroids.

I would rather my four-year-old stacked building blocks and played in the dirt with bugs and dandelions; my eight-year-old had hands-on experience with growing vegetables; my high-schooler participated in political debates with his peers; and all my children knew that a book is something made out of paper and ink that you cuddle up with mom to read at night before going to bed. Adults and teens alike are addicted to video games, text messaging, and Smart Phones. They no longer connect with the world outside of their technology. I was told recently that employers prefer not to hire people under 50 because they do not know how to relate to people face-to-face, and cannot make it to work on time.

What will we be teaching our children with this Plan? Is this truly where we want our tax dollars to go?

