

CSCOPE: Exposing the Nation's Most Controversial Public School Curriculum System

Mar 7, 2013 7:50pm [Tiffany Gabbay](#)

In February, Texas announced that the state, along with the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum (TESCCC,) would enact major changes to the controversial curriculum management system dubbed CSCOPE. The system received a litany of complaints from faculty members and parents alike concerning its lack of transparency (parents were allegedly not permitted to review lesson-plans), lack of oversight from the State Board of Education, and for allegedly imposing oppressive working conditions for faculty members.

CSCOPE was created so that teachers could frame their year around teaching points required by the state. Lessons, which are written by CSCOPE staff and current and former teachers, can be updated and delivered online, making it more cost-effective than standard textbooks.

To note just how off-color some of the CSCOPE curriculum is, consider that the Texas CSCOPE Review, an independent watchdog group [uncovered](#) an out-of-date, optional CSCOPE lesson-plan on terrorism — "World History Unit 12 Lesson 07" — which allegedly likens the Boston Tea Party to "an act of terrorism."

The system also recently asked students to [design a flag for a new socialist nation](#).

To glean greater insight, Glenn Beck invited special guests David Barton and Pat Gray, along with teachers Mary Bowen, Stan Hartzler and Texas State Sen. Dan Patrick to discuss what is truly going on within their state's education system.

Barton explained that CSCOPE is referred to as "instructional material" and not "curriculum," therefore is not subject to regulation by the State Board of Education. The historian also brought in artifacts of Texas public school curriculum to showcase just how different it is today and to mark, year-by-year, the increasing application of political correctness in lesson plans.

Using a chart, Barton documented and mapped out core CSCOPE material, which eliminates national values, Americanism or rather, American exceptionalism, the study of federalism and majority rule (the core of our constitution) along with patriotic symbols like the Liberty Bell, Christopher Columbus, Rosh Hashanah and Christmas are all relegated to the dustbin along with American military history. Equality and a belief in justice is replaced by "fairness" and instruction on American propaganda and imperialism.

Disturbingly, Beck and Barton noted that the worst is yet to come. Showcasing a lesson plan for grades 1-3, Barton revealed CSCOPE's list of "heroes," which comprises a dozen secular progressives and only three conservatives or political moderates.

According to a previous [report](#) from TheBlaze, teachers complained that they were expected to deliver the curriculum verbatim and only on days allotted by the CSCOPE lesson plan. Even if students were unable to

absorb the lesson, teachers were allegedly directed to progress to the next lesson regardless. TheBlaze also reported that teachers were “asked to sign a contract that would prevent them from revealing what was in the CSCOPE lessons or face civil and criminal penalties.”

The controversial program’s website states that CSCOPE is a comprehensive online curriculum management system developed and owned by the Texas Education Service Center Curriculum Collaborative (TESCCC), a consortium composed of the 20 ESCs in the state.” It goes on to explain that the CSCOPE system provides curriculum framework for grades kindergarten through 12 across a broad range of subject areas.

The online description might raise red flags for some when it states that the CSCOPE content is regularly updated based on, among other criteria, “feedback collected through various stakeholder groups in the collaborative, including individual teacher submissions through the CSCOPE website and the School District Advisory Committee, comprised of district representatives from all participating regions of the state.”

What, or rather *who*, comprises CSCOPE’s collaborative and stakeholder groups? That question and a myriad others are what critics hope to get to the bottom of.

But while the groups to which CSCOPE appears relatively beholden may sound alarms for critics, the actual researchers CSCOPE credits with providing the basis for its curriculum seem to be formidable industry veterans by and large. Those educators include Robert Marzano, Fenwick English, John Crain, Heidi Hayes Jacobs, Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe, H. Lynn Erickson, and James Barufaldi.

CSCOPE has been adopted by some 75 percent of Texas schools and the aim was to implement a national adoption of the management system. However, CSCOPE reportedly refused when Common Core Standards sought to purchase the system as the national curriculum standard. It is by far and away, one of the more hotly contested topics in the current education debate and much mystery still remains as to CSCOPE’s core tenets.

Beck noted that secular progressivism, further, the notion of communal life and collectivism, is at the system’s core. Other points of contention concerning CSCOPE curriculum include lesson-plans positing that Christopher Columbus was an “eco-warrior” and, when referring to the famed explorer’s journal, all references to God and Christendom were removed.

Students are also posed with hypothetical scenarios concerning historical figures and have allegedly been asked to take a position on population growth. Students were even subject to a lesson framed around the idea that “Christianity was a cult,” Beck noted.

CSCOPE’s director, Wade Labay has defended his curriculum and maintained that controversy has stemmed from misconceptions.” For instance, he said that framing the Boston Tea Party as an act of terrorism was merely one teacher’s way to engage students in the day’s lesson.

State Sen. Patrick, who chairs the Senate Education Committee, has led the CSCOPE hearings, bringing the controversial system to public light. He pushed CSCOPE to allow parents to view curriculum and to lift gag-orders on teachers. Patrick explained his experience bringing CSCOPE to task and revealed what he believes is in store

for his state.

Hartzler, who taught math for nearly four decades, retired early because of CSCOPE. He said that he was written nearly a dozen times for not following the system's lesson plan and maintains that CSCOPE is dumbing-down American students. He said he tried his best to follow the lesson plans, but simply could not.

Bowen, who is currently forced to use CSCOPE in her school district, feels that schools are now more like factories that send children out into the real world from an assembly-line that has not even given them the basics. She spoke to Beck despite the fact that CSCOPE had set up disciplinary consequences for doing so.

Bowen said that the lessons were mediocre at best, often "riddled with errors" and that "tests were invalid."

"There's tremendous coercion. It's an incredibly oppressive environment." She added that there have been teachers who were fired for speaking out to the school board.

Bowen also explained that teachers spend "one out of every five" days testing students, and that those tests provide data for the government's use.

When asked what they tell parents who are inquisitive about their child's lesson-plans, Hartzler said he violated his gag-order "right away." He said he showed the parents why the students were struggling and where they should go from that point on.

Beck said that President Obama will look to move forward with implementing CSCOPE or such systems within a short time-frame. The panel said concerned Americans should send letters to the Attorney General and that emergency legislation should be enacted to help teachers push back.



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