

Testimony of Franklin Mayo before the Senate Committee on Education, 1/31/13

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Honorable Senators,

I drove over from Houston this morning to represent Texans for Better Science Education and express our concern over the new curriculum and curriculum management system call CSCOPE. No doubt there could be some useful aspects of systems like CSCOPE but there are some major problems as well. **The two biggest problems are the almost total lack of transparency and the avoidance of public review by the SBOE.**

Public education is the essential foundation of a productive and proactive society. Public education is the key to the future wellbeing of our young people and the wellbeing of our society as a whole and that can hardly be overemphasized.

Likewise, **transparency** is the essential foundation of good government. History proves that without transparency we create an incubator for all of the negative sides of human nature to run amuck. Without the public ability to examine what is going on, public servants succumb to the temptation to take shortcuts and grab improper advantages. It is rather apparent that CSCOPE has gone in this direction already. Unless the legislature requires transparency in all that CSCOPE does, we can expect CSCOPE to continue to become an ever stronger magnet for special interests, personal gain, and simple corruption. That would be an intolerable situation; the very opposite of either good government or good education.

Please note that textbook publishers are well able to protect their materials with copyrights without any need to keep their texts secret. There is no real reason CSCOPE cannot do the same.

Another foundation of good government is **public involvement in review processes**. Texas has an excellent system of curriculum and standards review where everyone interested has ample opportunity to examine proposed materials and submit their concerns for consideration. Public review may seem like a rather messy process sometimes but it has yielded many good things ensuring that no one special interest gain too much control. The CSCOPE system seems somehow to have bypassed the SBOE review process. I want to ask you to make sure that CSCOPE curriculum content is brought under the public review and approval process of the SBOE.

Note also that all of our society is *strongly impacted* by the quality of our education system and all of our society *pays* for our education system, so therefore, all society must have the right to examine the curriculum and standards, not just current parents.

In summary:

Please require transparency to the public of all aspects of CSCOPE form the finances, to management system to the curriculum content itself.

Please bring the curriculum content under the public review and approval process of the SBOE the same as any other curriculum source.