

PRO PARAGRAPH:

The argument for Independent Schools to adopt Common Core standards in Mathematics relies on the power of information to inform instruction and learning. One argument is based on standardization. Incorporating Common Core allows independent schools to demonstrate the success of math instruction and outcomes against nationally accepted norms using well researched standards. Furthermore, the Common Core standards can be used as minimum standards which schools aim to exceed. Secondly, adopting Common Core allows Independent Schools to use assessments that are well regulated, research based. These assessments can be viewed as formative for such schools, and meaningful data can be analyzed to better evaluate the learning that occurs in mathematics in Independent Schools. Finally, the Common Core standards for mathematics are deeply aligned with the 21st century skills that are the hallmarks of current Independent School focus. Though the reputation of Common Core may be one of routinization and high stakes testing, the standards themselves are valuable guidelines for the construction of a comprehensive, deep and ultimately successful program in mathematics.

CON PARAGRAPH:

By contrast, the major arguments against adopting the Common Core in independent schools involve concerns about autonomy and assessment. A national program of this kind demands that certain concepts and skills be taught by a certain time and that this knowledge be demonstrated in a particular way. So much of the value of an independent school is that fact that it offers an alternative for those students and families who find that large-scale schooling does not reach them. Just as many college students thrive on personal interaction with professors in a small, liberal arts setting, many high school students respond to a curriculum dictated by a teacher who knows best how they learn and who has the autonomy to design learning tasks suited to unique set of minds in front of her. In addition, national standardized tests continually come under fire as being poor indicators of a student's knowledge or growth. Teaching to a test would not inspire the curiosity and thorough investigation that leads to true subject mastery; instead, such an approach would promote anxiety and a focus on guessing which questions will be asked on such a test. True education inspires students to develop proper habits of mind that lead to lifelong learning, and a short-term focus on a test counteracts such development by valuing extrinsic over intrinsic measures.

References

- Boaler, J. (2013, November 12). The stereotypes that distort how Americans teach and learn math. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/11/the-stereotypes-that-distort-how-americans-teach-and-learn-math/281303/>
- Boaler, J. (2014, July 12). *Why we need Common Core math* [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://youcubed.stanford.edu/why-we-need-common-core-math/>
- Common Core talking points* [ASCD Policy Points]. (2014, May). Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/publications/policypoints/Common-Core-Talking-Points-May-14.pdf>
- Gamoran, A., Nystrand, M., Berends, M., & LePore, P. C. (1995). An organizational analysis of the effects of ability grouping. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(4), 687-715.
- Garland, S. (2014, March 26). Why is this Common Core math problem so hard? Supporters respond to quiz that went viral [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://hechingerreport.org/common-core-math-problem-hard-supporters-common-core-respond-problematic-math-quiz-went-viral/>
- Garland, S. (2014, December 29). The man behind Common Core math [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/12/29/371918272/the-man-behind-common-core-math>
- Higham, M. (2013, June 17). 5 arguments in support of Common Core standards. Retrieved from <http://ivn.us/2013/06/17/5-arguments-in-support-of-common-core-standards/>
- Long, C. (2013, May 10). Six ways the Common Core is good for students. Retrieved from <http://neatoday.org/2013/05/10/six-ways-the-common-core-is-good-for-students-2/>

Rubin, C. M. (2013, February 4). The global search for education: If not the SAT, what?

Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/c-m-rubin/the-global-search-for-edu_60_b_2611982.html

Tienken, C. H., & Zhao, Y. (2010). Common Core National Curriculum standards: more questions ... and answers [Editorial]. *Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 6(4).

http://www.aasa.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/Journals/AASA_Journal_of_Scholarship_and_Practice/Winter_10_FINAL.pdf

Zhao, Y. (2012, June 17). Common sense vs. Common Core: How to minimize the damages of the Common Core [Blog post]. Retrieved from

<http://zhaolearning.com/2012/06/17/common-sense-vs-common-core-how-to-minimize-the-damages-of-the-common-core/>

Zhao, Y. (2013, January 2). Five questions to ask about the Common Core [Blog post]. Retrieved

from <http://zhaolearning.com/2013/01/02/five-questions-to-ask-about-the-common-core/>