

STAFF EDITORIAL

SHOULD CALIFORNIA CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS?

In 2010, the California State Board of Education unanimously voted to adopt the Common Core State Standards and implement it into California's state curriculum. Created with the belief that the academic progress of the nation had stagnated, Common Core was designed to define a higher set of academic standards, particularly for mathematics and English language arts/literacy. This proposal claimed to prepare students for college and the workplace by probing higher-level thought and problem-solving. Under Common Core's expectations, coursework would emphasize research, evidence-based learning, and clear and understandable instruction, and build upon the strengths and lessons of prior state standards.

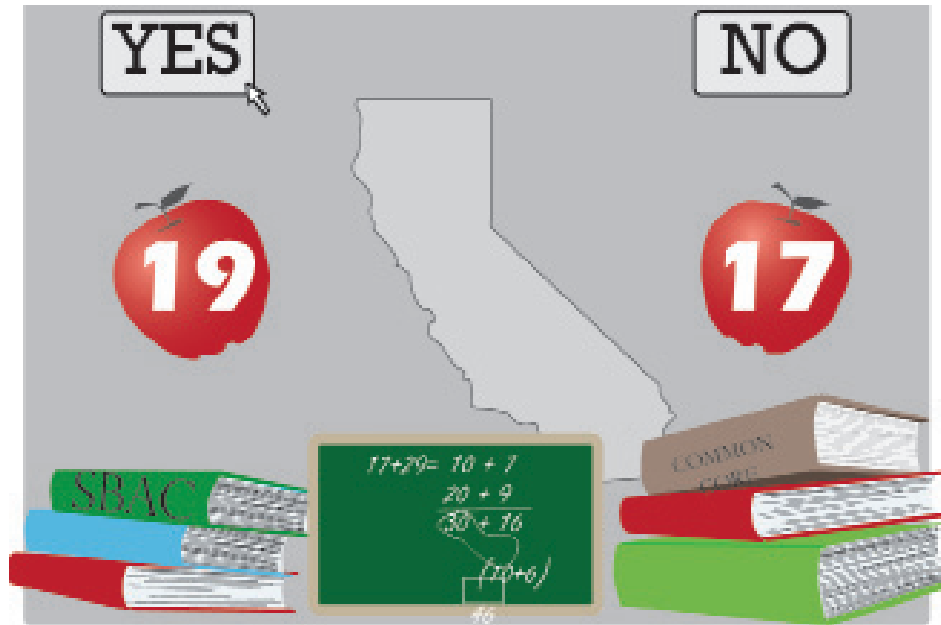
Though the program was a state-led initiative, many states were essentially coerced into using these standards by being offered federal assistance in return for complying with Common Core. However, recent legislation has prohibited the federal government from pushing forth a national curriculum with material incentives. In light of that fact, California should consider whether or not it should continue to integrate Common Core into its education as funding cannot be withheld. Because Common Core is relatively new, educators are having difficulty weighing its benefits

and consequences. There are no real results that can prove that students who undergo a Common Core curriculum as opposed to a traditional one will have higher chances of

success in their careers. Furthermore, the process of moving from California's old standards to the Common Core standards has been lengthy and grueling, at least at the high school level. Nevertheless, Common Core seems to be having a smooth transition

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tion and ability to support a coherent argument, teachers are simply building upon the topics they have already been stressing. Conversely, the new standards have forced some instructors in the math department to slow their classes' pace in order to accommodate the concepts stressed in Common Core as opposed to those emphasized in the previous curriculum. Offering integrated math classes alongside the traditional Geometry, Algebra 2 and Precalculus/Trigonometry classes has frustrated many math teachers who now have to teach material they previously did not have to. Despite these grievances, focusing on fundamental concepts from a young age allows students to adapt better to their coursework as they enter more advanced classes. Another item to consider is that any opposition to Common Core can simply be attributed to the difficulty that comes with change. Since Common Core was created using international standards, many Americans are unaccustomed to its learning methods. However, this can also be seen as a positive movement that would make our nation more competitive on the global scale. Regardless of the controversies that have arisen from implementing Common Core, it is certain that California cannot determine if the claims made about the program are true until at least another decade has passed. California's final decision lies in the length of time it will take for students and teachers to adapt to Common Core and whether or not the wait for improvements will prove itself to be worthwhile.



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THREE CHEERS FOR SPIRIT WEEKS

EVA ORTEGA Staff Writer

Before we all left to enjoy our Thanksgiving break, ASB decided to hold a Class Spirit Week. As usual, many Moors came to school decked out in their class color and participated in the lunch games held in the Quad each day, but have spirit weeks reached the point where they are downright repetitive? It is easy to argue that over time, spirit weeks have consisted of the same boring topics. We are all very familiar with Twin Day, Mix and Match Day and Class Color Day; the list goes on, up until the point where spirit weeks have seemed to have lost their excitement. However, spirit weeks form a unique bond within the student body and help students reduce stress from the daily routine of classes and school work.

With AHS students currently working to overcome their latest finals, no student is oblivious to the stress that comes from school work. According to the Huffington Post, stress can actually be beneficial to

a person's work ethic. However, an overload of stress can often leave students feeling overwhelmed. Therefore, spirit weeks provide much needed fun and lightheartedness to ease the tension that comes from heavy amounts of school work.

By choosing to hold spirit weeks, ASB is keeping in mind the well-being of students. It is important that, as a school, we find effective ways to maintain student happiness and well-being, and one way is through spirit weeks.

By participating in these school activities students also feel like they are a part of something. Whether it be participating in a fun game of musical chairs in the Quad, putting on a matching goofy outfit with your best friend, or coming to school covered in blue and gold face paint, spirit weeks instill pride within our school. They also bring out a sense of unity and belonging that most of us did not even know we had until we realized we all share a common trait, our loyalty to AHS.

MOOR graphics by LESLIE HWANG

Mentoring Programs Should Be Provided In All High Schools

CRYSTAL CHEAH Staff Writer

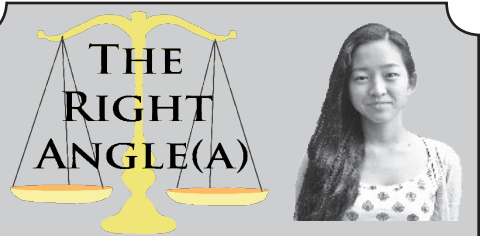
A report by Alliance for Excellent Education shows that 80.9 percent of high school students are able to pass their classes and graduate on time. Yet there are some students who are at risk of dropping out. The factors that cause this problem often include not having someone to care for these under-performing students and guide them through areas they need help on.

Seeing as mentoring can satisfy these conditions and raise graduation rates, schools should recruit mentors or work with a community organization that sponsors volunteer programs to help students.

Mentors and teachers have different roles. A mentor focuses on the person and supports individual growth while a teacher is job-focused and performance-oriented. Mentors let students discover their own directions instead of guiding them through problems like some teachers do.

According to educational psychologist Dr. Nigel Mellor, teenagers usually cause trouble in order to get attention from adults. As teachers are unable to look after every student at the same time, a mentoring program can help provide students opportunity to find someone who is concerned about their performance in school and makes them feel like they matter. When youths are assured that they are not abandoned, they will improve their behavior and thus lower the risk of being expelled.

Mentoring is needed and wanted by young people to help them stay on the path to high school graduation. When teens do not understand a subject, they might feel disappointed in themselves and would want to stop trying after a few attempts. Adult mentors can help out by assisting them with difficult courses and making them believe in themselves again.



New Year, Slightly Different Me

ANGELA YANG Editor in Chief

Iconic singer Britney Spears once said, "Now I'm stronger than yesterday; now it's nothing but my way." As we enter the new year, I'm keeping Britney's words close to heart. After all, this will be a year of many new experiences: from graduation, adjusting to a new campus and even being able to vote.

Even if New Year's resolutions don't always work out, I know that one thing I can always count on is myself. Even if a New Year's resolution seems unattainable, I know that I can count on my own determination to carry it through. If there's anything I dislike more than cheesy resolutions to better oneself, it's failing to follow through with said cheesy resolutions.

While it would be very typical (and very easy) for me to disparage New Year's resolutions, I cannot ignore what it fundamentally says about us as human beings: we understand that we are not perfect. We acknowledge and address our faults, in turn searching for ways to improve upon ourselves. So maybe it's the excitement from watching the Times Square Ball drop, or just the chance for a fresh start, but I find myself invigorated by the fact that I know 2016 holds many new experiences in store. And if not that, then I hold myself secure in the knowledge that no matter what happens, I have three things to rely on. First, that I will always have the opportunity to watch the New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square. Second, that my ability to dream big won't hinder my abilities, but rather enhance them. And lastly, that Britney Spears will always hold a special place in my heart, no matter the year or even the decade.