

# Features

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## THE CORE FOUNDATION OF EDUCATION

Designed by teachers, school officials, administrators and other experts, Common Core is a set of national academic standards that has been implemented throughout the nation. In 2009, the state school chiefs and governors coordinated a state-led effort to create the Common Core Standards as a way to address the need for consistent learning goals throughout the United States. However, it is not the first education act to be introduced in the U.S. and like many other acts, Common Core has its benefits and downsides.

"Common Core puts so much pressure on teachers to get the students ready for the standardized testing that it becomes all they have time for." -Nelly Avendano, junior

"I think that overall, it [will] benefit the kids [who] just started school, but hurts the older students, like us, [who have] been used to the old system for so long." -Johnathan Chan, freshman

JACQUELYN LOI STAFF WRITER

### Reach For Moor With Common Core

Ellen Lei Staff Writer

Alhambra High, along with other schools, recently switched to Common Core. Although it seems strange to suddenly switch our academic standards to Common Core, believe it or not, it is helping you. Common Core prepares students for the road ahead of them.

Education plays a huge role in a student's future. Requirements for entering colleges are mainly based on grades and standardized test scores. According to US News, many students in America have fallen behind in academics, making it harder for them to get accepted to the colleges they apply to. Common Core was created to help ensure success in college after high school graduation.

Instead of having vague instructions that do not focus on concepts that will be useful in the future, Common Core establishes clear, consistent guidelines and focuses on analysis, critical thinking and problem solving. This will train students to have better problem solving skills and increased reasoning. It also provides students with a genuine learning experience. Previously, students could answer questions by guessing or searching for it online. With Common Core implemented, students must show how they got their answers and explain why their answer is correct.

Communication is essential in relaying ideas to come to a mutual understanding. Common Core focuses on collaboration with other students in group projects or discussions. This allows students to broaden their prowess in communication.

Common Core is helping students in several ways. It prepares students for the future by improving their problem solving and analysis abilities, which gives them experience communicating ideas with others. Switching to Common Core is a step towards increased future success for students.

"[Common Core] really puts emphasis on learning, remembering and expanding the core principles of math, English and sciences. However, the whole situation feels forced and rushed, placing an entirely new system onto new high schoolers, [...] making it difficult to succeed." -Jesse Hernandez, sophomore

### Pros and Cons of Common Core

PROS

CONS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With the new system, written answers in math and English are required, which hones students' writing ability.</li> <li>The new system allows comparisons between states because they have one unified set of standards.</li> <li>The Common Core system emphasizes evaluating and analyzing, rather than just identifying, so students will do more critical thinking.</li> <li>Tests and assignments are more unified, so we do not need different assignments or tests for the same material covered.</li> <li>Various learning materials are put together to help students learn more in less time.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both the materials and the ways of teaching are changed, so teachers and students need time to adjust.</li> <li>Many of the old materials will be replaced and new online assessment are needed, which adds to the financial cost of the school.</li> <li>The Common Core standards only pertain to mathematics and language arts.</li> <li>Teachers are often pulled out of class for training, so substitutes will be needed, meaning more financial costs for the schools.</li> <li>The words addressing the standards are too complex, making it hard for some students and parents to understand.</li> </ul> |
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Yi-Feng Ho Staff Writer

### Education in 'Act'ion

Besides the Common Core State Standards Initiative, which is known by schools for how much of a change it has brought to our educational system, there are many more acts that have impacted our schools greatly. Some of these laws are considered to be helpful toward the good of the students, while many others are not and will be soon replaced.

One of the more well-known acts is the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, signed into law by President Bush on Jan. 8, 2002. The purpose of NCLB is to increase the academic achievement of all students through methods such as funding teacher training and having additional testings. For example, this act calls for mandatory annual exams in reading and mathematics for students in grades three to eight; in California, this test is known as the California Standards Test (CST). Unfortunately, the act is considered a "failure" according to an analysis from the American Educational Research Association; it drastically narrows our curriculum and causes an increase in dropout rate in schools. In response, the US Department of Education issued the Student Success Act.

In early 2012, the House of Education and the Workforce Committee introduced the Student Success Act, an act that aims to provide funding flexibility to states and local school districts and limit federal intervention in local school policies. In addition, parents of the students are empowered as the act ensures that "every dollar spent makes a direct and lasting impact for students," according to House Speaker Johnson Boehner.

It is quite certain that more acts will be issued in efforts to reform US education. Acts that shift powers, increase funding and raise the standards are to be somewhat beneficial; however, acts such as NCLB are on the verge of being overruled for their flaws. Although more is yet to be done on our education system, we can fortunately see the efforts from our government.

Jason Zhu

Staff Writer

Quotes compiled by Crystal Cheah

MOOR graphics by SAMMIE CHEN

#### THE MOOR WEEKLY

101 South Second Street, Alhambra, CA 91801

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