



The Messenger

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Minnesota Association of Christian Schools

Let's Even the Score with the Common Core

Many of our parents have asked about the Common Core. Even amongst educators, the Common Core is quite confusing. I have summarized some general information about this important topic after doing some general research. Our school's position on the Common Core is to remain steadfast on a curriculum-driven program which will remain as it has. The academic success we have realized will not be compromised in any way.

What is Common Core?

Common Core is the identification grade by grade, of all learning objectives for mathematics and English. This is a centralized effort for the sole purpose of



equalizing all learning so that benchmarks can be set for learning expectations by grade. The rationale is that by controlling benchmarks (objectives), students will progress appropriately and graduation rates will increase as well as preparation for college readiness.

Is Common Core a State-Led Effort?

Common Core has been sold to us as a state-led effort, but was initiated by private interests without any representation from the states.

States, however, can choose to adopt the standards, but most states have simply accepted the standards because federal grants and funding have been tied to the acceptance of those standards. Only four states initially rejected Common Core. "No Child Left Behind" Waivers have been tied to the acceptance of Common Core in states and the waivers have been necessary because states were not able to meet the 100% proficiency requirements in math and reading by the end of 2014. Common Core was written predominately by Achieve, Inc., a DC-based nonprofit. Massive funding has come from private interests such as the Gates Foundation.

Do states Ultimately Have Control to Change Common Core Objectives?

No. The federal government has been deeply involved in meetings which established the Common Core and has poured millions of dollars into national testing efforts which will align with the Common Core. States may add to the objectives, but the core will stand and drive curriculum choices and national testing will determine college-readiness and most likely federal educational funding to the states.

Are the Objectives Solid Educational Objectives?

It depends who you ask. If you go to the James B. Hunt, Jr. Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy's website, "Yes." But if you consider the growing numbers of bills that will be introduced in the states to pause or stop the Common Core, you would have to

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say, “No.” There are significant changes in what our kids will learn from the simplification of math learning objectives to significant changes in literature. While it appears there is a huge effort to increase critical thinking in the Common Core, the changes have caused educational leadership in many states to take a serious look at the Common Core.

Common Core's Origin

The movement toward centralized education has been on the liberal agenda for decades. President Bush Sr., back in 1989, called the governors of the states together to address the issue of our failing educational system. Eight major reforms dubbed the National Educational Goals were written and were to be enforced by the year 2000. President Clinton took the ball and ran with it, passing Goals 2000: Educate America Act. This act empowered a small group of people, the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC) to review and approve national standards paving the way for what we are dealing with today. But this sweeping legislation was halted by Congress and four bills were written, which if not passed, would have killed the legislation. You see, the majority of Congress several decades ago, valued the states controlling education. They did not want a centralized power (the federal government) having control of what our kids learned. The states fought for and maintained, at least for a short time, autonomous power over the education of its children.

What is Content Control?

If you control the content, you shape the worldview. So the



philosophical discussion, which must be considered, is not necessarily what will our kids learn in math or English, but how will they think? When one entity has power over the content of education, that power directs the philosophy or

worldview behind education for the next generation. The centralization of education through national standards in curriculum and testing will only result in a loss of liberties and will mandate teaching that will undermine the beliefs of our homes. Common Core is a movement toward the content control of education.

What is the Fuss Over Standardization of Testing in the Common Core?

Standardized testing should never drive content and learning, yet that is already the result of the implementation of the Common Core. Public school teachers are so concerned about student performance in math and language arts that we are seeing incessant pre-testing, testing and test prep taking place in our classrooms today. There is an over-emphasis on testing results in the Common Core. Teachers are frantically trying to prepare students for success. Yet, we believe that education is best accomplished when curriculum drives education, not standards and assessment. This is a huge philosophical change as a result of the Common Core. SAT testing has changed their college entrance exam to align with the Common Core and will abolish their K-12 Achievement testing program. ACT has not made any changes yet and is waiting to decide if they will rewrite their test.

The Liberation of the States – State Action is Demonstrating the Reality of the Common Core Objectives!

Across the country, states are beginning to wake up! Indiana and most recently, Missouri blocked the implementation of the Common Core in their states by passing legislation which pauses the Common Core and allows for the states to do adequate study. Debates are raging in Louisiana, Kansas, Alabama, and South Carolina. Four states initially refused to accept the Common Core: Texas, Nebraska, Alaska, and Virginia. Even our own liberal Minnesota rejected the Common Core Math Standards.

Please watch the following clip for a three-minute explanation of the Common Core from the supporter's side. It will reveal the real reason for it. Go to <http://vimeo.com/51933492>.

Could This Be the Real Reason Behind the Common Core?

In our Postmodern culture, we seem to be so determined to equalize opportunity for all that we will force an already failing secular educational system to dumb down its teaching at the expense of the majority of our students! In order to show favorable statistics, we will go to the extent of modifying our testing programs to reflect those changes so that, statistically, scores will increase and we look as if we are competing with other regions within our nation and around the world. From what I can see, the Common Core movement is nothing more than a centralized effort to bridge the achievement gap at any cost. This is not going to benefit any of our students. It will only drive down academic achievement and dumb our system further.

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**“The
FEDERAL TAKEOVER
involved NO TEACHER,
or PARENT INPUT.”**

- The Huffington Post

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The truth is that achievement testing publishers like ACT, SAT, and Iowa Test of Basic Skills have traditionally shown us what the benchmarks are for each grade level already. Credible curriculum writers and publishers have done excellent work in outlining learning objectives, course outlines, and scope and sequences so that we could track and plan how our students should progress through their school years. Is there really a need to create national standards that will only dumb down our educational system, bog down our districts with additional costs, and introduce further indoctrination of extra-academic teaching?

Common Core is bad for American education. Every state in the United States, should follow the lead of Indiana and pass a “Pause” bill to examine whether their state learning objectives match up with the existing Common Core objectives. Governor Mike Pence said it well: “I have long

believed that education is a state and local function and we must always ensure that our students are being taught to the highest academic standards and that our curriculum is developed by Hoosiers, for Hoosiers... The legislation I sign today hits the pause button on Common Core so Hoosiers can thoroughly evaluate which standards will best serve the interests of our kids.”

Might I add, let’s not just hit the pause button, there’s another button on far right bottom corner of my keyboard and its name is “Delete.”

-Alan J. Hodak *Administrator*, Fourth Baptist Christian School & *Executive Director*, MN Association of Christian Schools (MACS)



MACS Spring & Summer 2015 Calendar

April 10 – MACS Fine Arts Festival at Fourth Baptist

April 10 – MACS Annual Meeting at Fourth Baptist

May 8 – Granite City Baptist Annual Track Meet, St. Cloud



Summer Sports Camps (open to all MACS schools)

June 8—12 Basketball Camps at Fourth Baptist (grades 3—12)

Aug 3—7 Volleyball/Soccer Camps at Fourth Baptist (grades 3—12)

Contact ahodak@fourthbaptist.org for more information.



Education Update: MN Department of Education – Early Learning Grants

Not on anyone's radar, MN won the Early Learning Grant several years ago. Millions of dollars have been awarded to our state and many scholarships have been granted to private and public preschools particularly in disadvantaged areas. Children may receive state scholarships to pay for early childhood education in our state. The goal of the Obama Early Learning Grants? Get our children as early as possible in the government educational system.

Much like the Common Core's centralized learning objectives, the Early Learning Grant stipulations require that ECIP's or Early Childhood Indicators of Progress are written by our state that measures six domains of development. We have found out that the first two domains have been completed that cover the areas of Social and Emotional Development and Language and Literacy Development.

Private and Public schools who have accepted funding through early learning scholarships, child daycare aide or subcontracting with school districts for School Readiness Funding will be required to show how their preschool curriculum aligns with these Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.

Private schools that have refused funding will not have to comply or demonstrate compliance with ECIP alignment. Because we will not accept "Parent Aware" money or any day

care funding, FBSCS' program will not have to align with ECIP's.

We have asked the Dept. of Ed. to send us the drafts of those ECIPs for our review and we hope to receive them soon. To date, the department has not responded to several requests.

-Alan J. Hodak

Administrator, Fourth Baptist Christian School

Executive Director, MN Association of Christian Schools (MACS)



SR. HIGH MACS SPEECH & BIBLE FESTIVAL REVIEW

The Speech and Bible Festival focuses on helping students improve oral presentation skills, whether it be Preaching, Teaching a children's Bible lesson, giving a Puppet presentation, or presenting a speech as an individual or a group. Good presentation requires that the students work on memory and rapport with the audience through facial and physical gestures. Often many hours go into getting ready for this day, with assistance from many teachers and speech coaches.

This year we had 125 students participate from 9 schools, with several schools traveling a couple of hours to be part of the day. There were over 100 entries in 17 categories, an increase over the 75 participants from last year.

It's very exciting to see the number of schools getting involved and the increase in student enthusiasm for being a part of the day.

So much of what we do as individuals is a direct result of opportunities we have as young people to learn to express ourselves and communicate with others. As believers, this is foundational to being a testimony and witness for Christ.

If you have opportunity to encourage young people to get involved in activities such as the Speech and Bible Festival, do it! It's a great tool in helping to prepare these young people for what God has for them in the future.

I look forward to next year and many more students taking part.

—Pastor Loren Paulson, *Event Organizer from Woodcrest*

Answer to Prayer – Mrs. Susann Russell Back to Work

Mrs. Sue Russell returned to be our “lunch mom” at Fourth Baptist Christian School after Christmas break. After undergoing surgery and months of chemotherapy, Mrs. Russell was given a clean bill of health by her doctors. We praise the Lord for answered prayer as many, many prayers have been offered for Mrs. Russell and we are grateful to the Lord for His healing grace.

- A. Hodak

(Sue is pictured at right in the lunchroom with her class from last school year 2013-14).



JH MACS FINE ARTS FESTIVAL REVIEW

On Friday, March 6 we had nine schools converge on the campus of First Baptist School for the annual MACS Junior High Fine Arts Festival. The junior high young people have opportunities in Bible, speech, visual arts, and music on this day. We report that over 200 students in 9 schools competed in almost 200 events. It is a blessing to report an increase both in students and school participation this year.

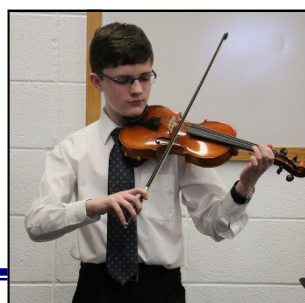
We appreciate every school's involvement and trust it will continue for years to come. Young people benefit greatly from these events, and it helps give them confidence, knowledge, and experience going into high school. A big thank you to nearly thirty judges and the First Baptist School staff, volunteers, and students. We also appreciate all the hard work from the staff and volunteers from each school. Your dedication and help makes the festival a success.



A plaque was presented to Pastor Loren Paulson, Assistant Pastor and Woodcrest Baptist Church, during the end of the day at the MACS Junior High Fine Arts Festival. He and his wife, Diane, were recognized for their hard work, dedication, and passion toward young people, especially in the area of MACS.

During the Awards Ceremony, we were able to honor Pastor Loren Paulson and his wife, Mrs. Diane Paulson for their many years of faithful service in MACS. While Mrs. Paulson was not able to attend, we presented Pastor Paulson with a plaque which stated the following, "Because of your dedication, faithfulness, and love toward young people, this award is presented to Pastor Loren Paulson on Friday, March 6, 2015, in special recognition for having a servant's heart, a mentoring spirit, and a passion to see young people serve God through Bible, Speech, and Music." The Bible verse on the plaque is from 1 Timothy 5:17 which states, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." A plaque was also created for Mrs. Paulson. Congratulations to both of them for this special honor.

—Dr. Charlie Graves, Administrator, First Baptist School, Rosemount



2015 MACS State Basketball Tourney Results

Boys' Basketball

Champion: Chisago Patriots

Second Place: Lake Region Hornets

Third Place: Fourth Baptist Warriors

Consolation: Prior Lake Eagles



Girls' Basketball

Champion: Lake Region Lady Hornets

Second Place: St. Francis Lady Patriots

Third Place: First Baptist Crusaders—Rosemount

Consolation: Fourth Baptist Warriors

2015 All-Conference First Teams

First Team Boys:

1. David Roddy—Woodcrest
2. Coltan Allen—Prior Lake
3. Abe Imdieke—Lake Region
4. Luke Hraba—Chisago Lakes
5. Michael Graves—Rosemount
6. Noah Kinniburgh—Fourth Baptist

First Team Girls:

1. Marlee Moore—Lake Region
2. Christy Graves—Rosemount
3. Grace Imdieke—Lake Region
4. Amanda Anderson—St. Francis
5. Marah Horner—St. Francis
6. Cara Hodak—Fourth Baptist



ABOVE: All Conference Boys Basketball First Team:
L to R: Noah Kinniburgh, Michael Graves, Luke Hraba,
 David Roddy, Coltan Allen, Abe Imdieke



ABOVE: All Conference Girls Basketball First Team:
L to R: Cara Hodak, Marah Horner, Amanda Anderson,
 Christy Graves, Marlee Moore, Grace Imdieke.



Chisago Patriots—MACS Champions



Lake Region Hornets—2nd Place



Lake Region Lady Hornets—MACS Champions



St. Francis Lady Patriots—2nd Place

Special Competition Winners:

Free-Throw Competition Winners:

Girls: Sophie Anderson, Prior Lake
Boys: Brendan DeMaris, Woodcrest

Hot Shot Competition Winners:

Girls: Jessica Keck, Chisago
Boys: Aaron Russell, Chisago

Three Point Competition Winners:

Girls: Cara Hodak, Fourth Baptist
Boys: Paul Tomsche, Fourth Baptist



2015 All-Tournament Selections

Boys Basketball

1. Coltan Allen—Prior Lake
2. Weston King—Fourth Baptist
3. Jared Gray—Chisago (MVP)
4. Abe Imdieke—Lake Region
5. Luke Hraba—Chisago
6. David Roddy—Woodcrest



Girls Basketball

1. Amber Flynn—Rosemount
2. Ashalon Asmus—Heritage
3. Marah Horner—St. Francis
4. Amanda Anderson—St. Francis
5. Marlee Moore—Lake Region
6. Grace Imdieke—Lake Region (MVP)

2015 All-Conference Second Team Selections

Second Team - Boys

1. Micah McGaffey—Lake Region
2. Caleb Swedeen—St. Francis
3. Ben King—Fourth Baptist
4. Men Mayerchak—Chisago
5. Nick Poe—Mankato
6. Addison Nichols—St. Francis
7. Seth Murphy—Rosemount
8. Tyler Ogren—Lake Region
9. Aaron Russell—Heritage
10. Michael Steien—Heritage

Second Team – Girls

1. Jessica Ureke—Woodcrest
2. Ashalon Asmus—Heritage
3. Rachel Kirkwold—Chisago
4. Emily Stange—Prior Lake
5. Amanda Rodriguez—St. Francis
6. Amber Flynn—Rosemount
7. Liz Anderson—Lake Region

2015 All-Conference Honorable Mention

Honorable Mention - Boys

1. Ryan Christenson—Lake Region
2. Mark Graham—Prior Lake
3. Cylas Horner—St. Francis
4. Kevin Malowitz—Mankato
5. Sam Mayerchak—Chisago
6. Weston King—Fourth Baptist
7. Chris Taylor—Rosemount
8. Deon McMahan—Woodcrest
9. Bryton Hanson—Heritage

Honorable Mention – Girls

1. Julia Van Luyk—Fourth Baptist
2. Sarah Blahoski—Woodcrest
3. Aylim Guzman—Rosemount
4. Jessica Keck—Chisago
5. Natalie Greiner—Owatonna