

# Common Core Monthly Reporter



Transitioning to the Common Core State Standards

OCTOBER 2013 VOL. 2, ISSUE 1

## Welcome Back! The **Common Core Monthly Reporter**... At Your Service

By Nia Rashidchi, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services

**W**e hope that the start of this school year has been powerful, exciting, and energizing. I have been visiting schools and seen lots of wonderful, rigorous learning happening in our classrooms.

Thank you for the work that each and every WCCUSD staff member carries out on a daily basis. It is making a difference for our kids.

This is the first edition of the 2013-14 *Common Core Monthly Reporter*. We are going to continue on from where we left off from the last issue in June 2013.

This first issue is going to recap lots of the learning opportunities that occurred this summer as we continue to transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

We have also included an article that highlights our Mathematics

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Department's areas of focus and the move to ensure that our local benchmark assessments reflect the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) types of assessments which will help our kids and teachers be more prepared when the actual assessments come our way.

Our CCSS theme continues to be **Build Knowledge, Build Confidence, and Provide Tools for Healthy Transition!** This is an exciting time in education. We have an opportunity this year to accelerate our learning and increase the academic outcomes for all of our students. I look forward to taking this journey with you.

For now, get your read on...

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For more information about the CCSS for the West Contra Costa Unified School District, visit  
<https://sites.google.com/a/wccusd.net/wccusd-common-core-standards/>

# Multiple Methods in **Mathematics** for a Smooth Transition to the **Common Core!**

By Phil Gonsalves and Drew Kravin, WCCUSD Mathematics Center

**A**s our district transitions to the Common Core State Standards, our Mathematics Department continues to focus on the research-based Mathematics Coaching Consortium (MCC) model, to improve mathematics education for all of our students. As related in previous issues of the *Common Core Monthly Reporter*, MCC focuses on (1) mathematics content; (2) lesson design; (3) coaching; and (4) formative assessment to transform instruction. In collaboration with other colleagues and districts in MCC, which our district hosts, we are developing and posting Common Core mathematics resources to help teachers implement the standards and best practices.

As part of the Common Core, California is participating in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a national effort to develop and implement new assess-

ments by 2014-15. SBAC has provided resources to help familiarize teachers with the look and feel of the new assessments, and MCC has developed additional SBAC-aligned resources for use in our classrooms. SBAC uses different kinds of assessments, including “selected response” questions, which are multiple-choice questions with more than one correct answer. For example, a student might be asked to select all correct representations of a given multiplication problem.

To familiarize teachers and students with this new format and way of thinking, a section of our district mathematics website is devoted to Common Core mathematics resources K-12, located at <http://www.wccusd.net/Page/3205>. Below are elementary and secondary samples of MCC resources you can use now to familiarize your students

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with selected response questions.

The complete files also contain a scoring rubric and the relevant Common Core State Standards. These tasks can be used as classroom activities to help students understand that there are many ways to solve problems in mathematics, and soon your students will be asked to show they understand multiple methods on assessments. Over the course of this school year our district benchmark assessments will also be changing to include selected response items developed this past summer by our own district teachers.


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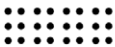
## Samples of Elementary and Secondary Mathematics Coaching Consortium Resources


*Grade 3 Selected Response*

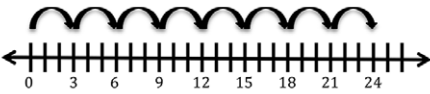
Indicate which models below represent  $4 \times 6$ .

(A) 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24

(B) 

(C) 

(D) 

(E) 

*Algebra 1 Selected Response*

Choose all that represent the product:  $(3x+4)(x-2)$

A)  $3x^2 - 8$

B) 

	$3x$	$4$
$x$	$3x^2$	$4x$
$-2$	$-6x$	$-8$

C)  $3x+4$   
 $\begin{array}{r} x-2 \\ -6x-8 \\ \hline 3x+4 \\ -3x-4 \end{array}$

D)  $x(3x+4) - 2(3x+4)$

E)  $3x(x-2) + 4(x-2)$

# Teaching American History Project and the WCCUSD Summer Institute 2013

by Natalie Wojinski, Project Coordinator for WCCUSD TAH/Hercules High School Teacher

**T**eaching American History (TAH) Project participants spent two weeks this summer digging into the Common Core State Standards. Continuing their work from the 2012-13 school year, teachers focused their efforts in two areas: deepening content knowledge and developing the Common Core-aligned performance tasks for their students. The culmination was a field study to Birmingham, Alabama.

The historical content of the Summer Institute focused on economics and the place of the United States in world history. Daily themes included imperialism, trade, and war and military. Drawing from the expertise of visiting professors Dr. Michelle Jolly and Dr. Steve Estes of Sonoma State University, participants also learned about gathering oral histories and selecting primary and secondary source documents that are both engaging and challenging. These activities address key features of the Common Core Literacy Standards for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.

Summer work also included the development of performance tasks modeled on current samples from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). TAH teacher leaders identified performance tasks as one of the most challenging aspects of Common Core for students. TAH Professional Development Director and Literacy Specialist Nancy Case-Rico guided teachers through a series of activities to help them prepare the key parts of the performance task.

Completed tasks featured California History Content Standards aligned topics such as Reconstruction, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and child labor during the Industrial Revolution. Teachers will field test and revise the tasks during the 2013-14 school year before publishing them on the WCCUSD and TAH Project websites.

Civil Rights has been a key theme in the TAH Project since its beginning. As a culminating activity for year three, participants traveled to Alabama for a tour of key sites of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Speakers during the trip included Bishop Calvin Woods, Carolyn McKinstry, and former U.S. Attorney Doug Jones. Sites visited ranged from a tour of the 16th Street Baptist

Church in Birmingham and Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church in Montgomery to a walk across the Edmund

Pettus Bridge in Selma. Teachers explored the many ways teaching about the events of the Civil Rights Movement can align to the Common

Core State Standards.

“One of the things that really struck me from the trip to Birmingham was how deeply infused music was in the Civil Rights Movement,” Middle College history teacher Steve Hoffman said. “Though we of course all know many of the songs, I was fascinated by the way different speakers would suddenly switch to singing as they told their stories. I’m a strong advocate for the importance of

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**The historical content of the Summer Institute focused on economics and the place of the United States in world history.**



*TAH teachers had the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Civil Rights Movement protestors when they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. The bridge was the site of 1965's "Bloody Sunday" when marchers were attacked as they attempted to walk to the state capital in Montgomery.*

# The 2013 WCCUSD Summer Institute: A Time for Intense/Engaged CCSS Learning

by Lyn Potter, Director of Ed Services

**M**ore than 400 teachers and administrators attended multiple days of our third annual Summer Institute. During this two-week event, teachers had the opportunity to learn from experienced trainers (including our very own WCCUSD teacher leaders) and participate in multiple venues for genuine collaboration.

The theme for the 2013 Summer Institute reflects the goal of fully engaging all learners, from students to teachers to administrators to our CCSS trainers themselves.

Teachers worked with each other to review, discuss, and explore relevant content with a shared purpose of gaining and refining the tools necessary to continue their transition to the Common Core State Standards.

## Key Components of the institute

- **Treasures training:** Our elementary school teachers focused on multiple two-day trainings on the newly adopted ELA program “basics,” as well as additional one-day Treasures Mini-Modules on differentiation and writing.
- **Prentice Hall (PH) two-day training:** Secondary ELA and special education teachers participated in sessions focused on differentiation and familiarizing teachers with the updated Common Core State Standards PH teacher edition. In addition, teachers learned about the online digital path which has a wide variety of resources, including differentiated lessons, vocabulary games, and video resources to engage students.



*WCCUSD teachers collaborate and plan together around the Common Core during the Summer Institute.*

- **Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP):** An engaging three-day training session taught by Greta Volmer, Director of BAWP and Professor of English at California State University, Sonoma. Sessions provided an opportunity for secondary teachers across content areas to delve deeper into concepts like Depth of Knowledge and Text Complexity. Teachers learned about best practices they can use in their classrooms on a daily basis to help students access the new standards. Participants also worked to develop model writing lessons so their students become college and career ready.
- **Common Core State Standards training:** Mini PD modules on specialized topics and overviews in ELA and mathematics were offered to give K-12 teachers a broader understanding of these new standards and their implications for instruction. Four modules were updated specifically for this Summer Institute. They included a focus on Text Dependency and demonstrated how this element is integrated into Treasures and the updated version of the Prentice Hall program.
- **Brokers of Expertise (BOE):** Sessions offered teachers a chance to engage in blended online training. Attendees participated in one to two sessions from the BOE modules in ELA and/or mathematics. Teachers completed the online portion of the modules on their own and then came for a one-hour facilitated discussion with teacher trainers. This blended learning was powerful because teachers from all different grade levels, across the district, had the chance to discuss the CCSS with each other!

The strategic planning of the Ed Services staff in conjunction with the efforts of many other departments across the district (Food Services, Electronics, IT, El Cerrito High School office, custodial staff, and Principal David Luongo) contributed to the huge success of the 2013 WCCUSD Summer Institute.



# Multiple Methods in **Mathematics** for a Smooth Transition to the **Common Core!** continued from page 2

Another resource posted on our Common Core mathematics resource page is the SBAC Practice Test Scoring Guides, which are located at <http://www.wccusd.net/Page/3677>. These guides contain both sample items for classroom use and also guides for how SBAC plans to score

similar items once they become part of the new national assessments, which will be field tested throughout California this spring. Below is an example of an SBAC selected response question for Grade 4.

By familiarizing our students now with these new question types, we

can provide a strong foundation in mathematics and get them ready for the new assessments. It is truly an exciting time when national standards and assessments help us implement best practices in the teaching and learning of mathematics!

**Example of SBAC Selected Response Question for Grade 4**

**597**

Kendrick says that the only way to create a fraction greater than  $\frac{3}{7}$  is to make the denominator less than 7.

A. Drag one number into each box to create a fraction that supports Kendrick.

B. Drag one number into each box to create a fraction that shows Kendrick is incorrect.

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Delete

**A. Supports Kendrick**

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**B. Shows Kendrick is incorrect**

## Three for Three: Time for a Little Check-in Fun, with **Rewards!**

Answer three questions about our district's transition to the Common Core State Standards. The first three respondents who answer all three questions correctly will win a prize! Be the first to email your three correct answers to [nrashidchi@wccusd.net](mailto:nrashidchi@wccusd.net)!

1. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) is creating a variety of assessments for upcoming standardized testing. What is a "selected response" question?
2. Name one action that the TAH teachers carried out during the Summer Institute which will help transition their instructional practice to meet the rigor of the CCSS, the SBAC assessments, and meet the needs of our students.
3. What was new and different about the Broker's of Expertise summer training when compared to traditional training?

## Teaching American History Project/Summer Institute 2013 continued from page 3

music in the curriculum, and especially when looking at history; this trip really brought the connection home for me."

Hoffman's performance task has students analyzing photographs and music of the Civil Rights efforts during World War II. Student written responses include Common Core aligned narrative and argumentative writing.

The work of the Teaching American History Project will continue through summer 2014. In this final project year, teachers will continue working toward implementing the Common Core State Standards with a particular focus on media literacy, effective search, and technology integration. Professional development sessions will also feature lectures by professional historians and time for Common Core-aligned lesson planning.