

Defies Measurement

Activity Guide – Common Core

Discuss the topic below and then make a presentation to the group. The presentation will be in the form of a proposal to the local school board. Using the information you learn about Common Core, be sure to state the problem that currently exists in the local school or district and then lay out the proposed solution. Or, if there isn't a problem, then propose a new plan that would add something positive to the school and/or district.

COMMON CORE

In Defies Measurement, Anthony Cody says, "The flaws in No Child Left Behind that were identified by the people who created Common Core, were that different states had different standards and so, as a result, there wasn't a common bar. So, the solution to that was to create a national set of standards and a national test so we can compare every state to every other state. Well, that misses the fundamental problem with NCLB, which really was not that different states had different standards. The real problem with NCLB was that it required schools to focus very narrowly on test scores. Well, Common Core does not address that. It assumes that we're still going to remain single-mindedly focused on test scores."

David Kirp adds to this by saying "Common Core as a set of standards...the Common Core is a lot better than what most states have. As a set of exams...the fear is that everything is being tested from every moment, we're going look back fondly on No Child Left Behind which was just one test a year in reading in math. I mean, if everything is going to be tested and tested from pre-K on, then we are really living in a nightmarish universe."

For discussion:

How has Common Core effected your local school district?

What has been appealing about Common Core to parents and teachers and what problems (if any) have crept up because of it?

Is a national set of standards necessary? Is a national exam necessary?

If they are, how can they be designed and implemented effectively?