



Twin Peaks Charter Academy

Resolution Addressing Common Core

Twin Peaks Charter Academy provides students with the foundations of virtue and character, building cultural literacy through a rigorous, content-rich curriculum in an encouraging environment.

What is Common Core?

The Common Core State Standards are benchmarks that theoretically delineate what students should be “able to do in English Language Arts and Mathematics” and purportedly ensure that students are “prepared for today’s entry-level careers, freshman-level college courses, and workforce training programs.”¹ Standards are not new; Colorado developed its own set years ago for its public schools. Common Core is another matter. Developed by non-profit groups and committees of experts,² not accountable to a Colorado constituency, and funded almost entirely by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,³ Common Core is an effort to reshape on a national scale not only *what* children are learning but also *who* is determining what children are learning. States received federal incentives to adopt Common Core: exemptions from previous mandates, and more importantly, opportunities to compete for billions of dollars in grants. Colorado adopted the standards, and in conjunction with this action, agreed to use federal Common Core-aligned assessments (to replace tests like TCAP).⁴ Assessments often influence classroom instruction, and these new assessments are the mechanism by which Common Core will be established in the public school system. As an additional requirement for competing for federal grants, the State also agreed to institute a system, commonly known as *P-20*, to track individual student performance from preschool to the workforce. Thus, much is changing with the advent of Common Core. An analysis of national test scores, however, provides scant evidence that standards, the impetus for these changes, are critical factors in student achievement.⁵ Common Core remains little more than a theory—a theory which regrettably now has the full weight of the law.

Twin Peaks Charter Academy Resolves:

WHEREAS, the State’s actions compromise the Colorado Charter Schools Act of 1994.⁶ Nationalized standards and assessments encumber a charter school which by nature is to be free of many regulations so that its innovative programming may be successful. The adoption of Common Core and its associated mandates amounts to a de facto undermining of the Colorado Charter Schools Act.

WHEREAS, an increased schedule of mandated assessments will have negative consequences to the learning process. The Colorado General Assembly’s Standards and Assessments Task Force has determined that such assessments impinge not only on the “time, logistics, and finances” required for implementation, but that “public support for the assessment system as a whole” is eroding.⁷

WHEREAS, Common Core is *not* Core Knowledge, TPCA’s chosen K-8 curriculum since the school’s inception in 1997. The use of the word “Core” in each of these educationally-related terms is unfortunate. The Core Knowledge® Sequence delineates subject area *content* (e.g. Civil War, anatomy, *The Odyssey*, algebra, etc.) to be taught in each grade. Use of this curriculum in schools is voluntary.

WHEREAS, TPCA was formed nearly 20 years ago by parents confident in *their* ability to implement an educational program capable of producing educated citizens. Time has not altered that belief. Today, the school affirms its right to design and implement its educational program as the “best education decision”⁶ for the young people of this community. At the K-8 level, this is the Core Knowledge® Sequence; at the High School, this is a classically-focused college preparatory high school.

THEREFORE, reasonable steps will be taken to minimize the impact of Common Core on our students. **Should it be determined, however, that the Common Core-associated mandates decrease the effectiveness of the school’s lawful educational program, Twin Peaks Charter Academy will take whatever action it deems necessary to protect its legal rights.**

WE AFFIRM that the keys to producing educated citizens are not standards and assessments, but rather engaged parents, willing students, outstanding teachers, and last but not least, solid content-rich curriculums. It is upon these keys alone that Twin Peaks Charter Academy stakes the success of all students who enter its doors.

¹“What Parents Should Know.” Common Core State Standards Initiative. 29 June 2014. Web.

²“What is the Common Core?” Home School Legal Defense. 29 June 2014. Web.

³ Strauss, Valerie. “Gates Foundation Pours Millions into Common Core in 2013. Washington Post. 11 November 2013; Ravitch, Diane. “Mercedes Schneider Explains: Who Paid for the Common Core Standards.” Huffington Post. 10 October 2013. Web.

⁴ “How is the Federal Government Involved in the Common Core?” Home School Legal Defense. 27 November 2013. Web.

⁵ Loveless, Tom. “2012 Brown Ctr. Report on American Education: How Well are American Students Learning.” Brookings Institution. 29 June 2014. Web.

⁶ Colorado Charter School Act of 1994. Colorado Department of Education. 29 June 2014. Web.

⁷ HB14-1202 Standards and Assessments Task Force Report of Findings and Recommendations. 17 February 2015. Web.