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## College Board: Reconciling AP Exams With Common Core

by Keren Yi

The College Board is responding to the brewing changes of today's Common Core era by revising the Advanced Placement program so that the focus is on fewer concepts and more depth.

In an AASA conference session, Advanced Placement in the Common Core Era: Changes and New Developments in the AP Program, on Saturday morning, Trevor Packer, senior vice president of the College Board's Advanced Placement Program, told superintendents that his organization would integrate Common Core standards in AP course standards and AP exams administered each May.

One measure cited by Packer is this: The College Board is removing extraneous details from the AP course requirements and making AP classes less about simple memorization and more about critical thinking and synthesizing information.

He compared the information in an AP class to ingredients in a recipe and compared the knowledge of how to synthesize and apply information to a recipe. Packer said: "The AP is about taking a college course and giving a recipe for students."

During the 2012-13 school year, the College Board has reformed the AP Biology, Latin and Spanish Literature exams. Plans are under way to modify the AP Chemistry and Spanish Language exams.

Despite these measures, there are still difficulties in reconciling many AP courses with the Common Core. In particular, AP Calculus is in conflict with the Common Core, Packer said, and it lies outside the sequence of the Common Core because of the fear that it may unnecessarily rush students into advanced math classes for which they are not prepared.

The College Board suggests a solution to the problem of AP Calculus "If you're worried about AP Calculus and fidelity to the Common Core, we recommend AP Statistics and AP Computer Science," he told conference attendees.

Moreover, the College Board may offer an AP Algebra course (although no plans are definite), which may supplant AP Calculus, particularly in schools rigidly adhering to the Common Core standards.

In addition to these measures, the College Board plans to offer more comprehensive assessment for high school students engaged in AP classes. The AP program and the Cambridge International examinations, in particular, are partnering to pilot a diploma through an API Cambridge Capstone Pilot. This is being done to address teachers' concerns that students are not being prepared to learn to commit to a long-term project.

"Rather than just having an end-of-course exam, there are thorough assessments," Packer explained. This program would demand, for example, a research project from high school seniors in the form of a 20-page essay.

The measure has been widely embraced by the education authorities in other countries. "The program would be free, with no school registration fees or student registration fees," Parker said. The only fees required are those for taking the examination, and will be about the equivalent of AP fees.

As of the 2014-15 school year, the program will expand globally.

<http://www.aasa.org/content.aspx?id=27296>

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VIDEO: [College Board's Trevor Packer on Common Core and AP Curriculum](#) [2:01]