

# *Providence Christian School*

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September 25, 2017

Dear School Families,

Our Mission at PCS is to impart to students the use and love of Christian principles, character, and leadership as well as provide academic rigor all through the lens of Biblical worldview. It is in this light that I wanted to share some important information about our Christian school curriculum.

We have chosen our curriculum because of its distinctly Biblical worldview, philosophy of education, and academic rigor. Both B.J.U. Press and A Beka Books are national norm curriculums based on the standards of over 25 states including California. I have attached additional information from each publisher explaining their stand on Common Core.

Together in Christ,

Gail Gilbertson

Principal/Administrator

*"Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory because of Thy loving kindness, because of Thy truth." Psalm 115:1*

# A Beka Book and CommonCore

A Beka Book is committed to providing the finest educational resources for Christian schools and homeschool families. Accordingly, we routinely monitor educational trends in curriculum and assessment to evaluate them in light of traditional Christian values and objectives. Our goal is to continually improve A Beka Book materials by providing the most up-to-date content and best practices in textbooks and curriculum.

## ***Common Core Alignment***

Many Christian school educators and homeschool parents are inquiring about the sweeping national education standards known as Common Core State Standards (CCSS). While CCSS have only been written for English language arts and mathematics, they have quickly been adopted by most state departments of education, and future standardized testing appears to be aligning with them. Meanwhile, there is much controversy over the imposition of national standards, the loss of local control over education, and undesirable philosophical implications.

Because A Beka Book has historically met or exceeded recommended content standards, it is not surprising that when compared to current CCSS, the A Beka Book language arts and mathematics objectives were found to already meet almost all Common Core content standards.

However, a few differences were found. For example, in English language arts, A Beka Book fulfills or exceeds many of the standards at an earlier grade level than outlined in CCSS. Further, in mathematics, A Beka Book has chosen a different sequence of topical representation because it is more logical in presentation than what Common Core proposes.

Standards in education are often very useful when they inform content in an effort to ensure that subject matter is age appropriate, sequentially meaningful, and academically rigorous. Unfortunately, some of Common Core goes beyond content and moves into the realm of teaching methodology. Since many of these techniques do not align with our traditional Christian approach, we have purposefully chosen not to add them, but rather to leave it up to the school or individual to make decisions for implementation in keeping with their philosophy and principles of teaching and learning.

## ***Proven Success of A Beka Book***

The academic integrity of A Beka Book has been validated by the success of hundreds of thousands of students over decades. Historically, students instructed under our curriculum consistently score above national averages on standardized tests and on college entrance tests. Our skilled researchers and writers do not paraphrase progressive education textbooks; they do primary research in every subject and look at the subject from the traditional Christian point of view.

While it is healthy to be informed by educational trends and performance data, it is not the practice of A Beka Book to adjust or change its curriculum to align with each new reform that is presented in academia. We will continue our commitment to seek content and best practices that provide students with the tools they need for both academic and personal success.

*Source: <http://www.abeka.com/resources/commoncore.aspx>*

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## **BJU Press Position on Common Core**

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As a publisher well known for maintaining excellent academics, BJU Press continually reviews all educational standards, state and national. To be aware of trends in education is not, of course, to be compliant with them. We believe that for us to live up to what we teach—critical thinking and discernment—we must review and assess standards. Not reviewing standards would hinder us from addressing errors in the standards and serving our customers who want to continue using our textbooks alongside Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or other applicable standards.

BJU Press is not changing any of its materials in order to be compliant with Common Core State Standards nor intentionally doing anything to align with them. Because BJU Press materials are academically excellent, standards tend to match the textbooks, rather than the other way around. We do not receive, and have never received, any federal funding, and we oppose any federal intervention in education.

BJU Press is adamantly opposed to federal direction or involvement in the content or methods of the educational system, whether directly or indirectly (through conditions placed on grants and other financial transfers to the states in exchange for Common Core standards compliance or otherwise). Please be assured that biblical integration and academic excellence continue to be the true core of BJU Press, just as it always has been. We remember daily—and prayerfully—the great accountability under which we labor in supporting Christian education.

### **Our History: We Have Always Been About Excellence.**

Dedicated since its founding forty years ago to excellence and Truth, BJU Press strives to keep itself constantly informed of changes in both pedagogy and technology. Staying abreast is not, of course, the same as blindly aligning with or even totally agreeing with. BJU Press serves all who want a publisher they can trust to deliver academically sound and biblically integrated materials and who expect that publisher to vigilantly check its products against rigorous standards, both educational and theological. By modeling what we teach, thinking critically and biblically about everything we produce, we have given much careful thought to addressing Common Core State Standards.

### **Our Position: We Have Not Changed Anything.**

Showing that our materials meet most Common Core State Standards serves the needs for some of our customers. However, it does not mean that we have changed our position on core philosophy or in our own standards of good teaching to meet the standards. For example, with the Next Generation Science Standards currently under development, there will be some conflicts. Some standards we will address by approaching them from a proper Christian perspective. Some standards we will not address at all in our materials. We have been doing this critical evaluation with other national standards for years in an effort to stay true to Scripture while at the same time still properly preparing students for the expectations of higher studies and the requirements of standardized testing.

Moreover, some Common Core State Standards actually align with *our* standards. For example, both the English Language Arts and Mathematics standards contain an increased emphasis on deeper understanding of underlying concepts rather than on mere memorization of facts. They also emphasize critical thinking and the supporting of positions with evidence. Such standards fit well with our educational philosophy. We can easily show how these standards are demonstrated in our materials.

Other Common Core State Standards address only the minimum requirements and may be one or more grade levels below what we recognize as good teaching. We do not limit ourselves to the level of the standards but go beyond, based on our philosophy of learning and sound educational practices. In other words, our materials exceed these Common Core State Standards in age-appropriate instruction and academic rigor. So to show that we meet the standards is comparable to showing how plans for a church building meet building codes and guidelines. But, like a good builder, BJU Press goes beyond minimal standards to create a beautiful and functional space that would please even the most discriminating architect.

### **Our Responsibility: We Have a High Calling.**

The Common Core State Standards are intended to be a quality check on secular education, a bar below which secular materials should not fall. A Christian publisher can refer to them in developing materials without being conformed to the world and can thus be, as a result, both salt and light. The benefit of teaching with BJU Press materials is getting an education from a Christian worldview that cannot be discredited. By consulting standards that are accepted in nearly every state and are becoming the basis of standardized tests, we not only maintain our own higher standards but also make it as easy for those who must prove Common Core compliance to use the best Christian materials available as it is for those who do not have to or do not want to.

*Source: <https://www.bjupress.com/resources/common-core-standards/>*