



October 2015

## Dear Reader,

Too many students are graduating woefully unprepared for the demands of postsecondary institutions and the workplace, and it is disadvantaged students with the greatest preparation gaps. There are many specific skills and competencies that students need to succeed, including the ability for complex reasoning, modeling with mathematics, and making sense of problems and persevering in solving them. These are precisely the skills that can be developed in mathematics courses.

Practically speaking, math skills can help prepare students to tackle the practical challenges of adulthood, such as managing personal finances, choosing a health care plan, selecting a mortgage, or planning for retirement. Beyond that, taking higher-level math courses is key to accessing postsecondary education, especially for disadvantaged and minority students. Students who take higher-level math courses are also better prepared for the workplace and earn higher salaries.

Alissa Peltzman, *Vice President, State Policy & Implementation Support*  
Achieve

## The Coherence Map: Mapping the Common Core Mathematics Standards

Student Achievement Partners recently released The Coherence Map an interactive, digital tool that shows the connections between the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. It allows educators to search by standard and instantly generate an interactive, visual representation of how that standard is connected to other standards both within and across grades. Educators can use the tool to:

- Enhance instruction by connecting concepts within and across grades so that students can draw on previous knowledge to tackle new material
- Identify gaps in student knowledge that may be causing students to struggle with mastering grade-level content
- Understand how supporting standards connect with the Major Work of the Grade
- Access additional resources, such as example student tasks and background documents to deepen their understanding of the Standards

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## Math Works



Achieve created the [Math Works](#) materials as resources for policymakers, advocates, educators, parents, and students alike that highlight the connection between higher-level mathematics course-taking and college access and success, workplace and career readiness, and personal and U.S. competitiveness. The kit contains fact sheets, brochures, and a policy paper that advocates can use to make

the case that all students benefit from acquiring a comprehensive knowledge base and skill set in mathematics.

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## *New Study Finds Unequal Access to Rigorous Math Content Widens Achievement Gap*



A [new study](#) in the journal of the American Educational Research Association found that much of the gap in math scores on the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) between wealthy and poor students can be traced to unequal access to rigorous math content in school. Researchers estimated unequal

content access accounts for nearly 40 percent of the achievement gap in U.S. student performance.

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## *Math Teacher: Why the Common Core Check Meme is Wrong*



A few weeks ago, a father who was frustrated while helping his son with his second-grade math homework wrote a check using "Common Core math" that quickly went viral on the internet. Hemant Mehta, a National Board Certified high school mathematics teacher, wrote a thoughtful and detailed explanation of not only why the check is

wrong, but why this "new" math isn't really new at all.

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## *Illustrative Mathematics Task Talks*

Follow Illustrative Mathematics [on Twitter](#) to join in on Tuesday Task Talks throughout the fall. Illustrative Mathematics brings teachers together to collaborate online and share carefully vetted mathematics resources for teachers and teacher leaders as well as expert guidance to states, districts, curriculum writers, and assessment writers.

## *EQulP Call to Action Seeks High-Quality Materials Aligned to the Common Core*



Achieve is continuing to accept submissions for the EQulP high school [Call to Action](#). Educators and developers can submit high-quality units aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that address the K-8 high priority standards that were identified by a panel of content experts and educators. Achieve launched this effort with Student Achievement Partners to strengthen resources to meet teachers' needs to implement the CCSS.

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DID YOU  
KNOW?

According to Achieve's [recent survey](#) of employers and college faculty,

# 5 in 10

mathematics instructors say that less than half of their students were adequately prepared to succeed in their classes.

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