

Meeting Challenges/Misinformation Head-on!

AP History

As promised, we at the Georgia Partnership are not resting on our laurels from our legislative victory on the Common Core last month. We knew there would continue to be challenges and we want to bring your attention to a new one.

Click here for the *Heartland* article [New Advanced Placement Framework Distorts America's History](#) outlining concerns about the newly revised Advanced Placement (AP) History Standards. We were suspicious over some of the arguments being made, as they are reminiscent of the misinformation that has been spread about the Common Core State Standards.

We are not curriculum specialists; however, the Georgia Partnership is committed to ensuring factual information is distributed. We researched the claims made in this article and have responded below.

Just as a reminder, all AP classes and exams are designed by the College Board and are independent of any state standards. Schools and districts are free to choose to offer AP courses or not, and students are free to take or not take the AP exam, and teachers are free to use their own materials to enhance their class.

False Claim #1 - The AP redesign is a curricular coup that sets a number of dangerous precedents. By providing a detailed course of study that defines, discusses, and interprets "the required knowledge of each period," the College Board has in effect supplanted local and state curriculum by unilaterally assuming the authority to prioritize historic topics.

- According to the Georgia Department of Education, the revisions to the AP History class are in the framework that is being taught, not the curriculum. In the AP world, the frameworks are the standards. They are now recommending organizing the framework by theme instead of chronologically, which is the big shift. However, teachers of AP are still free to teach chronologically, they just need to cover the recommended themes outlined in the framework as they go through each time period. The College Board also extended the time periods to be covered.

- Saying that the Curriculum Framework is designed to "supplant" local and state curriculums makes no sense, given that fewer than 450,000 students took the AP U.S. History exam in 2013, out of a total estimated high school student population in the U.S. of over 16 million. Also, the decision to even offer AP classes resides at the district and school level.

False Claim #2 - AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework is the beginning of a national takeover of American history education, especially since David Coleman has recently taken over at the College Board, and was one of the developers of the Common Core national standards.

- AP curricular frameworks are developed by committees comprised of higher ed faculty members and experienced AP teachers and validated by college department chairs. This is the same process that has been followed for 60 years for keeping the AP Curriculum Frameworks up-to-date as history continues to unfold. In the case of U.S. history, the curriculum framework being implemented in 2014 was published prior to Coleman's becoming president of the College Board.

- The framework leaves much to the discretion of teachers and districts to select the specific subject matter for productive exploration of these topics with their students, and the flexibility to meet existing state and local requirements for American history courses.

False Claim #3 - Key figures in history have been sidelined.

- In fact, the focus on the work of key figures in American history - and the Founding Fathers in particular - has been expanded, rather than reduced. The examples in the *Heartland* article are taken from the list of suggested topics, not required topics. [Here is a table](#) showing the complete list of required American documents in the AP course before and after the redesign.

Here is more documentation:

1) FAQs document - [AP U.S. History Course and Exam Frequently Asked Questions](#). This describes the difference between the old and new frameworks.

2) Facts and Fiction – [Fiction and Facts about U.S. History Curriculum Framework](#). This document is an official rebuttal from the College Board regarding the article written in *Heartland*. It's rather long (4 pages) but very informative.

I have many other, more detailed documents about what's in the framework that I will be happy to share. But I don't want to overwhelm you. [Let me know](#) if you have any questions or would like more information. As always, we appreciate your feedback.

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