



TPS Publishing Inc.
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If you are reading this document you are likely watching the results of the EdReports organization with interest. TPS sent a detailed response in March, 2014 addressing the original results published by EdReports. This short summary will explore how and why the small review team employed by EdReports is in complete disagreement with State Department of Education curriculum material adoption panels across the nation who have approved the *Creative Core Curriculum for Mathematics with STEM, Literacy and Arts program* for adoption in their state. Those states include; California, Florida, Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia for K-8. Each state and its curriculum adoption panel have a very thorough process, far more rigorous than the process employed by EdReports. The states take the time to review newly designed programs extensively. The process determined by the Board of EdReports included two major criterion of the company's own design and preference; they are not requirements of Common Core.

- 1. The EdReports Board would not permit review of all TPS core components as they did not have a matching teacher and student component (no individual teacher guides, no parent guides, no manipulatives, nor any cross-curricular components were allowed for consideration by EdReports).**
- 2. The EdReports Board would not permit review of any digital-only components.**

A high number of our components do not match EdReports' new criterion as you have seen in the accompanying EdReports results and commentary. EdReports advised TPS that they were going to review elements again of all the programs. TPS asked that EdReports review the whole toolbox, but EdReports declined. All TPS materials were built from scratch to exactly align to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics with our partner companies and organizations: CeMaST, Illinois State University, Action Based Curriculum, Didax and Ellison. In a few days time you will see the reports that score TPS with zeros or a heady two. Apparently there is no place for deviation from the traditional single printed textbook in the EdReports system.

If EdReports does not permit authors to use innovative designs in their work – then we can be certain that only traditional programs with traditional (unsatisfactory) results will continue to plague American children in mathematics. If EdReports continue to publish these hugely negative results because of their personally added criterion then they may as well mandate their chosen programs for the whole of the country. These inclusions will undermine the fine and rigorous work that went into developing the Common Core and the work of the curriculum material adoption committees who approved it. The problem with this approach is that we will again suffer with another generation of poor results in mathematics. It is time for change from traditional to project-based learning; that does not mean inclusion of a few story problems. It means teaching mathematics for understanding by modeling, constructing, data collection/analysis, problem solving, and with application through career-targeting projects. CeMaST has worked with some 23 industries to ensure this occurs. Teachers who served on state adoption panels know the enormous effort review team members expend for review of every single criteria of Common Core. Each serving member spent many months in each of these states reviewing every line of **EVERY** component a publisher advised as being built to meet the demanding requirements of Common Core. Standards maps with alignment to these requirements were built and used as the scoring rubric. Math content was paramount for each standard K-8 but there were numerous pages of criterion about focus, rigor and coherence; detailed and mandated needs for scaffolding and having materials



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for ELL through to advanced learners. **The rigor of the state review process is NOT apparent in the above two EdReports criterion.**

Perhaps the problem lies in the fundamental structure of the TPS program. Most curriculum materials, particularly in mathematics follow the industrial model. The curriculum serves as a machine in which the student enters as the raw material and the teacher serves simply as the machine operator. As with any machine, the goal is to produce uniform products of acceptable quality. The problem, of course is that the “raw material” is infinitely variable and we do not want to crush individuality from our society through uniformity. Also, we have not been an industrial society for over 30 years.

The TPS program is a toolbox. The skilled teacher selects the proper tool to perform that task. The tools accommodate infinitely variable situations. Important concepts such as “diversity” and “differentiated instruction” are central to the toolbox approach. The teacher has the tools to assure learning, not just the functioning of the machine. Since there is a misalignment between the EdReports review process and the TPS program (evidenced by the outcome of the reviews conducted by several states), any results published by EdReports are worthless concerning any program similar to TPS, where the design of the materials is a toolbox, not a self-contained machine. We empower our fellow teachers with the ability to review the tools, choose the pieces they wish to use and add them, by domain in the order of the district pacing plan, and by grade and deliver them digitally, or in print, or in combination.

Our philosophy and research can be seen on the TPS website (www.tpspublishing.com). The STEM projects (which EdReports simply seem not to understand) are pivotal to cover the conceptual understanding of each and every domain of mathematics. They were built by educators at the Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology CeMaST, at Illinois State University. CeMaST is one of the oldest STEM centers in the nation at an institution that is one of the largest producers of teachers in the United States. A traditional teacher does need transitional training in project-based learning – training which we provide. Reviewers without STEM experience may not recognize the strength of the project-based approach.

Consider this please:

Traditional instruction is based on the "just in case" approach. We teach concepts because the students will probably need to know them at some time in the future (on the test). That is not how we learn as adults nor is it effective for most students. **The STEM projects create a need to know the concept.** Think of it as "just in time" instruction. For example, in the Mathball Wizard lesson, students design and build a pinball machine. Granted, making a pinball machine is rather non-traditional for a math class. Students cannot score their performance, however, without knowing the order of mathematical operations (PEMDAS). In traditional classes, most teachers will save the application of learning until after instruction has occurred (if time permits to do it at all). Skilled teachers, however, will capitalize on the fact that students are more receptive to learning new content when it is needed. Students will request instruction on PEMDAS so that they can calculate their pinball score and compare their performance to others. This student desire for just in time information is where the project can be supplemented with direct instruction. Given a compelling reason, all students will learn.

Before using the STEM project we benchmark the students using online materials. EdReports refused to include these types of materials in their review.



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In the same way for advanced learners we provide +200 digital only STEM projects; again not permitted for review.

The Arts projects in grades K-5 only have a teacher edition, because they are teacher led arts-based mathematics activities, EdReports only review approximately half of these projects.

We have some grades 10-12 cross-curricula materials and products such as SMILE, Math with Literacy, and Critical Thinking in Mathematics; none were reviewed as we only supply them as online. Our modeling mathematics projects have included instructional videos but the lesson count of these and STEM projects is not accurate in the EdReports review as they do not understand the delivery or depth of these lessons.

As President of TPS I cannot afford to spend extensive time trying to answer the EdReports review team's points as they are so badly wrong and inaccurate, not so much due to the individual reviewers, but due to the process EdReports employed. It is not a good use of TPS' time and resources. Contrary to what EdReports may claim, it has been our experience that they do not listen.

We do not understand why a company with investors from the software industry would exclude all digital content. Since EdReports rejects digital components, they apparently believe that nothing useful can be learned in a digital format (like this letter or their webpage or EdReports, etc).

Also, why would a company with apparently experienced math educators ban all teacher-led or student-only led activities? Is none of the EdReports team a teacher with experience in RTI? Most students need visual and tactile experiences and probably guided and independent practice through worksheets, but they do not always need a student textbook.

All of the parent materials we provide were also excluded. Are parents no longer part of the team to help their children recognize that math and science are all around them every day?

With all this said, however, EdReports have brought some positive things to TPS. They are bringing TPS new customers. We have learned of the need to create documents to show traditional teachers *How to Use the Program* and illustrate other benefits of the program. In turn, this responsiveness to student, teacher and parent needs has led to more sales. Many teachers seeing the EdReports results and state curriculum adoption panel results recognize that there must be an issue with the review process and are intrigued by innovation that does not fit the norm. Teachers and School Administrators call us directly and we provide a digital link to ALL materials. They see the toolbox structure and recognize that it is impossible to mark the program as zero for any area. Although they may not be familiar with the toolbox format, they can, with the use of the standard maps, find the materials to prove 100% Common Core alignment.

The old saying is 'Do not believe everything you read'. This phrase is definitely true of these EdReports about TPS.

If you have interest in providing an innovate project based learning program that currently houses Science, Technology, English Language Arts, Art, and 100% alignment to Common Core then please contact me at maz@tpsublishing.com for your own personal digital link.

TPS will have its K-8 NGSS aligned content available by the end of 2015 and intends to merge the two programs. This dual alignment will provide a school district with everything they need for Common Core Mathematics, NGSS, and everything they need to organize after school and summer school programs. We would not ever state that our program is perfect but it will certainly provide better education than a traditional print-only program that does not offer cross-curricula, project-based learning.



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We wish you good luck with your choice of program.

Warmest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maz Wright'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Maz Wright