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Professor Says Editors Altered Review of AP, IB Courses

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Final Analysis of Which High School Math Program Is Better Bumped Up Grade for One Program

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Tuesday, November 27, 2007; A07

A mathematician who contributed to a recent report on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs says the report's editors reversed his judgment of which of the two college-level high school programs had the better math course.

David Klein of [California State University](#) at Northridge posted on his university's Web site his original assessments of AP Calculus AB and IB Mathematics SL, which showed he would have given a C+ to the AP course and a C- to the IB course. The final version of the report, released Nov. 14, raised the IB grade to a B-, contradicting Klein's view that the AP course was better. Last year, about 190,000 U.S. students took the AP course and about 8,370 took the IB course.

Klein also says that many of what he considered his strongest points were deleted by the editors, particularly his view that overuse of calculators could interfere with students' mastery of analytical skills and conceptual understanding.

In a statement, Chester E. Finn Jr., president of the Washington-based Fordham Institute, which sponsored the report, said that Klein "is a fine mathematician and expert educator" but "proved unacceptably resistant to editorial guidance with respect to length and reader accessibility and, after multiple attempts and with our deadline looming, we were unable to reach a meeting of the minds about needed revisions. To my knowledge, our only substantive difference is that I view calculator use as a problem while he apparently views it as a major flaw, leading him to reduce the programs' marks somewhat more than I and my colleagues felt was justified on this ground."

Finn did not explain why the editors raised just the IB grade.

The Fordham editors removed Klein's name from the list of co-authors, as he requested, although they mentioned in the forward that he had advised on the AP and IB math reviews. Other listed co-authors said that they had no complaints about the editing and that their grades were not changed.

Klein says he does not consider either the AP or IB courses the gold standard for high school math, although in his original report he said they had some strengths not found in mainstream high school programs. The Fordham report said that AP and IB were "intellectually richer than almost any state standard and exam for high school that we've seen."