



Just for Parents

Message from the Commissioner

As the Commissioner for the Florida Department of Education, it is a privilege to introduce you to the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. These standards will shape classroom instruction and the way children learn. As we transition to the Common Core State Standards, I am confident that Florida will continue to serve as a national leader in education reform. Our students, parents, educators, communities, and other education stakeholders are essential to Florida's success during this time.

Pam Stewart, Commissioner of Education

Why Common Core?

Education standards like the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards are learning goals. They identify what skills your child needs to master in each grade before moving up to the next.

Florida has adopted new standards, called Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics, which will impact the way children are taught, how they learn, and how they will be assessed. Florida's schools will be fully integrated with these standards by school year 2013-2014. By understanding these standards now, parents can get a head start on paving the road to success.

Some Facts about Common Core Standards:

- Developed by the best teachers, administrators, and experts in the field
- Aligned with the highest international standards
- Based on the best research about educational outcomes and readiness for college and workforce (See: [Research Supporting Standards](#))
- Adopted in 45 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia

- Will ensure all students, *everywhere*, receive a consistent quality education (students can move from state to state or district to district and transition smoothly)
- Will replace Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

For more information, visit the following website:

[Common Core State Standards](#).

To view frequently asked questions, click here:

[Frequently Asked Questions](#).



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COMMON CORE AND THE CLASSROOM

What can I expect for my child in the classroom?

As Florida's schools incorporate the Common Core State Standards, classroom instruction will look increasingly different. Expect to see children learning in more collaborative groups. Expect subject areas to overlap and intertwine. Expect more in-depth reading assignments. You can get your children off to an early start by focusing *now* on the new expectations, some of which are listed below:

More Non-fiction

- Students will be reading more informational and increasingly complex text as they move through the elementary and secondary grades.

- Teachers in all subject areas will increase focus on reading and comprehension.

More Evidence

- Students will be expected to write more and write better, using facts, details, and examples to inform, describe, and explain.
- In reading, students will be required to make *evidence-based* claims about what they read.
- In writing, students will be asked to cite evidence to justify their statements rather than rely on opinions or personal feelings.

More Complexity

- Students will be expected to read and comprehend increasingly complex texts. Research shows that the complexity of texts used in schools has declined over the past 40 years.

More Speaking /More Listening

- Students will be expected to demonstrate that they can speak and listen effectively.
- Students will be assessed for both speaking *and* listening skills. In the classroom, this means more small-group and whole-class discussions.
- Expect teachers to teach and evaluate students on how well they understand the speaker's points.

More Reading and Writing—Lots More!

In other words, teaching reading and writing will be the responsibility of every teacher. Reading and writing skills must improve if students in the United States expect to compete globally. Common Core is embracing this challenge by bringing literacy (the ability to read and write with competency) to the forefront. Literacy standards for history/social science, science, and technical subjects are now embedded in the new course descriptions; starting this year, these standards will be taught by teachers, mastered by students, and assessed on tests.

Why do we need literacy standards for subjects like history/social science, science, and technology? Simple. To understand and

converse in a subject, students must be able to read, write, speak, and listen in the language of that field. Research shows that the more fluent a student is in any particular field, the more capable he/she is of understanding the complexities of that field. Literacy standards will actually serve to enhance the *content* standards for subjects like history/social science, science, and technology.

Common Core includes technology-based standards as well, interwoven into the literacy standards. These will help prepare students for life in our technological society. They ask that students understand and use sound methods for researching, producing, and consuming media.

Below are samples of what a middle-school student enrolled in a science class will be taught and expected to learn now that Common Core Literacy Standards are in place:

Reading Standard for Science, grades 6-8:

- Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text.

Writing Standard for Science, grades 6-8:

- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

To learn more about Common Core Literacy Standards, visit the following website: [Literacy Standards](#).



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“...Students must read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts...”

***Excerpt from
Common Core
State Standards
Initiative***

WHAT ABOUT MATH?



The new standards for practicing math will allow students more time to master concepts and skills. Standards will be fewer but have more depth.

Learn more about these standards in the October issue of [Just for Parents](#). In the interim, consider visiting the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice website: [Standards for Mathematical Practice](#).

PARENT GUIDE TO COMMON CORE

Overloaded? Try this—a quick and easy roadmap through Common Core that shows what your (K-8) child will be learning this year and how you can support them:

[Parent Roadmaps to Common Core Standards](#)

To stay up-to-date with positive happenings in Florida’s public schools and communicate with other parents, please join our online parent community at [Just for Parents](#).

