

Common Core State Standards for Parents and Families: Overview

What is an Academic Standard?

Academic standards describe the knowledge and skills a student needs to acquire by the end of each school year and upon completion of a K-12 public school education.

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) identify the specific skills and knowledge that all students are expected to learn, know, and be able to do in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in 2010 and implemented a four-year timeline for educators to learn and begin to adapt their own lesson plans and curriculum.

Today, jobs require new ways of thinking and using technology. The CCSS will help schools design lessons and other learning experiences to focus on deeper, richer learning that will prepare students for the 21st century workforce.

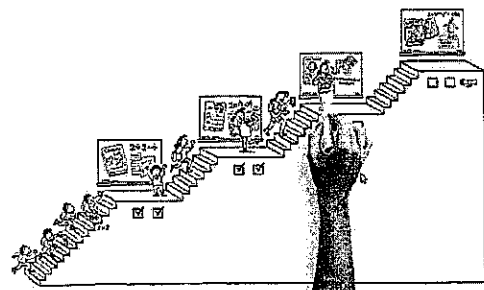
Did New Jersey have state standards prior to the Common Core State Standards?

Yes. Since the 1990s New Jersey has had state standards for teaching and student learning in nine subject areas, known as the Core Curriculum Content Standards (English language arts (ELA); mathematics; science; social studies; technology; 21st century life and careers; comprehensive health and physical education; visual and performing arts; and world languages). The New Jersey State Board of Education voluntarily adopted the CCSS to replace the previous ELA and mathematics standards.

What do the CCSS mean for student learning and achievement?

The skills and knowledge outlined in the CCSS will help your child grow from one grade to the next by focusing on authentic learning experiences. We don't know what tomorrow's jobs will be, but we do know that the future depends on a strong workforce in which critical thinking and problem-solving skills can be applied in any context. The CCSS for ELA and mathematics were updated so that your child is encouraged to think deeply, collaborate with peers, and show their work and their thought process in arriving at an answer. This will prepare them for success at work or when they enroll in college. To search for information and examples organized by subject and grade, visit the [New Jersey Educator Resource Exchange](http://www.nj.gov/education/standards).

Watch a 3-minute video that explains how the Common Core State Standards will help students achieve at high levels and learn what they need to know to get to graduation and beyond. <http://www.cgcs.org/domain/33> (English and Spanish)



What are some benefits of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?

The CCSS better prepare students to succeed in college course work and future employment. The standards:

- Set clear and consistent learning goals for every student.
- Utilize the knowledge and experience of teachers, the higher education and business communities, academic content experts, leading education researchers, and the public.
- Focus on students' critical thinking skills and students' ability to solve real-world problems rather than just memorize facts.
- Are based on state and international student learning standards that reflect the expectations of postsecondary job training programs and credit-bearing, entry level courses in two- and four-year colleges.

Do the Common Core State Standards determine what and how teachers teach?

No. The standards are not a limited program of study or a specific set of courses. In New Jersey, local school districts and educators have the responsibility to develop lessons and materials that will help ensure that students in their classrooms meet the learning expectations in the CCSS.

The standards can be taught in many different ways to meet the needs of all students, including students with special needs. Therefore, lesson plans are still in the hands of districts, schools, and teachers so that they can design lessons that include strategies to engage all students in learning.

The CCSS do not limit the knowledge and skills needed for quality teaching; all decisions regarding lesson plans, textbooks, and materials continue to be made at the local level.

What do the CCSS look like in the classroom?

If you visit your child's classroom, you may not see straight rows of desks facing the teacher who stands in the front of the room and does most of the talking. Instead you might find that the room is arranged with tables and groups of chairs so that students can interact with each other and the teacher can move from table to table.

You might also see students moving around the room sharing information and asking questions. Unlike in the past, you may not see students memorizing lists of items, but rather using multiple methods to obtain and remember information. The CCSS emphasize teaching students *how* to find information and analyze, apply, and explain it. Students are responsible for learning to solve authentic, real-world problems. You will see that teachers put an emphasis on assisting students in explaining their answers to problems and questions.

Of course, there are quiet times in the classroom, but there is interaction in the Common Core classroom as well. Students have discussion groups and perform team-based activities to discover and share information. You will see inclusive classrooms where students with special needs are working with their peers to solve problems in many different ways. Learning with the CCSS is personalized. The CCSS let students practice the skills that they will need when they move on to the next grade or graduate from high school.

In a Common Core classroom, teaching and learning focus on critical thinking skills and students' ability to read, write, speak, listen, and solve "real world" problems.

This allows students to learn and perform in an environment similar to what they will experience in their future work environment.

Learn more about the standards at <http://njcore.org/resources/portal/18242> and corestandards.org.

Common Core State Standards for Parents and Families: Resources

Learning more about the Common Core State Standards can help parents and families partner with schools to help their child succeed. Here is a list of resources, materials, websites, and guides to learn more about the standards.

A. Common Core State Standards 3-minute video:

Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) released 3-minute videos explaining the Common Core in **English** and **Spanish**:
<http://vimeo.com/51933492>

B. Common Core Shifts (Updates from the previous academic standards to the current Common Core):

Common Core Shifts for **ELA/Literacy**: http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/122113_Shifts.pdf
Common Core Shifts for **Math**: http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/122113_Shifts.pdf

C. Common Core State Standards in ELA and Math:

CCSS ELA Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
CCSS Math Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/>

D. CCSS A Focus on Math – Grades K-12

Math Common Core for all grade levels:

<http://achievethecore.org/dashboard/300/search/1/2/0/1/2/3/4/5/6/7/8/9/10/11/12/page/774/focus-by-grade-level-list-pg>

Focus by grade levels:

K http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_K.pdf
Gr 1 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_1.pdf
Gr 2 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_2.pdf
Gr 3 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_3.pdf
Gr 4 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_4.pdf
Gr 5 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_5.pdf
Gr 6 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_6.pdf
Gr 7 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_7.pdf
Gr 8 http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/SAP_Focus_Math_8.pdf

E. National PTA – Parent Guide to Student Success: An Overview of Key Skills in English Language Arts and Math

Main site for all National PTA Parent Guides: <http://www.pta.org/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2796>

National PTA Parent Guide: Kindergarten to High School:

http://pta.org/files/Common%20Core%20State%20Standards%20Resources/2013%20Guide%20Bundle_082213.pdf

Parent Guides by Grade Levels:

K http://www.pta.org/files/K_B-W.pdf
Gr 1 http://www.pta.org/files/1st%20Grade_B-W.pdf
Gr 2 http://www.pta.org/files/2nd%20Grade_B-W.pdf
Gr 3 http://www.pta.org/files/3rd%20Grade_B-W.pdf
Gr 4 http://www.pta.org/files/4th%20Grade_B-W.pdf

Gr 5 http://www.pta.org/files/5th%20Grade_B-W.pdf
Gr 6 http://www.pta.org/files/6th_Grade__BW.pdf
Gr 7 http://www.pta.org/files/7th%20Grade_B-W.pdf
Gr 8 http://www.pta.org/files/8th%20Grade_B-W.pdf
HS-ELA http://www.pta.org/files/HS%20ELA_B-W.pdf
HS-Math http://www.pta.org/files/HS%20Math_B-W.pdf

F. Council of Great City Schools (CGSC) Parent Guides :

Parent Guides to the CCSS – English Language Arts: <http://www.cgcs.org/Domain/36>

Parent Guides for ELA by Grade levels:

K http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_K.pdf
Gr 1 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_1.pdf
Gr 2 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_2_v1r3.pdf
Gr 3 <http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ELA%20Grade%203.pdf>
Gr 4 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_4_v1r5_newfont.pdf
Gr 5 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_5_v1r5_newfont.pdf
Gr 6 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_6_v1r8.pdf
Gr 7 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_7_v1r10.pdf
Gr 8 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_ELA_8_v1r7.pdf
HS http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/100282-000ParentGuide_ELA_HS_v1r8.pdf

Main website for CGCS Parent Guides to the CCSS – Mathematics: <http://www.cgcs.org/Page/244>

Parent Guides for Math by Grade Levels:

K http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_k_v2r2.pdf
Gr 1 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_1.pdf
Gr 2 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_2.pdf
Gr 3 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_3.pdf
Gr 4 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_4.pdf
Gr 5 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_5.pdf
Gr 6 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_6.pdf
Gr 7 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_7.pdf
Gr 8 http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_8.pdf
HS http://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/36/ParentGuide_Math_HS_Final.pdf

G. Glossaries for CCSS Math and ELA Terms:

Math Glossary: <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/mathematics-glossary/glossary/>
ELA Glossary: <http://commoncore.scholastic.com/basics/glossary-english-language-arts-terms>

H. Partnership of Assessment for Readiness for College and Career Readiness:

About PARCC: <http://parconline.org/>
Main website for Parents: <http://www.parconline.org/for-parents>

**The New Jersey Department of Education has created guides that explain
the new standards and what they look like in the classroom:**

K-2: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/resources/guidek2.pdf>
3-5: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/resources/guide35.pdf>
6-8: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/resources/guide68.pdf>
High school: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/resources/guide912.pdf>

Common Core State Standards for Parents and Families: Myths vs. Facts

Successful implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) requires parents, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to have the facts about what the standards *are* and what they *are not*. The following information addresses common misconceptions about the development, intent, content, and implementation of the standards.

Myth	Fact
<p>Myth: Because the standards are “common” across all states, New Jersey’s current high standards for student learning will be lowered. The standards create a “one-size-fits-all” education system in our country.</p>	<p>Fact: When the CCSS work began, there was a clear agreement that no state would lower its academic standards. The standards were designed by some of the best educational minds in the country and incorporate the highest international standards, research, evidence, and expertise about educational outcomes. Teachers still have the flexibility and responsibility to customize instruction depending on their students’ abilities. In addition, the CCSS make it more likely that if students move to another state, they remain on track to attain all skills and knowledge necessary for a K-12 education.</p>
<p>Myth: The standards tell teachers what to teach.</p>	<p>Fact: Teachers know best about what works in the classroom. That is why these standards establish what students need to learn but do not dictate how and what teachers should teach. Districts will continue to set curriculum and teachers will continue to create lesson plans that help students reach the standards.</p>
<p>Myth: These standards amount to a national curriculum for our schools.</p>	<p>Fact: The standards are not a curriculum. They are a clear set of shared goals and expectations that will help students succeed in college and their career. Local teachers, principals, superintendents, and school boards decide how the standards are to be met for their students. Teachers will continue to create their own lesson plans and tailor their instruction to the individual needs of the students.</p>
<p>Myth: Teachers are left to implement the standards without any support or guidance.</p>	<p>Fact: Decisions on how to implement the standards are made at the local level. There are different approaches to providing teachers with the supports they need to help students succeed. NJ teachers will continue to have professional development opportunities and the Department of Education will continue to provide resources to support this work.</p>
<p>Myth: The federal government enforces the standards and it will control their use in schools.</p>	<p>Fact: The CCSS were developed by teams of educators and other experts, and were voluntarily adopted by the New Jersey State Board of Education in 2010. Although the federal government has supported states adopting rigorous standards, it has never required the CCSS or any other specific set of standards for states.</p>
<p>Myth: The Common Core State Standards will result in a national database of private student information.</p>	<p>Fact: The CCSS do not contain requirements related to data collection. Standards define expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. Implementation does not require student data collection.</p>

Myths about Content and Quality: Mathematics

The mathematics standards lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle school and high school standards expect students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real-world issues and challenges. They prepare students to think and reason mathematically. The standards set a rigorous definition of college and career readiness - not by piling topic upon topic, but by requiring that students develop a depth of understanding and ability to apply mathematics to novel situations, as college students and employees regularly do.

Myth: The math standards are not connected, do not build on each other, and they do not prepare students for the challenges at each grade level.

- ✓ **Fact:** The mathematical progressions presented in the standards build upon each other. The math standards lead to college and career readiness at an internationally competitive level.

Myth: First-year algebra is the base for all higher-level math classes but the standards do not require students to learn algebra in the 8th grade. This means in high school, they will not get the advanced math they need.

- ✓ **Fact:** Districts can design accelerated courses for students preparing for Algebra I in 8th grade and there is support and guidance within the CCSS for doing so.

Myths about Content and Quality: English Language Arts/Literacy

The English language arts standards require specific critical content for all students, including classic myths and stories from around the world, America's founding documents, American literature, and Shakespeare. One of the over-arching goals of the Common Core State Standards is to improve students' critical and analytical reading skills. Students will be required to read more "informational" texts. The texts are selected by the district, school, and teacher—just as they always have been. In addition to content coverage, the increased focus on information and authentic texts is to prepare students for college and real-world reading and writing requirements. For example, 80 percent of the reading and writing done in the workplace requires workers to read material, analyze the material using critical-thinking skills, and articulately write or verbally respond to the material. The standards require that students learn and apply their new knowledge through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Myth: The standards are just vague descriptions of skills and do not include a reading list or any other reference to content.

- ✓ **Fact:** The appendices of the standards do include sample texts that demonstrate the level of complexity appropriate for students in each grade level. The samples are aligned with the standards and provide a reference point for teachers when selecting their classroom texts, along with the flexibility to make their own decisions about which texts to use.

Myth: English teachers are expected to teach science and social studies content, and science and social studies teachers are expected to teach reading.

- ✓ **Fact:** English teachers will still teach their students reading through literature and informational texts. However, high school graduates headed straight for the work force and college freshmen need the skills to utilize complex texts outside of literature. Therefore, the standards also ensure that students are being prepared to read, write, speak, listen, and research across the curriculum, including history and science. Literacy skills are taught within the context of the content. The CCSS mandate that by Grade 12, 70 percent of reading assignments across all subjects use informational texts and 30 percent use literary texts. All teachers should be familiar with the standards so students can successfully build their knowledge in all of their subject areas.