

Top 10 Things Parents Should Know about **Common Core State Standards**

1. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will prepare students for college and career.

The new standards in English language arts and mathematics were designed to prepare students for the rigor and performance expectations of college and the workplace.

2. The standards support the work of San Diego County's teachers.

Just like the earlier California State Standards, CCSS describe what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level and in specific classes. For years, teachers have worked individually and collaboratively, designing lessons that support the standards. That same process is underway as we implement the new standards. Teachers will continue to work collaboratively at their sites and in district- and county-led training to create lessons based on the new standards.

3. Teaching and learning with the CCSS allows for more in-depth study.

CCSS allow teachers to take a focused set of standards and teach them in depth. With these new standards, students in math classes will learn how to consider multiple ways to solve a problem and how to explain their rationale behind their answer. In English and other subjects, students will learn how to gather evidence from multiple sources to support a position in a classroom debate or to write an argumentative essay.

4. CCSS instructional materials will be streamlined and collaborative.

In 2012, State Superintendent of Instruction Tom Torlakson recruited teachers and content experts to review our existing textbooks and instructional materials for alignment to the CCSS.

Because the standards have been adopted by 45 states, our teachers are also accessing lessons and materials designed by teachers in other states.

5. New standards mean new assessments.

Since 1998, students in Grades 2 to 11 have taken the California Standards Test (CST) each spring. New tests currently being designed by Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) will replace the CST beginning in spring 2015. These tests will ask students to explain their thinking and apply their knowledge more than previous multiple-answer tests could. They also will give parents and students accurate information about whether students are on track to graduate high school ready for college and the workplace.

6. The way students' and schools' test scores are calculated will change.

CCSS test results should not be compared with previous CST test results, as they are completely different assessments that test different skills. As our teachers and students transition to these more rigorous requirements, we must be prepared for students' scores and schools' Academic Performance Index (API) numbers to be assessed using different measures.

7. There is funding to support the transition to the new standards.

California has budgeted \$1.25 billion to help implement CCSS. The money will be spent on the three areas designated by the California Department of Education: staff development, instructional materials and technology.

8. Parents can support their students' transition to CCSS.

Learning doesn't end in the classroom, and parents can help provide the support and environment that children need to succeed at school.

The National Parent-Teacher Association offers a list of recommendations that include:

- creating a quiet place for your child to study;
- setting aside uninterrupted time every day for your child to concentrate on reading, writing and math; and
- sitting down with your child at least once a week for 15 to 30 minutes while he or she works on homework.

There are many resources available for parents who want to learn more about instruction and assessment under the new standards, including practice tests on www.smarterbalanced.org and guides to student success on www.pta.org.

9. The new standards are nationally and internationally benchmarked.

California is one of 45 states that have voluntarily adopted the standards. High standards that are consistent across states provide teachers, parents and students with a set of clear expectations that are aligned to the expectations in college and careers. The standards promote equity by ensuring all students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad.

10. The new standards are a critical component in our students' future success.

The clearly defined goals of CCSS allow teachers and families to work together to help students succeed here in San Diego County and equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college and in their chosen careers.

Learn more about the Common Core State Standards at www.sdcoe.net/commoncore.