

# Common Core State Standards

## *A Spotlight for Parents*

*Issue #1*

### What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative is a voluntary, state-led effort to establish a shared set of clear, educational standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

The Common Core Standards communicate what is expected of students at each grade level, putting all stakeholders on the same page. Most states in the country have Math and ELA standards currently in place, however they vary widely from state to state in their rigor and coverage of material.

The Common Core State Standards initiative is not a federal initiative. These are not national standards. Currently 47 states and Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia have adopted these standards as a whole or in part, including New York State.

A common set of standards will ensure that all students, no matter where they live, will be focused on graduating from high school prepared for college and/or career. Furthermore, in an increasingly mobile society, families with school age children will not have to adjust

to new learning expectations if they move from state to state. Another advantage is that common standards allow states and districts to pool their resources such as instructional materials, best practices in teaching, assessments and approaches to helping parents support and reinforce learning at home.

The religious and independent schools in NYS are working to implement the standards in our classrooms to ensure that our graduates continue to be shining examples education at its best.

### What are your children expected to do?

#### **ELA**

- Become better readers;
- Use primary sources;
- Infer, like a detective where the evidence is in a text to support an argument or opinion;
- See text as a source of evidence;
- Tolerate frustration by reading challenging text;
- Balance fiction and non-fiction book selection;
- Be a critical reader and writer;
- Expose themselves to the world through reading and exploring text.

#### **Math**

- Spend more time thinking and working with fewer concepts;
- Be able to understand concepts as well as the process to solve a problem;
- Build knowledge from year to year;
- Spend time practicing with high intensity skills;
- Show, through numerous ways, mastery of material at a deep level;
- Apply math in other content areas;
- Be fluent in math facts and skills.

### The Common Core State Standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build on strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society; and
- Are evidence-based.

Source: <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards>

### What does it mean for the classroom?

According to its mission statement, the Common Core State Standards Initiative aims to “provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.” ([www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org))

Students and parents will see an in-depth focus on fewer standards as well as an emphasis on inquiry based learning. In addition, the text complexity of grade level books will increase in some cases as much as two or three grade levels. Students will also be asked to apply their knowledge through higher-order thinking skills. You can also expect to see your children reading more informational texts rather than fictional works of literature. In addition math education will be focused more on real-life application. You can expect to see more emphasis being placed on students as the facilitators of their own learning rather than on teachers delivering all of the information directly to the students.

### What can you do to help your child?

Since your child was born you have heard that reading to them every day is one of the most important thing you can do. This has not changed.

One thing you can do to add to this routine is to practice “close reading” and “evidence based questioning.”

What is close reading? What this means is the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text. Such a reading places great emphasis on the particular over the general. So how do you do this? While

reading a book with your child take the time to focus on specific details on a page, looking for words or phrases that may cause confusion. Focus on specific things that are happening within the story.

Use evidenced based questions to get to the details the author is writing about. Ask questions as you are reading that requires your child to “go back to the text” to find the answer. All ages of children can do this, from the youngest pre-readers who can an-

swer questions about the pictures, to the most advance readers, who are able to answer specific questions with details from the text.

Another thing you can do is find non-fiction books, or articles to supplement the fiction stories you are reading. For example if you are reading [Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do you See](#) also read selections from a non-fiction book about brown bears.