

Deeper Understanding of Common Core Standards

ACTION ALERT



Schools throughout California and the rest of the nation have begun implementing the Common Core State Standards in the last few years. These new academic standards reflect the notion that how students learn is as important as what they learn. The standards set goals to ensure all students are prepared for the demands of the 21st century global economy and set clear learning expectations to be met along the way towards high school graduation, leaving how to meet them up to teachers.

Different Ways of Learning

The Common Core will not result in students learning substantially different information; rather it will push them to learn in different ways. The focus will be on critical thinking and problem solving instead of rote memorization. As Andrea Gould, math coordinator for the San Mateo Union High School District, puts it, "Common Core offers a lot of opportunities for more rigor in our classrooms, and also actually tries to get students to learn ideas more deeply and understand concepts." California students will have a much greater and more active role in their education. This will mean changes in how they are taught. For example:

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in California:

- Expose students to more complex text, meaning what they read will have a higher level of difficulty: This is important for college readiness, as the ability to answer questions about complex text is a key predictor of college success.
- Place a much greater emphasis on informational text as do colleges and workplaces: Currently, in many elementary programs, only 15% of text is considered expository. The Common Core sets the expectation that, in grades three through eight, 50% of the text be expository.

The Common Core State Standards for Math in California:

TAKE ACTION >

Send a letter urging the Governor and Legislature to invest wisely in the transition to Common Core.

Additional Resources

Milestones schools and students need to meet under Common Core [GO →](#)

Understanding how the transition to the Common Core will be made in California (PDF) [GO →](#)

Parent guides to the Common Core standards [GO →](#)

Articles

New techniques get kids thinking critically [GO →](#)

California prepares for Common Core standards [GO →](#)

- Are designed to focus instruction on fewer topics each year: Allowing more time to be spent on each topic to foster deeper understanding of key concepts and skills.
- Ask students to engage in more complex, higher-order thinking: They require students to gain in-depth mastery of content, to demonstrate mastery by solving non-routine and multi-step problems, and to fully explain and justify their solutions.

(Source: Sacramento City Unified School District: <http://www.scusd.edu/common-core>)

The Common Core provides an exciting opportunity to revolutionize classrooms and, more importantly, allows for a greater engagement of students in their education. There will be challenges on the road to implementation and there is an immediate need for the state to invest in ensuring teachers are supported in the classroom, students have aligned-instructional materials and schools can build up their technology infrastructure.

We'll continue to keep you informed on the Common Core in the coming months.

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THE CHILDREN'S MOVEMENT OF CALIFORNIA