

Another education 'reform'?
What is I heard... Is that true?
Common Core? I'm confused...
When I went to school...
Who do we listen to?
Really?
We hear you.
I don't understand. Help!
Why do we need
Common Core? What about...
Are you serious?
What's my role?
What's your role?
But someone told me...
What is changing?
What's next?

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Understanding California's **Common Core**

A guide for parents

What is Common Core?

California's Common Core is an updated set of goals for learning. It is a set of standards for students that educators from every state helped develop, states voluntarily adopted, and communities and districts implement. In our schools, this new set of goals for English and math will work grade-by-grade, step-by-step to help prepare your children for life after high school.

Like renovating an old house, we're working together to remodel our school system to keep up with modern times. Common Core represents a new blueprint for the way our schools approach teaching and learning. Like any good remodel, this blueprint is an upgrade in quality and content.



Why the upgrade?

This approach to teaching and learning is going to build the next generation of American innovation.

Today, we need all students achieving at high levels, and we need them not only to know things, but also to be able to do things. That means understanding the content they learn in school and being able to apply it in real-world settings.

This new approach allows students to weave together, like the strands of a rope, the knowledge they learn with the skills needed to succeed in college, in the workforce, and in life. With Common Core, your child will have the ability to weave together that rope well before graduation.

What's new about this approach?

The big ideas about Common Core aren't new. The lessons or projects that your child tends to remember and absorb are the ones that get them engaged with the material. The new California standards require them to figure out how and why something works, while creating their own ways to test their knowledge and apply it in different ways.

With Common Core, children are required to use information like cooks use ingredients, selecting, evaluating, and combining them in a hands-on, exploratory way. Along the way, they're working with each other, their teachers, and their families and gaining a deeper understanding of what they are learning and how to apply it in a variety of ways.

Educators have always used these kinds of lessons, but with Common Core, we can apply them consistently, so this approach to learning is the rule and not the exception.

What's Common about Common Core?

Clear, shared goals allow our schools to have a coherent plan so they can coordinate across classrooms, grade levels, schools, districts, and even states. Educators can then share ideas, and states and districts can make sure that as students move through school, they're building the knowledge and skills they need to succeed after high school.

It wouldn't make much sense for a sports team to play under a different set of rules in each stadium. Common Core allows us to share key goals for our kids while still providing teachers with the flexibility to customize learning to student interests and needs.

What about the tests?

In order to grow a strong workforce for tomorrow, we need a strong and accurate way of evaluating how we're building students' potential today.

The Smarter Balanced assessments adopted by California are a thoughtful remodel of the way we assess learning. They ask students to show deeper learning and solve real world problems across subject areas. Students have to explain their reasoning, rather than just memorize answers. They must solve multi-step problems and think critically.



This is the kind of thinking we all have to do in the real world, so it makes sense to evaluate whether we're helping kids think that way now.

What's our role as administrators?

It is our role as administrators to support our teachers with the right resources, training and materials so they are fully equipped to do what they do best. It is also our job to guide our community – including parents and families – through this process. Common Core is inviting all of us to rethink the way we educate, and that is a good thing.

What's your role as a child's family?

We need you in this process. It is a team effort to make sure that our young people can handle their role as active learners. You have a critical role to play in providing your child with opportunities to learn and explore, giving them feedback on what's working and what's not, and encouraging their persistence both when they succeed and when they make mistakes.

Learn More: Visit www.acsa.org or www.ccsesa.org for more about how parents and community members can help our students.