As districts implement the Common Core Standards, they are also reflecting on their reporting systems to ensure alignment with the revised standards. Many are looking at transitioning to a standards-based reporting system.

Thomas Guskey and Jane Bailey, in their book, *Developing Standards-Based Report Cards*, walk readers through the steps to make a positive, successful transition to standards-based report cards:

1. Define the purpose of your report card
2. Develop reporting standards
3. Address essential steps in development
4. Establish performance indicators
5. Develop the reporting form
6. Pilot test and revise

The first step to creating a meaningful and useful standards-based report card is to clearly define the purpose of the tool.

Decide if its primary purpose is:

- To communicate information about students’ achievement to parents and others
- To provide information to students for self-evaluation
- To select, identify or group students for certain educational paths or programs
- To provide incentives for students to learn
- To evaluate the effectiveness of instructional programs

- To provide evidence of students’ lack of effort or responsibility

This is a critical first step. After making the decision as to your report card’s purpose, include it on the document as a reminder as you move forward with implementation.

Promoting Adolescent Literacy

Www.AdLit.org is a website that contains resources geared for teachers and parents of adolescents. Some of the resources available address not only English Language Arts, but ideas for content area teachers and how to address the Common Core.

Some of the tools that are available on the website include: concise and detailed research on adolescent research (AdLit 101), explicit strategy instruction for all content areas in a library of tools (Classroom Strategies), and professional development video modules and resources for English language arts and content area teachers (Common Core Classroom).

The video modules in the Common Core Classroom contain all the teaching materials and strategy instructional tools needed to implement the lessons. The modules assist in expressing how a lesson aligns with the standards and offers reflection from the implementing teacher.

Books for Struggling Adolescent Readers

Teachers can find a variety of great books for teens at Themed Booklists for Teen Readers. Even struggling or reluctant readers will be drawn to these lists which are grouped into the following categories: history, mystery, fantasy, nonfiction, short stories, and poetry.

In addition, this site provides a Featured Booklist where one can find both fiction and nonfiction books on popular topics such as War Stories, Romance and Relationships, the White House and Its Residents or Award-Winning books.

Students can learn how espionage played a significant role during the Revolutionary War or how Mary Todd Lincoln’s dressmaker was a former slave.

Author Study Units

Teachers can locate the background information on 62 top young adult authors and illustrators from the video interviews with them at http://www.adlit.org/authors/.

Students can learn about why they became writers, the people who influenced them and the writing process itself. When using the video interviews as a resource for author study units, teachers can access the Author Study Toolkit to learn how to create such units. Students read several works by an author and then can work in groups, with partners or independently to complete the following tasks:

- Evaluate the themes, characters, and writing style of the author
- Make connections between the author's life and work
- Make personal connections between their own experiences and those of the author and his/her characters

Source: http://www.adlit.org/authors/

The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who cannot read them.

- Mark Twain

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Expectations from Previous Grades

With all the changes that are taking place as we transition to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, it is especially important to have vertical articulation conversations with the grades above and below those we are teaching. Students that enter Math II will extend previous work with linear and exponential functions to quadratic functions. Students will find correlations between the equation of a function and its graph based on transformations. Students extend geometric relationships with more formal arguments and proofs.

Students that enter Geometry should be coming with a base understanding of translations (introduced in 8th grade) that will be formalized this year. Students will extend their use of quadratic equations to find distances in the coordinate plane and to solve problems using the Pythagorean Theorem.

For more information: http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs

Inside Mathematics

“The study of mathematics, like the Nile, begins in minuteness but ends in magnificence.”

Charles Caleb Colton

Inside Mathematics is a website created for teachers with the goal of providing researched mathematics instruction resources. Created from the Noyce Foundation’s Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative, Inside Mathematics offers:
- Classroom Tasks
- Videos of lessons in the classroom
- Videos of Problems of the Month
- Videos of Re-engagement lessons
- Videos of Math Talks
- Problems of the month
- Tools for Coaches
- Tools for Administration

For more information visit: http://insidemathematics.org/

PARCC Evidence Statements

PARCC has released Blueprints for the summative components of the assessment to be given in the spring of 2015 to Illinois students. The PARCC assessment is based on Evidence Centered Design (ECD), which starts with broad claims defining goals for students. To assess these broad claims, they created Evidence Statements to show what a student would be able to do to show mastery of the standards. One type of high school evidence statement is “Construct, autonomously, chains of reasoning that will justify or refute propositions or conjectures.” There are several evidence statements in this category that specify different content scope standards from Number & Quantity, Algebra, Functions, and Geometry. There is also an evidence statement of this type that requires use of “securely-held content” from eighth grade in the domain of Expressions & Equations.

For more information: http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs
To increase student interest and engagement with subject matter, consider a collaborative learning environment (Johnson and Johnson, 1999).

This evidence-based practice has been shown to support 21st Century skills such as deeper reasoning and improved communication, along with influencing increases in social, emotional, and behavioral competencies (Youngerman, 1998).

To build capacity and manage the classroom during these highly effective learning times, pre-planning, modeling and practice time is crucial. A review of teacher-authored articles highlighted the following “lessons learned” which support collaborative interactions:

1) Establish interpersonal norms. Setting norms supports effective interaction. Knowing how students are to interact with each other sets the stage for appropriate and productive interactions.

   One example is: 

   - Listen, pause, ask questions.
   - Paraphrase, and then respond.

To build capacity and manage the classroom during these highly effective learning times, pre-planning, modeling and practice time is crucial.

2) Explicit instruction on peer to peer listening skills. Practice to listen, pause, ask questions, paraphrase, and then respond.

3) Explicit instruction on asking good questions. “What” and “how” sentences lead to deeper and richer dialogue. Teach that questions are for clarification or for understanding.

4) Negotiation skills and the art of compromise. Extending beyond “win-lose” situations requires the ability to reframe opinions around values or agreed expectations. This sometimes includes revisiting norms.

5) Educator modeling. Viewing application of lessons learned can make a big impact. Teachers can consistently and visually place high value on group goals and individual accountability.

6) Try again. Utilize new tools; work with a colleague to pre-plan, model, practice; re-assign student groupings; observe each other, and discuss observations.

Collaborative learning strategies and tools engage many students’ natural instinct to be social and are at the core of most learning styles (Silver & Perini, 2010).

- ISBE Collaboration Guide

**GROUP INVESTIGATION**

**STEP BY STEP**

Common Core implementation includes group investigation through requiring students to work in small groups using cooperative inquiry, group discussion, and producing cooperative artifacts.

**Step 1:** Choose a topic (e.g. communities) and assign small groups to select differing subtopics (e.g. work, family, friends).

**Step 2:** Students work within a collaborative environment in response to a more reflective question proposed by the teacher or other group (e.g. “How does one impact the many?”) (Slavin & Chamberlain, 1992).

**CLASSROOM APPLICATION**

Apply this strategy to discover free digital support tools.

**Step 1:** Assign student groups to search “digital tools for student collaboration;”

**Step 2:** Groups discuss when, where, and how one tool assists learning. Students produce a class resource.

Collaborative learning supports students synthesizing ideas as a group to create shared meaning and understanding, and increases student interest and engagement with subject matter.