



Illinois State Board of Education

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Fact Sheet: Common Core State Standards

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Division of Public Information, Illinois State Board of Education

The Common Core State Standards establish clear expectations for what students should be learning in English language arts and mathematics at every grade level from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Spearheaded by governors and state education leaders from a consortium of more than 40 states, the Common Core represents a collaborative effort to raise expectations and improve instruction for all students regardless of where they live and to provide students with an equal opportunity to succeed academically. The Common Core sets high, clear and uniform standards to prepare students for college and the work force.

The Common Core standards differ from previous learning standards because of their emphasis on critical thinking and concept mastery. In English language arts, the Common Core underlines the importance of reading nonfiction, using evidence to back claims and expanding academic vocabulary. In mathematics, the standards call for greater focus on fewer topics so that students gain a more comprehensive understanding of key topics. They also emphasize the application of math towards solving real-world problems. The Common Core's changes will ensure that students not only gain skills and knowledge, but can also apply their knowledge to succeed after high school graduation.

Although created by a national consortium of states, the Common Core standards are independent of the federal government. Implementation decisions will remain local and teachers and school administrators will continue to write local curricula and lesson plans for their classrooms. The Common Core standards establish the benchmarks for what students need to learn, but districts still determine the best strategies and content for instruction and curriculum. Teachers will continue to make daily instructional decisions to reach individual students.

Illinois adopted the Common Core standards in 2010 after recognizing that it needed to update its existing learning standards. The creators of the Common Core consulted with parents, teachers and school administrators through two public comment periods held in September 2009 and March 2010. After considering public feedback, staff members from the Illinois State Board of Education then submitted their own suggestions to the consortium developing the Common Core standards. Educators across the state have already begun to incorporate elements of the Common Core into their curricula and all schools are expected to fully implement curricula that meet the new standards during the 2013-2014 school year.

Illinois is currently in the process of updating its science standards as well. It was one of 26 lead states that collaborated on the Next Generation Science

Standards (NGSS), which will provide a new way of teaching science and engineering to students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. As a lead state, Illinois helped to write the standards and provided guidance on their eventual implementation. The final draft of NGSS was released in April 2013 and the State Board will review the new science standards for potential adoption later this year. NGSS is similar to the Common Core in that it is rigorous, internationally benchmarked and intended to better prepare students for college and career.

Students will ultimately benefit from the Common Core's consistency and higher standards. Since the majority of states have adopted the Common Core, students who move from one state to another will face the same expectations. The standards ensure that an education in Illinois is on par with an education in other states. The Common Core aligns with international standards as well so that students will be well-equipped to compete in today's global economy. Because it encourages students to apply and demonstrate their knowledge in real-world settings, Illinois' students will be better prepared for life after high school graduation.

Resources

Illinois State Board of Education:

http://www.isbe.net/common_core/default.htm

Common Core IL, a project of the Core Coalition:

<http://commoncoreil.org/real-learning/>

Common Core State Standards Initiative:

<http://www.corestandards.org/>

Additional fact sheets provided by the ISBE Division of Public Information will be released throughout 2013.

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