

# Understanding the Common Core State Standards

## An Overview for Parents and Families of Elementary School Students



*The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of education skills and goals that define what we want Rhode Island students to know and be able to do at each grade level. The Common Core prepares students for success in later grades and provides students more opportunities to practice and master the concepts and skills needed for success in college, careers, and life after graduation.*

## Five Things to Know

1

**The CCSS are learning goals.** The Common Core State Standards describe what we want each child to know and be able to do in each grade in the subjects of English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The standards don't dictate how students will learn these skills, what books they'll read, or the assignments and activities they'll do in class.

2

**Schools will continue to teach basic concepts.** Under the Common Core State Standards, your child will still learn basic English language arts/literacy and math concepts. The new standards are designed to provide your child more opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of these basic concepts and to build more advanced knowledge and skills from this understanding.

3

**New standards will require new forms of testing.** Rhode Island has invested in a new test to align to the new English language arts/literacy and math standards and to ensure students are learning what they need to know at each grade level. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, students in grades k-12 will transition to the PARCC assessment. The new, computer-administered assessment asks students to show what they know through written responses.

4

**The CCSS are designed to be challenging.** Your child may struggle a bit more on assignments and assessments than they did under previous standards—this is okay! Schools and classrooms will continue to provide extra time, attention, and accommodations to students needing additional support (including special education and English language learners).

5

**Rhode Island students and teachers are ready for the Common Core!** The Rhode Island Department of Education will continue to work with schools and districts to ensure that teachers and students have the support needed to succeed under the new standards.

# Five Things to Do

**1** *Continue to support your child and their achievement.* Ask about classwork, assignments they're working on, and how you can help support them. Talk to your child about subjects of interest and their future goals.

**2** *Continue to keep an open dialogue with your child's teachers.* Attend parent-teacher conferences; talk with teachers about how you can support your child's progress and achievement. Contact teachers with questions about classroom instruction or assignments.

**3** *Stay informed about what's happening in your child's school.* Attend parent nights and school activities and sign up for school or district newsletters. Consider joining your local parent teacher organization or volunteering at your child's school. Contact school or district leadership if you have questions about assessments or the general concepts and skills your child is learning.

**4** *Connect with the Rhode Island Department of Education.* Visit [www.ride.ri.gov](http://www.ride.ri.gov) and sign up for RIDE's e-newsletter or RSS feeds. Connect with Education Commissioner Gist, and the Ready, Set, Go Common Core! Initiative on social media to learn more: [www.facebook.com/ReadySetGoCommonCore](http://www.facebook.com/ReadySetGoCommonCore) or [www.facebook.com/pages/Commissioner-Deborah-A-Gist/137204599733781?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Commissioner-Deborah-A-Gist/137204599733781?fref=ts); [@deborahgist](https://twitter.com/deborahgist).

**5** *Explore available resources.* Download the Common Core app from Mastery Connect ([www.masteryconnect.com/learn-more/goodies.html](http://www.masteryconnect.com/learn-more/goodies.html)) to your mobile device, and explore available resources on the CCSS and PARCC on the RIDE website.

## Additional Resources



- **Transition to the CCSS and to PARCC** [www.ride.ri.gov/Transition-CCSS](http://www.ride.ri.gov/Transition-CCSS)  
RIDE regularly updates this page with information and resources to about the state's progress in transitioning to the CCSS.
- **Parent Roadmaps to Common Core Standards** [www.cgcs.org/domain/36](http://www.cgcs.org/domain/36)  
These detailed parent roadmaps from the Council of the Great City Schools (available in both English and Spanish) provide grade-by-grade insights as to what students will be learning and provide tips on how to support students and communicate with teachers.
- **Colorín Colorado** [www.colorincolorado.org/families/](http://www.colorincolorado.org/families/)  
This bilingual website includes information and resources about the English language arts/literacy transition to the Common Core for Spanish-speaking ELL students. The site includes guides, tool kits, and policy information for teachers and families written in both English and Spanish.

