

Understanding the Common Core State Standards

An Overview for Parents and Families of Middle and High School Students



The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of education skills and goals that prepare Rhode Island students for future success in continuing education, careers, and the trades. The Common Core provides clear guidance as to what we want Rhode Island students to know and be able to do upon graduating from high school.

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

The CCSS focus on practical skills and concepts. The Common Core State Standards provide students with more opportunities to practice skills and concepts needed for success in the real world—such as making observations and decisions and explaining themselves through their work.

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 will transition to the PARCC assessment. With the new assessment, students in grades 9, 10, and 11 will be tested each Spring on the concepts and skills they've learned so far that year. Graduation requirements will include PARCC starting with the class of 2017. Students will continue to take NECAP testing for science.

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 goals following high school graduation.

2 *Continue to keep an open dialogue with your child's teachers and guidance counselors.* 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. Talk with your student's guidance counselor about their readiness for college, career, or the trades following graduation.

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 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 or 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) 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
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
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/
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.

