



The Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Assessments

Preparing Our Graduates for the World that Awaits Them

Maryland is creating a world-class education system that prepares all students for college and career success in the 21st century. To achieve this, the State has adopted rigorous, internationally benchmarked academic standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics - **the Common Core State Standards** - and is implementing a new State curriculum and next generation assessments aligned to those standards.

Why Do We Need New Standards?

To be prepared for the challenges of work and college, students must graduate from high school equipped with the knowledge and skills to help them succeed in today's knowledge-based global economy. Maryland has led the nation in establishing strong academic standards and accompanying curriculum, but to truly provide students with a world-class education the State must continue to raise those standards and improve achievement for all.

About the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of clear, high-quality academic expectations in English/Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics that define the knowledge and skills all students should master by the end of each grade level. The goal is simple and important: keep students on track for success in college and career.

The CCSS were created through a state-level initiative, coordinated by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, in collaboration with teachers, parents, higher education leaders, and experts from across the country. To date, the CCSS have been voluntarily adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia.

Maryland adopted the Common Core State Standards in 2010 and in the years since has been translating those standards into a challenging and engaging curriculum - the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum.

How Do the New Standards Differ from the Old Standards?

The instructional shifts of the Common Core State Standards will provide all students with an education that not only leads to a high school diploma, but prepares them for college, career, and life after graduation.

- In English/Language Arts/Literacy - which apply to social studies, science, and technical subjects as well as English - students will be exposed to more content-rich nonfiction and informational texts in addition to literature. Reading and writing will be grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and nonfiction.
- In Mathematics - instruction will focus on fewer topics at each grade level, but instruction will be deeper in content. Mathematical concepts will be logically connected from one grade to the next and linked to other major topics within the grade. The standards are designed to help develop fluency in arithmetic, application of knowledge to real-world situations, and create a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

The Common Core State Standards...

- *Provide consistent learning goals for all students, regardless of where they live*
- *Are relevant to the real world*
- *Are anchored in college- and career-readiness*
- *Reflect the knowledge and skills most valued by employers and higher education*
- *Are internationally benchmarked against standards from the highest-performing countries, such as Singapore and Japan*

The New Assessments

A parallel effort also has been underway to develop a new assessment system to measure the critical content and skills embedded in the CCSS. In spring 2010, Maryland became a Governing State in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of 22 states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English/Language Arts and Mathematics anchored in what it takes to be ready for higher education and the job market.

How Will the New Assessments Differ from the Old Assessments?

The PARCC assessments are being designed to measure the full range of the CCSS and full continuum of student abilities, including the performance of high and low performing students. The new assessments will test writing skills at every grade level and critical thinking and problem solving skills in an in-depth manner.

- **Better assessments** - The assessments will feature a mix of items - short answer, longer open response questions, richer multiple choice items, as well as technology-enhanced items, to better reflect the full range of content and skills found in the CCSS.
- **Better use of technology** - The computer-based assessments will produce timely snapshots of student knowledge, giving parents and students richer information, and teachers the opportunity to adjust instruction to better support student learning.

When Will the Transition Take Place?

Maryland educators helped develop the new curriculum and have been provided professional development on the transition since the summer of 2011. The transition from the State's current curriculum content standards and Maryland School Assessment (MSA) to the new Common Core curriculum standards and PARCC assessments will be complete by school year 2014-15. Instruction aligned to the CCSS will be fully implemented in 2013-2014. The PARCC assessments will be operational in the 2014-2015 school year.

How Are Teachers Being Prepared?

The transition to the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum has been taking place since the summer of 2011. Teams of educators from all 1,500 Maryland Public Schools have been involved in intensive three-day Educator Effectiveness Academies each summer, led by curriculum specialists and master teachers.

This summer Maryland will hold 11 regional Educator Effectiveness Academies to provide professional development on the new curriculum, assessments, and evaluations. School teams consist of five representatives - the principal, teachers from English/Language Arts, Mathematics, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), and a fifth member to support cross-curricular discussions and implementations.



For Additional Resources:

Visit MSDE's Common Core page:

www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/ccss/

Read the Common Core State Standards in ELA and mathematics:

www.corestandards.org/the-standards

Read FAQs about the Standards:

www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions

Visit the PARCC website: <http://www.parcconline.org/>

View the PARCC Model Content Frameworks:

www.parcconline.org/parcc-model-content-frameworks

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