

In August 2010, California State Board of Education joined forty-five other states in the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Educational and business leaders across the country recognized the need for common standards among the states, thus the Common Core State Standards Initiative began. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District has undertaken the transition to the CCSS for English language arts and mathematics. Implementation of these standards begins in 2012 and will continue through 2014.

The purpose of adopting the CCSS is not simply to align with other states, but rather to raise the bar in all grades to ensure that our students are receiving a relevant and rigorous education. The adoption of the CCSS means that your child will be better prepared to meet the demands of college and/or the work place in the 21st century. Today's global economy means that our students need to possess academic standards by the completion of twelfth grade to ensure their success in college and/or workforce.

Transition to the new ELA Common Core should not be difficult because California's current curriculum has many similarities to the new CCSS. However, the new ELA Common Core requires more rigor, focuses on reading comprehension, and includes a heavier emphasis on writing, grammar, informational text, thinking skills, better instruction, and literacy across the curriculum.

The mathematics Common Core modifies the broad content addressed in the existing state standards, -- often too much to cover in a single year--, to a more coherent and focused set of concepts that are addressed in greater depth. This is particularly true in elementary mathematics where standards concentrate more on arithmetic and lessons on geometry. In high school, it is anticipated that math concepts such as Algebra and Geometry will be taught together as part of an integrated sequence of high school mathematics. Mathematical practices such as reasoning and problem solving will figure prominently in Common Core mathematics as students are expected to know procedures fluently, develop a deep conceptual understanding of topics, and demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge to solve problems.

Over the next few years you will notice some changes to instruction, reporting and testing that will impact your child. A significant first step will be implemented this fall in the form of a revised standards-based report card. The state of California will continue to evaluate student's performance using the California Standards Test (CST), which measures the standards adopted for California in 1997, until at least 2014. As a result, CRPUSD has modified its standards-based report card to reflect the most important 1997 standards while also highlighting key concepts addressed in the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics. The topics on our report card will be familiar to parents of students in grades 3-12 as they are frequently the same categories addressed in the annual CST results you receive for your children.

We will be updating our district website with information about the CCSS. Additional information is available at the California Department of Education <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc>. The National PTA has also organized resources to help parents support their children at www.pta.org/common_core_state_standards.asp.

If you have additional questions as to how this might impact your child's education, please feel free to contact us.