

Why Teachers Should Support the Common Core **(Kentucky Core Academic Standards)**

Common Core is working!

Since implementation of the Common Core (Kentucky Core Academic Standards), we've seen improved college/career-readiness rates, improved graduation rates, lower remediation costs and more successful transitions to college and career.



Common Core is the anchor in an integrated system of improvement that will provide a world-class education for all students.

Rigorous standards, aligned assessments, teacher and leader effectiveness, and professional learning and growth of our educators all work together to maximize student potential and ensure college/career-readiness for all students. The system promotes:

- deeper understanding of the key concepts students need to succeed as independent thinkers
- students' ability to apply knowledge to real-world situations
- instruction that places more emphasis on understanding and application as opposed to memorization and test taking

Common Core is great for teachers.

The standards are clear, focused and easy for both teachers and students to understand. The standards also encourage a new approach to teaching where educators facilitate students' learning rather than spoon-feeding them information -- making students more responsible for their own learning. The standards lend themselves well to integrated studies and project-based learning.

Common standards make it easier to collaborate and to develop and share lessons, resources and what works in the classroom. This allows you to more easily individualize instruction to meet student needs and frees you up to create new, innovative and more effective ways to actively engage students in the learning process.

The standards spread the responsibility for developing core skills across the school.

While English/language arts and mathematics teachers are primarily responsible for teaching the standards, they call for teachers in other subjects to reinforce the standards and help in developing core skills in students including the ability to:

- apply math in real-world situations
- read and analyze both literature and informational text – reading and writing are more specific to the discipline than before
- construct viable arguments and critique reasoning of others
- think critically, creatively and solve problems
- communicate effectively

Teachers have a lot invested in the Common Core.

Since 2010, teachers have been working with the standards to develop student learning targets and break down the standards into language that parents, students and teachers could understand. You've invested both time and money developing new curriculum, instructional materials and practices.

Common Core assessments more accurately reflect student preparation than previous state tests.

- Test scores dropped the first year under the Common Core, because the standard changed from basic proficiency to college- and career-readiness, which demands more of our students.
- Scores will be low for a few years but start improving the longer the standards are taught. Remember we've raised the bar. Just like a high jumper who is used to clearing six feet, if the bar goes up to 12 feet, it takes them a while to learn what they have to do to clear it. They have to train and refine their technique. It will take time for teachers and students to get used to the more rigorous standards and the kind of teaching and learning they demand. Scores should start to rebound as students build a stronger foundational knowledge based on the standards and educators gain greater experience teaching them.
- The college- and career-readiness standard is aligned with postsecondary expectations and requires more than rote memorization for tests. Students are required to think critically, reason, solve problems – skills they must learn and that will serve them well in the long run.
- With the new tests and accountability system, everyone should be able to tell as early as 3rd grade if a student is on track for college/career-readiness and if not, determine what interventions may be needed.
- The results of the Kentucky assessments are more closely aligned to results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Those results report proficiency at a much higher level than most state tests. Being proficient on NAEP is similar to our new college- and career-ready proficiency. One could say that proficiency on NAEP and the new K-PREP is similar to getting a B or B+ and being advanced/distinguished is similar to an A.
- This is the first step on a path of continuous improvement for districts, schools, teachers and students.
- Stay the course and don't get discouraged. This is the right thing for kids to ensure they are ready for college/career and to compete in a global economy.
- The data from K-PREP and End-of-Course exams are crucial to planning and improvement – for our schools, districts and state.
- Remember, our focus is on college/career-readiness for all students. Progress toward that goal is being made as reflected in our college/career-readiness rate.

Despite what detractors want you to believe, Common Core has a lot of support in Kentucky.

A recent poll by the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) revealed more than 90 percent of school boards support Common Core; TELL KY Survey results show that 97 percent of teachers are teaching curriculum aligned with Common Core.

