Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards (Common Core) are a new set of learning standards that describe the skills and knowledge students are expected to have at each grade level in order to be college and/or career ready by the time they graduate from high school. New York State (the State) has adopted the Common Core and teachers across the state are now planning lessons and assignments using the Common Core. State tests are also being redesigned to measure student progress in meeting the Common Core standards.

Which subjects and grades do the Common Core impact?

- The Common Core has been designed for all grades, from pre-K to grade 12.
- The Common Core only sets standards for English and Math. New Science standards and Social Studies standards are also being developed will each be released separately.

How is the Common Core different from New York State’s previous learning standards? How will the Common Core change what my child learns?

- The Common Core sets higher expectations than the State’s previous standards. As a result, the work students will do in every grade level should be more challenging.
- For English classes, there are three main changes:
  1. Greater emphasis on reading non-fiction and learning facts from these texts.
  2. Greater emphasis on reading more challenging texts and answering questions by referring to the text for answers.
  3. Greater emphasis on developing more sophisticated vocabulary.
- For Math classes, there are three main changes:
  1. Fewer topics will be covered so that there is more in-depth learning on each topic.
  2. There will be less repetition of materials taught in previous years.
  3. Math content will be more challenging and students will solve more word problems.
- Because of these changes, you might notice a change in the types of reading materials your child brings home from school and the types of assignments he or she is expected to complete. For example:
  - For English, a 1st grader may now read the book *A Tree is a Plant*, which will teach him or her reading skills and about science.
  - For Math, a 5th grade student must now solve problems with fractions that relate to the real world, such as: determine how many 1/3 cup servings are in 2 cups of jelly beans.
How will New York State tests change?

- New State exams are being introduced that reflect the Common Core standards.
- During the 2012-2013 school year, new English and Math tests for grades 3-8 were given to students. These exams were harder than exams given in past years.
- Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, English and Math Regents exams based on the Common Core will be phased in for high school students.
  - **English Regents**: All students entering Grade 9 in the 2013-2014 school year will take the new Regents Exam. If a student entered Grade 9 before the 2013-2014 school year, he or she may take the old Regents Exam. The old ELA Regents Exam will be given for the last time in June 2016.
  - **Math Regents**: All students entering Grade 9 in the 2013-2014 school year will take the new Regents Exams. If a student has already taken a high school level math class before the 2013-2014 school year, he or she will take the old Regents Exams. The old Math Regents Exams will be given for the last time in January of 2015, 2016, or 2017, depending on the subject (i.e. Algebra, Geometry, and Trigonometry).

The questions below show the difference between a sample question from the 3rd grade state math test from 2011 and the current 3rd grade state math test based on the Common Core. Both questions test the same concept, but the new test question is harder.

**2011:**

*There are 27 students in Ms. Austin’s class. She groups her class into 3 teams that have an equal number of students. How many students are on each team?*

- A 6  
- B 7  
- C 8  
- D 9

**Now:**

*Two groups of students from Douglas Elementary School were walking to the library when it began to rain. The 7 students in Mr. Stem’s group shared the 3 large umbrellas they had with Ms. Thorn’s group of 11 students. If the same number of students were under each umbrella, how many students were under each umbrella?*

- A 6  
- B 10  
- C 18  
- D 21

How will the new State tests affect promotion decisions in NYC?

- The State has created a new scoring scale for the Grades 3-8 English and Math tests. Student scores on the new tests will now range across a scale of 100-425. A student’s score will determine his or her placement into a performance level. The new performance levels are listed below:
  - **Level 4**: Student excels in the Common Core for his/her grade level
  - **Level 3**: Student is proficient in the Common Core for his/her grade level
  - **Level 2**: Student is below proficient in the Common Core for his/her grade level
  - **Level 1**: Student is well below proficient in the Common Core for his/her grade level
- Over time, the State will align promotion standards to these performance levels.
What does the Common Core mean for students with disabilities?

- The Common Core will not affect the process of creating an IEP, determining services to address the needs of your child, or determining testing accommodations.
- However, changes in your child’s supports, services, and access to alternative classroom materials or assistive technology may occur in order to help him or her develop skills that meet the Common Core standards.
  - In NYC, the DOE is using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, which gives students with disabilities greater access to curriculum and tasks based on the Common Core. Teachers are encouraged to use a variety of materials and methods of instruction in order to engage all students in lessons, regardless of how they learn. The UDL allows teachers to create accommodations for every student’s individual learning needs in a regular classroom setting.
- For students who take the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), the exam for grades 3 to 8 is currently being re-designed and will be given to students for the first time in the 2013-2014 school year.

What does the Common Core mean for English Language Learners?

- The Common Core will not affect the process of identifying English Language Learners (ELLs), determining the services to address their needs, or determining testing accommodations.
- ELLs will be expected to meet the same Common Core standards as other students.
- The Common Core will be incorporated into bilingual, English as a Second Language, and dual language programs.
- To provide ELLs with additional support to meet the Common Core standards, the State has launched the Bilingual Common Core Initiative. The initiative is looking at how to make the Common Core accessible to all ELLs.
- The State is revising the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (the exam used to measure a student’s level of English language proficiency).
- New ELL standards and tests will be introduced in the 2013-2014 school year.

Online resources to learn more about the Common Core:

- NYC DOE Common Core “parent roadmaps”: [http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/ForFamilies/LearningAtHome/SLH_k8.htm](http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/ForFamilies/LearningAtHome/SLH_k8.htm)