



# Common Core State Standards

## The real story in Florida:



**Apryl Shackelford, Duval County's 2013 Teacher of the Year**

"As Duval County's Teacher of the Year, I embrace these new standards. They bring needed rigor and emphasis on critical thinking to the classroom. They give teachers added flexibility to design plans to help students meet high standards without overwhelming them with material. I know they will offer a better path to college and career opportunities for all of my students.

"...I know they work. Over the last two years, my school used a blended instructional approach with old and new standards, and our students responded by making a 40-point gain on the FCAT and the second highest gains for a middle school in Duval County. Central to our progress was the additional flexibility afforded by Common Core to ensure students mastered skills before we moved on to the next concept."



**Florida has been a leader in developing the Common Core State Standards.**

There is a misconception that states were required to adopt the standards. They were not. Florida's state and education leaders were at the forefront of the movement and voluntarily adopted them to ensure all students have access to an excellent education.

Governors, education chiefs, educators and parents came together to ensure higher expectations and greater alignment across states so that families moving from state to state can expect consistent, high standards across our schools. Students moving into or out of Florida will have a smoother educational transition because learning goals will now be the same across states.

Being aligned to international standards from the highest achieving countries, means our students will be well prepared to compete both nationally and internationally.



**Marie DeSanctis, executive director of curriculum, Broward School District**

"Having students sit in rows, listen to a classroom lecture and memorize the right answers for a test just won't cut it in the real world.

That's why new K-12 education standards called Common Core are reshaping classroom instruction to better reflect the realities of college and the workplace.", said Marie DeSanctis, the Broward school district's executive director of curriculum.

"There's so much more innovation and creativity that comes with jobs now; they're not cookie-cutter, rote-type jobs. What we're hearing from our corporations is that students are expecting somebody to tell them what to do, like in school."

## + Common Core STATE Standards

**There is a misconception that states were required to adopt the standards.** They were not. Florida's state and education leaders voluntarily adopted them to ensure all students have access to an excellent education. The Common Core State Standards are the result of state leadership. States recognized the need for more rigorous standards, led the development, and will retain full authority for implementing the standards in their respective states. States retain a 15% variance to include content they want to include



The Standards specify *what* students should know and be able to do in each grade and by the end of high school to be college- and career-ready. It is still up to states, districts, schools and teachers to determine *how* to get students to that point. Decisions about curriculum, tools, materials and textbooks are, as they should be, left to local decision-makers who know their students best. Standards are not a curriculum. **School districts will—as they always have-- adopt their own curriculum** just like they did under the old set of state standards



**The standards have the support of business leaders.** The business community is supportive of the internationally benchmarked standards and believes they will ensure that all students develop the skills and knowledge they need for success in college and careers, thus providing the educated workforce American business needs to remain competitive in a competitive global economy.



**College should not begin with remediation.** According to analysis by ACT, three-fourths of young men and women entering college “were not adequately prepared academically for first year college courses.” A 2009 study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found **NO State had reading proficiency standards as rigorous as those on the highly respected and internationally benchmarked NAEP 4<sup>th</sup> grade exam.** Only one State, Massachusetts, had an 8<sup>th</sup> grade test as rigorous as the NAEP exam



**Ease of student mobility.** Families move from state-to-state and need to know students won't be behind when they relocate because of job and/or family needs - and this includes **military families** who often move not by choice but because they are serving our country. The ***Department of Defense Education Activity*** schools have adopted the common core for this very reason.

## + Common Core STATE Standards

**Governors, education chiefs, educators and parents came together** to ensure higher expectations and greater alignment across states so that families moving from state to state can expect consistent, high standards across our schools. Students moving into or out of Florida will have a smoother educational transition because learning goals will now be the same across states. These standards were modeled on success – pulling for the best standards already in place at the time, Florida’s Standards are heavily represented, and taking them to the next level.



**The Common Core Standards are aligned to international standards from the highest achieving countries.**

Massachusetts’ students’ rank 1st in the US in math. Hong Kong’s students rank first in the world. **The best in our country do not come CLOSE to matching the best in the world.** 87% of the questions on the Hong Kong test require a higher level of thinking compared to just 6% of questions on the Massachusetts test. These figures express how woefully behind we are.



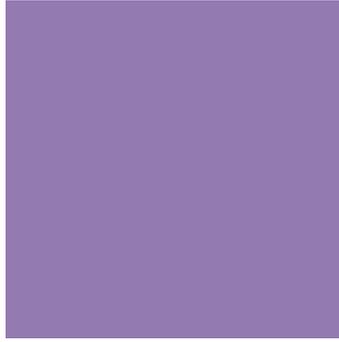
**Reduced costs on standards creation and review.** The CCSS allows states to supplement the standards. Maybe it is cursive writing, or certain math concepts or adding particular reading materials. Customizing the standards by adding to them to meet state needs while keeping in place the CCSS would allow states to be nationally and internationally competitive—and save us time and money on recreating the basics.



**Common Core State Standards focus on more in-depth knowledge** of foundational and crucial concepts for more advanced mathematics, rather than an expansive, but shallow, knowledge of many concepts. This new, more concise approach eliminates the “mile-wide inch-deep” curriculum in America. This allows for the students to achieve a higher level of mastery and understanding of concepts which will allow for “thinking outside the box” as the currently job market requires.



**The ability to use common materials currently in development and greater choice in curriculum** including text books, lesson plans, instructional units, and professional development models and materials. The marketplace is already opening up for states, districts and schools who can now look across state lines to purchase aligned materials that have been proven successful.



## + Don't Politicize the Common Core State Standards

From Erick Hargis, Executive Director of National PTA

“As we all know too well, business in Washington and in many states is driven by partisan politics. Despite the proven effectiveness of the Common Core State Standards, they have become an easy target for a bickering Congress, and divided state and local leaders. The American people are tired of the political games that are hurting our children. We want our government leaders to come together to ensure that our children receive a better education than we did. Those states that have still not adopted the standards for purely political reasons are doing their state's students an incredible disservice.

*Empowering parents to be involved in their child's education is the cornerstone of what we do at PTA.* In this difficult economy, many parents are focused on getting food on the table, finding a job, or simply making it through one more day. The PTA works to reach every parent, providing them with tools and resources to be involved in their child's education at every

level. In our work on Common Core we have seen what a parent armed with information can do.”

### What can you do to advocate for your child?

The PTA urges parents to research the issues for yourself. Go to the Duval County Council PTA website for access to articles, websites, and information to assist you in making informed choices at [www.iadvocateforkids.org](http://www.iadvocateforkids.org).

Go on the Florida Department of Education website ([www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org)) for current education information and to review the standards and make your comments. Either let them know that you support the standards as adopted, or talk about a specific standard.

**FLDOE Standards Website at**  
[www.flstandards.org](http://www.flstandards.org)

**Citizens may make a comment on Common Core once each day through 10/31/13**