



The media and press are talking about the shift to the Common Core Standards in the area of English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The next questions are: "What are the Common Core Standards and what does this mean for my child?"

What are the Common Core State Standards? The Common Core State Standards are a national effort to coordinate states delivering a rigorous, college and career aligned K-12 curriculum in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. What is most evident in the standards is the clarity of expectations for student learning at each grade level. The English Language Arts (ELA) standards were adopted in New Jersey June 2010 and the Mathematics standards were adopted in June 2011.

There are three major shifts in ELA and Mathematics. Each shift represents changes in how both content areas are taught. The standards provide clear, specific and consistent expectations for students in each grade K-12.

English Language Arts Shifts

1. Regular practice with **complex text** and its **academic vocabulary**
2. **Building Knowledge** through **content-rich non-fiction** and informational text
3. Reading and writing grounded in **evidence from text**

Mathematics Shifts

1. **Focus:** Focus with more intensity where the standards are focused
2. **Coherence:** Thinks mathematically across grades and **link** to major topics
3. **Rigor:** Requires **fluency, application** and **deep understanding** of mathematical concepts

What does this mean for my child?

All students K-12 will have increased exposure to non-fiction text in the ELA class. As the standards expectation that literacy instruction is a 'shared responsibility' across all content areas, non-fiction text will be infused in math, science and social studies/history instruction.

How is the district prepared to support the Common Core Standards?

The district implemented the ELA students during the 2010-11 school year. Under the leadership of our ELA Supervisor, teachers and administrators collaboratively revised the K-12 ELA curriculum as well as determined the staff professional development and new instructional materials needs to support the new curriculum. Non-fiction texts were added to the book rooms and/or media centers at all buildings. We have implemented a Reading and Writing workshop model K-6 which aligns with the recommendations written in the ELA Common Core Standards.

The Common Core State Standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build on strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society, and
- Are evidence-based

Source: <http://www.corestandards.org>

Implementing the *Investigations* (K-5) and *Connected Math* (Grade 6-8) math programs aligns with the 'Standards of Mathematical Practice' listed in the Mathematics Common Core Standards. Specifically, we have focused on the mathematical 'habits of mind' being infused into all mathematics professional development.

Our staff continues to participate in Common Core Standards professional development opportunities focused on the Common Core Standards, teaching and learning strategies supporting our curriculum, reviewing new instructional materials and developing assessments aligned with the new rigor of the standards. Many workshops include multiple grade levels so staff can link the content expectations in their grade level to the prior and next grade levels. The district continues to utilize our talent within district staff and supervisors as well as national organizations to present to our staff. When staff members attend professional development outside the district, they have 'turned-keyed' their experience within the district.

The new standards challenge the traditional grade level expectations for ELA and Mathematics; however, Ewing staff continues to work and learn how to meet our student needs through the Common Core Standards.