

Connecticut PARAPROFESSIONALS' Guide to Common Core State Standards (CCSS)



All educators, including paraprofessionals, must work together to achieve the goals of full CCSS implementation statewide.

Paraprofessionals play important roles in improving student achievement. Before making decisions regarding the appropriate use of paraprofessionals in the implementation of CCSS, schools and districts should examine how they are currently training, supervising, and evaluating paraprofessionals. The Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals was published and endorsed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to inform and guide district personnel in the many important factors to consider in the use of paraprofessionals, specifically their training. It also clarifies their role as it relates to instruction. The CSDE highly recommends this document be used as the foundation for identifying appropriate roles for paraprofessionals to assist in the implementation of CCSS. Once these roles are identified, it is important the paraprofessional continues to work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher and receive ongoing specialized training.

We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this publication. Comments should be directed to Iris White, Turnaround Office, at iris.white@ct.gov.

OVERVIEW OF CCSS

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a set of K-12 expectations for English language arts and mathematics, adopted by 45 states across the country and designed to ensure all students are able to compete and succeed globally. In spring 2009, governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, including Connecticut, 2 territories and the District of Columbia committed to developing a CCSS for K-12 English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. On July 7, 2010, the Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the CCSS as Connecticut's standards in English language arts and mathematics. Districts throughout the state are making the systemic changes in curriculum and instructional practices required. All educators, including paraprofessionals, must work together to achieve the goal of full implementation statewide so the standards have the desired effect on student achievement.

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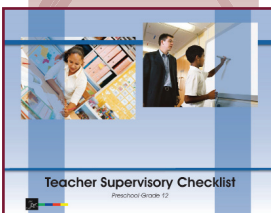
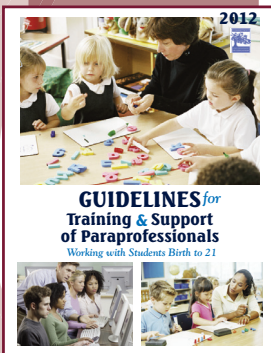
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WHY DO WE NEED EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS?

Educational standards provide teachers with clear goals for student learning to ensure their students have the skills and knowledge needed to be successful. Common standards will help ensure students are receiving a high-quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state.

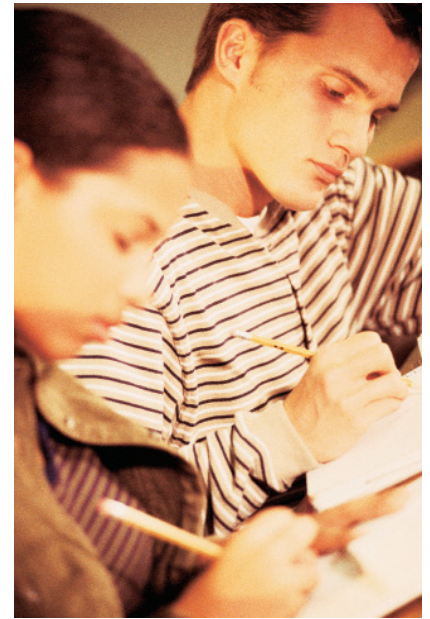
Standards help students and parents by setting clear and realistic goals for success. Of course, standards are not the only thing needed for our children's success, but they provide an accessible road map for our teachers, parents and students (www.corestandards.org).



STANDARDS HELP SUPPORT THE WRITING OF CURRICULUM

Curriculum is a guaranteed course of study and learning objectives that integrates standards, instructional strategies, materials, and assessments to ensure all students are able to achieve standards. The CCSS do not and cannot include all or even most of the content students should learn. Therefore, they must be complemented by a well-developed, content-rich curriculum.

While the Standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the discretion of teachers and curriculum developers. The aim of the Standards is to articulate the fundamentals, not to set out a list or a set of restrictions limiting what can be taught. These standards will help inform the development of a curriculum that promotes deep understanding for all children.



ASSESSMENT

In 2012, 31 states including Connecticut joined together to form the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) to develop assessments aligned with the CCSS that will replace current state assessments in ELA and math in the 2014-15 school year. Connecticut is a governing state in SBAC and is taking an active role in the consortium through representation on several workgroups. The new assessment will replace the current CMT and CAPT and provide new tools to monitor student progress and resources to meet each student's unique needs. Teachers will be able to use these reports to inform instruction.

KEY POINTS OF ELA/LITERACY STANDARDS

The ELA Standards are divided into reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Standards require students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The Standards set requirements not only for ELA but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Just as students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas, so too must the Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in multiple disciplines.



KEY POINTS OF MATHEMATICS STANDARDS

In mathematics, the Standards lay a solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals. Taken together, these elements support a student's ability to learn and apply more demanding math concepts and procedures. The middle and high school standards call on students to practice applying mathematical ways of thinking to real-world issues and challenges. They prepare students to think and reason mathematically.

Grade	Priorities in Support of Conceptual Understanding and Fluency
K-2	Addition and subtraction - concepts, skills and problem solving
3-5	Multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions - concepts, skills and problem solving
6	Ratios and proportional relationships; early expressions and equations
7	Ratios and proportional relationships; arithmetic of rational numbers 2
8	Linear algebra

Instructional Shifts in ELA	Explanation	Implications for Classroom Instruction
Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational text	Most knowledge comes from informational text. Informational text is harder for students to understand than narrative text yet students are asked to read very little of it in elementary and middle school	Provide more opportunities for students to read nonfiction text.
Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text, both literary and informational	Standards in speaking and listening require students to prepare for and refer to evidence in ideas under discussion. Standards in writing ask students to respond to evidence-based writing prompts (argue). Rather than asking students questions they can answer solely from their prior knowledge or experience, the Standards expect students to answer questions that depend on their having read the text or texts with care.	<p>Provide more opportunities for students to talk about text and find evidence to support their arguments.</p> <p>Read aloud or read the same book and discuss with evidence.</p> <p>Write “books” together and use evidence/details.</p> <p>Cultivate narrative writing throughout the grades.</p> <p>Ask text-dependent questions - questions in which the answers require inferences based on careful attention to the text.</p>
Regular practice with complex text and its academic language	Gaps between the complexity of college and high school texts is huge. What students can read, in terms of complexity, is the greatest predictor of success in college.	Provide more challenging texts the student wants to read and can read independently. Support challenging text by reading aloud with the student.
Instructional Shifts in Mathematics	Explanation	Implications for Classroom Instruction
Focus strongly where the standards focus	Focus deeply on what is emphasized in the standards, so students gain strong foundations.	Narrow and deepen the scope of how time and energy is spent in the classroom.
Coherence: think across grades, and link to major topics	Begin to concentrate on solid conceptual understanding of core content and build on it. Each standard is not a new event, but an extension of previous learning.	<p>Teachers collaborate across grade levels so students can build new understanding onto foundations built in previous years.</p> <p>Provide students with opportunities to apply the math they know to solve problems inside and outside of the math class.</p>
<p>Rigor: in major topics pursue (See table on previous page):</p> <p>Conceptual understanding</p> <p>Procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity</p>	Conceptual understanding: the Standards call for conceptual understanding of key concepts, such as place value and ratios.	<p>Procedural skill and fluency: teachers structure class time and/or homework time for students to practice core functions such as single-digit multiplication so students have access to more complex concepts and procedures.</p> <p>Application: teachers provide opportunities for students to apply math in context. Teachers in content areas outside of math, particularly science, ensure students are using math to make meaning of and access content.</p>



Professional Development Resources PARAPROFESSIONALS

The CSDE professional development for paraprofessionals is coordinated by Iris White, Education Consultant, Turnaround Office. Iris White can be contacted at iris.white@ct.gov or at 860-713-6794.

The **State Education Resource Center (SERC)** provides professional development under a variety of initiatives, including the *Paraprofessionals as Partners* Initiative. Through diverse professional development opportunities from SERC, paraprofessionals working in collaborative partnerships with general and special education teachers and support services professionals can enhance and acquire skills to improve their ability to effectively provide instruction and other direct services to meet the needs of all students. SERC also holds the annual *Paraprofessionals as Partners* conference in the fall.

For more information, contact Anthony Brisson, Consultant with SERC's Paraprofessionals as Partners Initiative, at brisson@ctserc.org or at 860-632-1485, ext. 315. More information can also be found on SERC's Web site: www.ctserc.org.

The **Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)** also offers a variety of professional development and job opportunities for paraprofessionals and aspiring paraprofessionals, including a comprehensive, job-embedded professional development curriculum called *The Compass*. This series of training modules, aligned with the *National Paraprofessional Standards*, has been designed to enhance paraprofessionals' skills in working with students in educational settings. More information can be found on the paraprofessional page of the CREC Web site, www.crec.org/tabs/paraprofessional, or by contacting your local regional educational service center (RESC):

ACES: Patricia Hart-Cole, phart@aces.org

CES: Dr. Christine Peck, cpeck@ces.k12.ct.us

CREC: Donna Morelli, dmorelli@crec.org

EASTCONN: Jim Huggins, jhuggins@eastconn.org

EDUCATION CONNECTION: Jonathan Costa, costa@educationconnection.org

LEARN: Tracey LaMothe, tlamothel@learn.k12.ct.us

References

Achievethecore.org: Assembled by Student Achievement Partners, includes free resources for implementation of the CCSS. Resources include articles, sites, research, professional development modules, and voices of teachers doing the work of the Common Core.

Corestandards.org/resources: Resources from the CCSS Initiative coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals:
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/guidelines_paraprofessionals.pdf

Connecticut State Department of Education Common Core State Standards Web page: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=322592>. The CSDE's CCSS Web page includes units of study to provide a framework for ongoing instruction and assessment.

Engageny.org: Engage NY is an evolving, collaborative platform for educators to access and share resources.

Smarterbalanced.org: Smarter Balanced is a state-led consortium developing assessments aligned to the CCSS in ELA and math. Resources include FAQ, publications, and webinars.

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