

January 2017 Op Ed

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has offered 48 states, including Connecticut, the opportunity to have a set of defined standards in English language arts and mathematics. The CCSS ensure all students have the academic knowledge and skills to be college and career ready upon high school graduation. The following is a brief informational summary about CCSS and clarification of some misconceptions:

Q: What are the educational Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards, called the Connecticut Core Standards here in Connecticut, define what students should know and be able to do at every grade level in grades K-12.

Q: What is the Common Core?

It is an initiative of 48 states, comprised of state education chiefs and governors to develop a set of college and career-ready standards for grades K-12 in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. Connecticut is one of 43 states that voluntarily adopted the standards. CCSS is designed to prepare students graduating from high school to be successful in introductory credit bearing courses in a 2-4 year college programs or entering the workforce.

Q: Were teachers involved in the creation of the standards?

Yes, teachers were a critical voice in the development of all standards. The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council Of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), in conjunction with other organizations, were instrumental in bringing teachers together to provide specific and constructive feedback on all standards.

Q: Why are the Common Core State Standards important?

They are important because they provide teachers, parents and students across states with a set of clear expectations to ensure that all students have the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career and life after graduation from high school regardless of where they live. These standards promote equity among students because they are ready to compete with peers across the United States.

Q: What guidance do the Common Core State Standards provide teachers?

They define clear shared goals and expectations for knowledge and skills in the areas of English language arts and mathematics at each grade level. The standards establish what students need to learn but they do not dictate how teachers should teach and the resources that they must use. In Plainville, teachers collaborate to create their own

lesson plans and curriculum that meet the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

Q: What should parents know?

Today's students are preparing for a world in which colleges and businesses are demanding more and more. Students need to be able to compete not only locally, but globally. The CCSS ensures that all children are equally ready to face the ever changing challenges in the world of post secondary education and the work force. The CCSS focuses on developing critical thinking, problem solving and analytical skills students need to be successful.

Q: What has Plainville done to prepare for the CCSS?

Plainville teachers and administrators continuously refer to the standards for the purpose of crafting district and school improvement plans and curricular changes. Standardized testing results from CAPT, the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC), and the New SAT are carefully analyzed for the purpose of celebrating individual and collective student success, but also to learn what additional interventions and resources are needed to ensure that all students achieve the goals of the CCSS.

For more detailed information about CCSS in Connecticut, please visit:

(<http://www.corestandards.org/standards-in-yourstate/>) page