

Common Core State Standards are coming to EGUSD schools!

In the 2013-2014 school year, the Elk Grove Unified School District will fully implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) at all grade levels. These national academic standards, adopted by the State of California, reflect the most significant change in public education in over two decades. It is an exciting shift. In addition to being aligned at a national level, the CCSS are focused on preparing students to have the skills and knowledge that will enable them to compete in a 21st century global marketplace.

The following information is intended to give you a brief overview of the CCSS and what to expect in terms of changes. More information will be shared with parents in the coming months.

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The CCSS standards stem from a nationwide initiative to set a clear and consistent progression of learning across all states. In 2010, the California State Board of Education adopted these standards with some additions unique to California. These kindergarten through 12th grade standards provide a progression of knowledge and skills that prepare students to graduate from high school and be ready for college and careers. The standards are research-based and internationally benchmarked.

These new academic content standards address English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, with ELA standards including literacy standards for science and history/social sciences. Standards define the concepts and skills that every child learns. Over the past year, EGUSD teachers have been preparing to teach these new standards to your students.

How is EGUSD Implementing the Common Core State Standards?

The Elk Grove Unified School District is committed to making the transition to the CCSS as smooth as possible for students and teachers. The with that in mind, the District chose to transition over a two-year period in order to give ample time for the transition.

EGUSD's implementation of the CCSS began this school year at elementary schools with mathematics in grades K-2 and ELA in grades 3-6. In 2013-2014, elementary schools will add ELA in grades K-2 and mathematics in grades 3-6.

At the middle and high schools, in 2013-2014, the CCSS mathematics and ELA standards (including literacy standards for science and history/social sciences) will be taught at all grade levels.

The following information is intended to provide parents with understanding of the subtle shifts that you may become aware of as we implement the CCSS.

Key Shifts in the Mathematics Standards

Students will:

- Spend more time on fewer concepts
- Learn to solve problems through multiple approaches
- Understand, talk and prove why the math works
- Apply math to real world situations
- Be able to use core math facts fast

Key Shifts in English Language Arts

Students will:

- Read more non-fiction
- Understand how non-fiction is constructed
- Find evidence to support their arguments
- Form judgments and support their judgments with citations from credible sources
- Make arguments in writing using evidence
- Use media for evidence, analysis of arguments and to present information

How does CCSS impact California's Standardized Tests?

California's current system of assessments, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program, also known as California Standards Test or CSTs, are aligned to the state's previous academic content standards. California's Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson has recommended a plan that will bring the state's testing system into alignment with the CCSS by the spring of 2015.

This plan includes a shift from paper-and-pencil tests to computerized assessments starting in the 2014–15 school year. The new assessments were designed to meet federal- and state-level accountability requirements and provide teachers and parents with timely and accurate information to measure and track individual student growth.

Included in the State's recommendations is the suspension of STAR assessments in the spring of 2014, except for the exams that are specifically mandated by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or used for the Early Assessment Program (EAP). This would suspend STAR testing of second graders and end-of-course exams at the high-school level.

Between now and the adoption and implementation of Superintendent's Torlakson's recommendations, school districts across California will be in a transition period. Elk Grove Unified expects the spring 2013 testing of elementary students to reflect the District's transition to the CCSS in the 2012-2013 school year. It is important that our parents know that during this transition, the STAR results, which are released in August, may not be the best measure of students' academic achievement or learning.

Where parents can learn more about CCSS

EGUSD's CCSS website has more information and resource links for parents at <http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/>. If you have questions about the CCSS specifically in relation to your student, please contact your student's classroom teacher.