

### **Common Core 101**

What are the Common Core State Standards?

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a coherent progression of learning expectations in English language arts and mathematics designed to prepare k-12 students for college and career success. The CCSS communicate what is expected of students at each grade level, putting students, parents, teachers, and school administrators on the same page, while working toward shared goals.

### **How were the standards developed?**

The CCSS effort was launched in June 2009, through a partnership of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association working together with parents, teachers, school administrators, and experts from across the country. National and international research, evidence, and standards--including standards from countries that are often recognized for high quality education--informed development of the CCSS. After public comment, the final version of the CCSS was released in June 2010.

### **What are the benefits for parents of common standards?**

- A common set of standards ensures that all students, no matter where they live, will be focused on graduating from high school prepared for postsecondary education and careers. In an increasingly mobile society, families with children transferring to new schools will not have to adjust to new learning expectations. Standard will be the same for all students in states adopting the CCSS, making transitions smoother for students.
- In a competitive global economy, all students must compete with not only American peers in other states, but with students from around the world. The CCSS were designed to prepare students to succeed in this environment.
- Common standards will facilitate conversation among parents, teachers, and children about high level academic learning goals. Because common standards define exactly what students should know and be able to do at each grade level, they will help parents hold their schools accountable for teaching students in ways that support learning of the important content and skills defined by the CCSS.
- With adoption of the CCSS, states and districts can share experiences, methods of assessment, teaching practices, instructional materials, and approaches to helping parents support and reinforce learning at home.

### **How will the standards be assessed?**

Two consortia of states--the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers--have been awarded federal funding to develop an assessment system aligned with the CCSS. California is part of the [SMARTER](#) balanced consortium. Different types of assessments to measure students' progress during and at the end of the school year will be designed for students in grades 3-12.

In addition to the SBAC summative assessments students will take, OUSD educators and Teaching and Learning department have collaborated to create embedded assessments that monitor student progress towards state standards throughout the year. These assessments are authentic and aligned with teacher instructional units. The assessment calendar outlines the variety of assessments used to ensure students are making progress and teachers have reliable data to make good instructional decisions.

### **What is our Charge in OUSD?**

In the spring of 2014-15, we will officially sunset the CST and adopt the SMARTER balanced assessments aligned with the California Common Core Content Standards. In the 2011-12 school year, we focused on developing **Awareness** in our OUSD learning community. In the 2012-13 **Transition** year, we are embracing the opportunity to work with teacher leaders from each site to create and implement sample units and align our understanding of rigorous learning experiences and assessment across the District. 2013-14 will bring us towards a fuller **Implementation** of these learning experiences and assessments. In 2014-15, all learning experiences and assessments will be **aligned** as we prepare for our first participation in the new Common Core-aligned assessments.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative is a state-led effort intended to provide more clarity about and consistency in what is expected of student learning across the country. Until recently, every state has had its own set of academic standards, meaning public education students at the same grade level in different states were expected to achieve at different levels.

The CCSS Initiative has been coordinated by the [National Governors Association Center for Best Practices](#) (NGA Center) and the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#) (CCSSO).

### **What are the goals of the Common Core State Standards?**

The common standards define the rigorous skills and knowledge in English language arts and mathematics that need to be effectively taught and learned for all

students to be ready to succeed academically in credit-bearing, college-entry courses and workforce training programs.

The goal is to provide more consistent exposure to materials and learning experiences through curriculum, instruction, and teacher preparation among other supports for student learning. This initiative also aims to provide all students with an equal opportunity for a quality education that will prepare them to go to college or enter the workforce, regardless of their zip code.

### **What's included within the standards?**

See the CCSS standards online:

- [English Language Arts](#)
- [Mathematics](#)

The standards for English language arts and math provide grade specific standards for grades K-8. Because they focus on results rather than the means, teachers are not told how to teach the content. In other words, there is flexibility in determining how students will reach these standards in the classroom. The standards also don't cover all that can or should be taught, but rather focus on the essentials.

It's important to note that in keeping with advancing technology, multimedia and the strategic and capable use of technology is embedded throughout both sets of standards.

What resources are available for ELLs and special education students? While the authors of the Common Core State Standards offer suggestions for applying the standards with [English language learners](#) and [students with disabilities](#), they have left the specifics of that implementation to districts and states.

### **Pathway to Excellence**

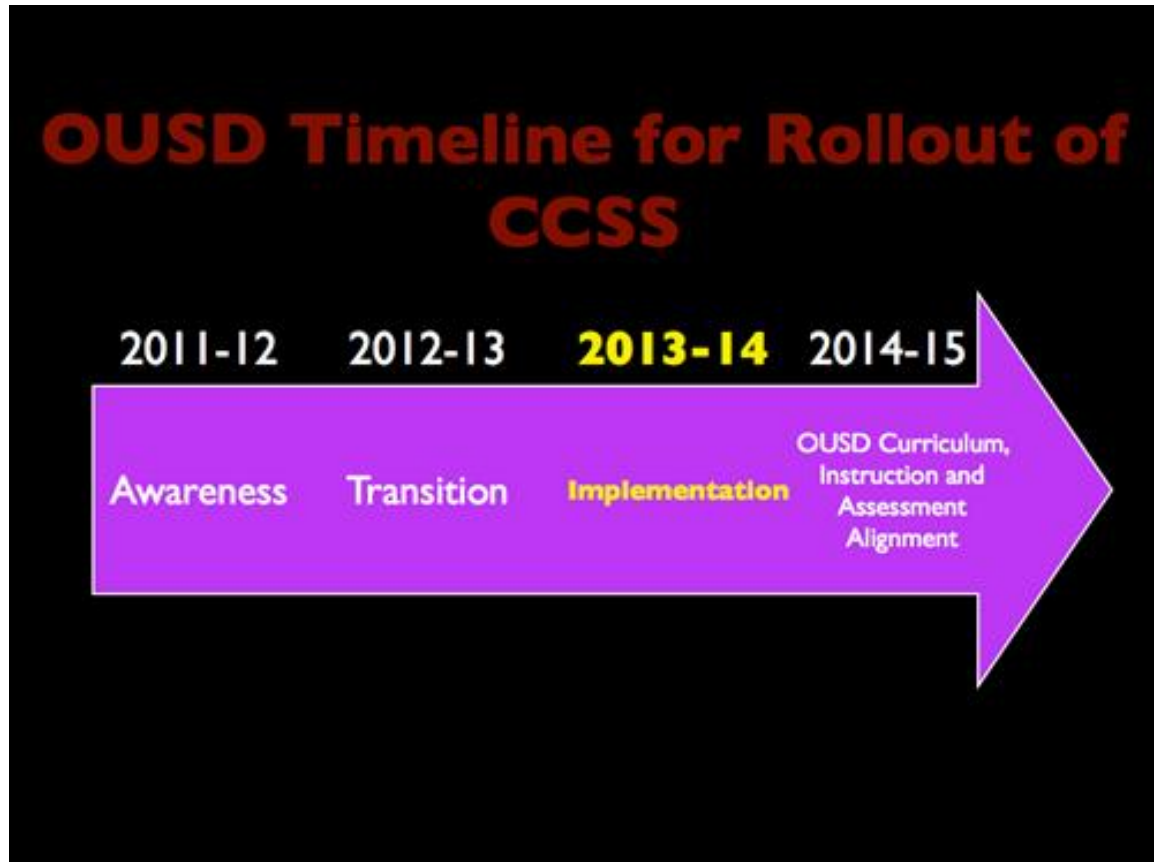
Our Strategic Plan was designed with the Common Core State Standards in mind. Student outcomes are clearly articulated that will create the sense of urgency around learning conditions necessary for students to leave our schools prepared for college, career and community.

### **Common Core as Equity**

As we deepen our understanding about what it means to be engaged as a district in equitable outcomes for students, we are using CCSS as a frame for equity. The promise of CCSS is one of equity. Students will be prepared for college and career regardless of which state they live in. For the first time we will be able to compare

student outcome data with other states because we will be using a common assessment metric (SBAC or PARCC).

### Timeline



### Work to Date

The focus to date has been on the shifts in instructional practice necessary to implement CCSS. This might be thought of as the “HOW” of CCSS. While this is important and great work has been done in OUSD, there needs to also be a focus on the “WHAT” of CCSS, or the standards themselves. This will be our focus for professional development of both teachers and leaders moving forward.

The Teaching and Learning department is currently planning for professional learning over the summer to be offered to all teachers. We are seeking to provide high-quality professional learning experiences for all teachers that will directly impact their ability to implement the Common Core state standards. Some intensive professional development will be specifically designed for Common Core Teacher Leaders. This work will support these individuals as they lead at their sites. All professional development will take on a “results based” approach, where teachers

are given time to plan collaboratively with other teachers at similar grade levels and content areas. In addition to summer, we will continue to offer high-quality professional development to teachers to support the implementation of CCSS and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Professional development will be provided in all grade levels and content areas with numerous topics designed to support teachers with the shift to CCSS.

Alignment between the three divisions of the OUSD Academic Leadership Team (ALT) is our goal. The division of Academic sets the vision for instruction, the Talent division provides the tools needed to improve teaching practice and the Schools division supports with on the ground implementation of both the vision and the tools. The Teacher and Leadership Frameworks reinforce a focus on improving instruction aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

### **Communication Strategy**

In order to prepare our community and families for understanding the Common Core, we are revising our communication strategy with assistance from our Communications department. To date, we have held several town halls for families to engage in dialogue about CCSS and SBAC. In addition, many schools have requested and received support from central administration to present on this topic to PTAs and other parent groups.

Over the next month, the Chief Academic Officer will be collaborating with the communications department to ensure we are preparing our families and communities for the reports they will receive after SBAC testing and our anticipated drop in test scores.

### **System Tools**

Referenced herein are tools that are being currently used in OUSD and advance the work of Common Core implementation.

### **Tool #1: OUSD Graduate Profile**

CCSS College and Career Ready: Students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language:

- Demonstrate independence
- Build strong content knowledge
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Comprehend as well as critique

- Value evidence
- Use technology and digital media strategically and capably
- Come to understand other perspectives and culture.

### **Tool #2: Oakland Effective Teaching Framework (OETF)**

The Oakland Effective Teaching Framework (OETF) articulates a shared definition of effective teaching and learning practices. The OETF can be seen as the “how” to the “what” that is Common Core. While the CCSS do not indicate “how” a teacher should teach, they do provide clear outcomes about “what” students should know and be able to do in order to be prepared for college and career. The OETF and other similar frameworks across the country are an attempt to fill the void of the “how” for teachers and provide some guidance on the types of planning and teaching conditions necessary to ensure students have access to CCSS. The OETF and the CCSS work like a cart and horse, together to ensure learning momentum.

### **Tool #3: The Four Ts Document**

The Four Ts were developed by Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Devin Dillon, in response to work to date around CCSS and observations in OUSD schools. These four instructional priorities were named in an effort to simplify some of the educational jargon with CCSS that can potentially get in the way of a powerful and rigorous experience of teaching and learning for students and teachers.

#### **TALK**

Our students need to be engaged in daily, authentic classroom discussions grounded in evidence and argument. Teachers play a vital role in facilitating these discussions. By posing effective questions & prompts teachers advance higher level thinking that will support student thinking and writing across content areas. Students need to learn and be accountable for using academic language. (Oakland Effective Teaching Framework Indicators 3B.1, 3B.2, 3B.3)

#### **TASK**

We know that the academic task predicts student performance. With this in mind, we strive to provide tasks that are complex, challenge student thinking and result in authentic learning & active engagement for all students. Complex tasks are inquiry-based, require high-level thinking and incorporate reading and writing across the disciplines.

#### **TEXT**

Our students need opportunities to experience reading and writing authentic texts in a variety of genre, with an increasing focus on information and argument text. Students need to be exposed to rigorous, grade level text, daily across all disciplines. In addition, students need explicit instruction with text at their instructional level and plenty of opportunity for independent reading during the school day.

### **TIME**

Our students and teachers will maximize every precious moment we have during our school day. We value each moment as an opportunity for teaching and learning. By providing extended periods of time for independent reading, writing, speaking and listening, we will prepare our students for college, career, and community.

Intersection of the Four Ts leads teachers and students to the “BIG T”- TRANSFORMATION of Teaching and Learning. Schools today need to look different than they did when we were kids, because the types of industries we are preparing students for are different today than they were twenty, even five years ago and continue to evolve. We have developed some observation tools around the Four Ts. Devin Dillon provides leaders and schools feedback related to the Four Ts after school visits. This framework has been met with enthusiasm from both district and school leaders and serves as a simple tool in knowing what to look for in our classrooms. We will continue to focus on the Four Ts next year and deepen our understanding about the intersections between the Ts.

### **Tool #4: Implementation of the Common Core State Standards: A Transition Guide for School-level Leaders (Aspen Guide)**

This tool was developed in 2013 by The Aspen Institute with Student Achievement Partners. It is a guide available free online to support building leaders with implementation of the Common Core State Standards. It's utility lies in the seven indicators identified of “High-Quality Transition” and the supporting materials for leaders. The seven indicators identified are:

1. A team that includes classroom teachers and administrative leads and is accountable for common understanding and implementation of the CCSS.
2. The leadership team establishes common expectations for CCSS-aligned instructional practice. School personnel use observation tools to support and assess this practice in mathematics, English language arts, science, social studies, and technical subjects.

3. Ongoing professional learning, including feedback and coaching systems, is focused on deepening educator knowledge of and facility with the CCSS.
4. School personnel use data from a CCSS-aligned assessment system (including interim/benchmark and summative assessments as well as ongoing collection of student work) to inform instruction and gauge effective implementation of CCSS.
5. Instructional resources, whether purchased or developed, are aligned to the CCSS.
6. Families and communities are engaged in supporting the success of CCSS.
7. Decisions about staffing, time, and spending reflect a prioritization of CCSS.

#### **Tool #5: Academic Guidance Document**

A guide in draft form developed by multiple internal OUSD stakeholders to serve as a roadmap for the kinds of teaching and learning experiences we hope to see in classrooms, aligned to Common Core. This document provides the “tight” and the “loose” around instructional materials and expectations for using them.

The intent of the Academic Guidance document is to reinforce common alignment throughout all schools while also allowing schools to move at a faster pace and differentiate. Defined autonomy is given to schools who demonstrate success with students over multiple years and allows for greater flexibility with curriculum use and resources.

#### **Deepening our Implementation**

Next year we have another opportunity to focus the work on Common Core implementation. While this year is intended to be “Full Implementation” of CCSS, we are not there in terms of the student experience. Our SBAC data will likely support this assertion. We need to anticipate our baseline SBAC data being much lower than our CST scores. The tests are not comparable, since they measure different sets of knowledge (standards) and different learning experiences, including use of technology.

We started this year with a focus on the Four Ts as a way to deepen understanding of Common Core State Standards. In particular, the focus is on the TASK “T”. Supporting teachers and leaders in designing a rigorous, CCSS aligned task, we are training our teachers and leaders to consider grade level expectation and press, as outlined by the CCSS. Next year, we plan to add the role of Common Core Teacher Leader. This will be an out of classroom, TSA type position, tasked with supporting their building with the implementation of CCSS. We have currently repurposed 20 FTE from central funding to support school sites with CC implementation in Language and Literacy. We have a proposal to include 20 additional FTE for Common Core Mathematics. These important positions will provide acceleration in



CCSS for students who are outside of the sphere of typical achievement (lower or higher) and provide professional development support to their staff. These individuals will serve as “Lead learners” for Common Core at their sites and deepen the work of CCSS implementation through demonstration, co-teaching, collaboration and supporting their colleagues at their sites. Sites were carefully selected based on the percentage of English Language Learners served, the percentage of Long-term English Language Learners and other data points, including reading proficiency data. While we recognize the challenge with providing only half of our schools with this centrally funded resource, we acknowledge that many schools budget for a TSA (Teacher on Special Assignment). We are “reimagining” the role of the TSA to be one of instructional leadership and planning to support individuals in this role to be CCTSAs (Common Core TSAs) and lead the work of deepening Common Core at their sites.

In addition, we will continue to focus on the Four Ts as our academic priorities. We are seeking ways to integrate the Four Ts and the OETF across various departments and to bring cohesion to the work of CCSS implementation.

Instructional materials will continue to be analyzed for alignment and purchased where there is a need identified. Our goal is to provide teachers with the very best tools available to allow equitable access to CCSS aligned instruction.

## **References**

### **Aspen Guide**

<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/implementation-common-core-state-standards-transition-guide-school-level-leaders>

### **Oakland Effective Teaching Framework**

<http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/Page/11430>

**The Equity Assistance Centers. (2013). *How the Common Core Must Ensure Equity by Fully Preparing Every Student for Postsecondary Success: Recommendations from the Regional Equity Assistance Centers on implementation of the Common Core State Standards.***

<http://www.wested.org/resources/how-the-common-core-must-ensure-equity-by-fully-preparing-every-student-for-postsecondary-success/>

## **Further Resources**

### **Common Core State Standards Initiative: Home**

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

OUSD Board Special Full Report (Appendix)  
Common Core State Standards, April 15, 2015  
Dr. Devin Dillon, Chief Academic Officer

Learn why the *Common Core* is important for your child. What parents should know  
Understand how the *Common Core* was created.

### **Achievethecore.org**

***achievethecore.org/***

It includes practical tools designed to help students and teachers see their hard work deliver results. *achievethecore.org* was created in the spirit of collaboration.

### **Council of the Great City Schools Parent Roadmaps:**

Math

<http://www.cgcs.org//site/Default.aspx?PageID=244>

ELA / Literacy

<http://www.cgcs.org/Page/328>

National Parent Teachers Association (PTA)

<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>

Achieve the Core

[www.achievethecore.org](http://www.achievethecore.org)

Common Core State Standards Text Exemplars

[http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix B.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf)

### **Videos**

For more information, take a look at these introductory videos from the [Teaching Channel](#), a great resource for CCSS information sessions:

- [Common Core State Standards: Elementary School](#)
- [Common Core State Standards: Middle School](#)
- [Common Core State Standards: High School](#)
- [Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy](#)
- [Common Core State Standards for Math](#)

### **Glossary of Terms**

#### **ALT: Academic Leadership Team**

In OUSD, this team is made up of the three divisions of Talent, Schools and Academics. The Chiefs of these divisions meet weekly and in monthly retreat sessions to ensure alignment and cohesion across divisions.

**CST: California State Test**

The “old” state standards test. It went away officially in 2014. However, we still use CST to test Science in grade 5. Comparisons between CST and SBAC should be avoided, since they are two entirely different measures of content and performance.

**CCSS: Common Core State Standards**

[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

The set of standards that outline WHAT students should know and be able to demonstrate at each grade level. The standards spiral and build upon each other.

**NGSS**

Next Generation Science Standards

<http://www.nextgenscience.org/next-generation-science-standards>

The Next Generation Science Standards are now available. Twenty-six states and their broad-based teams worked together with a 41-member writing team and partners throughout the country to develop the standards.

**OETF: Oakland Educator Effectiveness Framework**

<http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/Page/11430>

**PARCC: Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers**

<http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-assessment>

**SBAC: Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium**

[www.smarterbalanced.org](http://www.smarterbalanced.org)

The new computer-based, standardized assessment based on CCSS. Last year, students took the field test, which was essentially a practice for the real thing. This year, students will take the SBAC in OUSD between March 30-May

Results will be made public, both as a district and for individual students.

Comparisons between CST should be avoided, since these are two entirely different measures of student content knowledge and performance.