

A classroom setting with a green chalkboard. At the top, a colorful banner displays the alphabet from 'Aa' to 'Zz'. Below the banner, there are several educational posters, including one that says 'Be a Friend' and another that says 'Positive Behavior'. In the foreground, there are rows of wooden desks and blue chairs.

6 Things
Parents Need
to Know About

COMMON
CORE

6 Things Parents' Need to Know About Common Core

It's not a curriculum...

It can be easy to lose sight of what the Common Core standards are (and what they are not). Common Core is *not* a curriculum that dictates how teachers should educate students. Rather, the Common Core comprises skills and knowledge that students need to succeed in college and career. Teachers, administrators, and the school community can choose how students meet those standards.

...And it's not an assessment, either...

The Common Core does not tell schools how to assess these skills, either! If your state has adopted PARCC or Smarter Balanced, provide more information about these tests. Explain how you plan on evaluating students for success.

...But it *is* a staircase

Each year students build on the skills they learned the year before. The standards guide students to become college- and career-ready by the time they graduate from high school. The work students do as 3rd graders builds on what they did as 2nd graders. The work is more rigorous than what students did before, but this staircase approach makes the standards achievable for all.

Literature and fiction are allowed!

Common Core puts a big emphasis on reading informational texts. By Grade 12, 70% of reading should focus on informational (non-fiction) texts, and 30% on literature. This applies across *all* subjects areas! Literature-loving parents can rest assured that Shakespeare will likely remain in many schools' curriculum. Other subjects, like science and social studies, will integrate more non-fiction to meet the Common Core standards.

Reading, writing, and math skills are key.

The Common Core does not lay out how each subject is taught in school. Rather, it focuses on how students should progress with reading, writing, and math skills. The Common Core offers suggestions for social studies, history, science, and technical subjects. [Read more about them here.](#)

It will allow our youth to compete in a global economy.

The United States trails behind Asia and Europe with reading and math skills. The U.S. ranks below average for both categories, compared to other advanced economies (ranked 17th in math, 15th in reading). The Common Core brings our children up to speed with their peers in other countries. Common Core makes education more equal in the U.S., and our graduates more competitive with the global market.