



# MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # *442-2013*

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: December 13, 2013

SUBJECT: Common Core Standards

The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to provide information from Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools, regarding Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and its implementation in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).

Should you have any questions on these new standards or need additional information, please contact Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld, Organization Development, at extension 6923 or Ms. Iraida R. Mendez Cartaya, Assistant Superintendent, M-DCPS Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement at 305.995.1497.

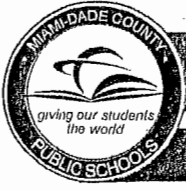
Thank you in advance for your continued support of our children and schools.

JLM/KGB/LDR

Attachment

c: Executive Staff  
Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE



# Miami-Dade County Public Schools

*giving our students the world*

*Superintendent of Schools*  
Alberto M. Carvalho

*Miami-Dade County School Board*

*Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair*  
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*Dr. Wilbert "Tee" Holloway*  
*Dr. Marta Pérez*  
*Raquel A. Regalado*

November 12, 2013

Dear Stakeholder:

Recently there has been much controversy over what has been coined "Common Core State Standards" (CCSS) and its implementation. You may have already been contacted by constituents on this matter. CCSS is a set of skills that students are expected to know at each grade level. These standards were adopted by the Florida State Board of Education in July 2010 and have been implemented in all 67 school districts. The development of these standards was a result of an effort generated by state governors and state education leaders with input from teachers, universities, and the business community. Thus far, more than 40 states have adopted these standards. These standards have been benchmarked internationally and are intended to ensure that our students be career and college ready.

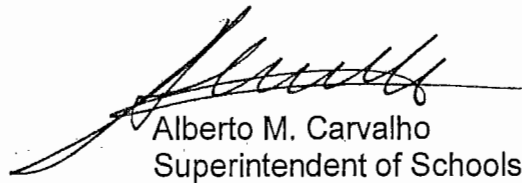
As a mandate of the state's adoption of CCSS, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) has implemented Common Core in grades K-2 for two years, with grades 3-12 transitioning fully this school year. The District has provided human capital development to both district-level and school-level personnel on the implementation of CCSS.

It is important to keep in mind that academic standards are the knowledge and skills students are required to learn at each grade level. Curriculum represents the materials and delivery methods used during instruction. Since the CCSS is not curriculum, but standards, districts will continue to have the flexibility to choose curriculum. The CCSS does not require that educators teach with specific materials or methods, and, as a District we would not accept a prescriptive approach to classroom instruction in Miami-Dade.

The implementation of these more rigorous benchmarked standards is intended to enable our students to more successfully compete in the national and global economy. The standards are aligned with the skills today's students require to be college and/or career ready by the time they graduate from high school. By focusing on the essential knowledge and skills for success in life, the CCSS address two major issues in Miami-Dade County and the nation: the growing number of college students in need of remedial courses and the increasing skills gap in our workforce.

Attached are documents that may help you further understand the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in our state as well as resources that address specifically the argument of some CCSS opponents. Thank you as you continue to support our children and our schools as we transition to these new standards. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ms. Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement, at 305 995-1497.

Sincerely,



Alberto M. Carvalho  
Superintendent of Schools

AMC:ibd  
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Attachments

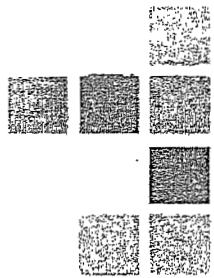
cc: School Board Members  
School Board Attorney  
Superintendent's Cabinet

# Parents @ the Core

*Common Core State Standards, Your Child, and You*



## Helping Your Children Succeed in School



### What is Common Core?

Common Core State Standards are the skills students are expected to know at each grade level.

Common Core State Standards are designed to be relevant to the real world to ensure students are college and career ready. Learning will focus on knowledge and skills students will use in life.

Common Core State Standards were built on international benchmarks and enable our students to compete on both national and international levels.

More than 40 states have adopted these standards. The development of these standards was a grassroots effort generated by state governors and state education leaders with input from teachers, universities, etc.

Florida has been transitioning to a new set of standards called Common Core State Standards since they were adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010. Several school districts have implemented Common Core in grades K-2 over the past two years. This school year will serve as a transition year for grades 3-12. The state is requiring Common Core Standards to be fully implemented in all grade levels in 2014-2015.



### Parents' Lead: What Can You Do?

**Encourage** your children to read a variety of texts (e.g., fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers, maps, charts, and research and reference materials).

**Talk** with your children about what they've read so that they can make sense of it and draw their own conclusions using actual examples.

*Turn this page over for more suggestions...*

# Parents' Lead: What Can You Do?

...continued from other side.

**Practice** writing at home. Have your child use supporting information and details. Look at homework and make sure that your child can explain how he/she arrived at the assignment's result.

**Ask** the teacher what skills your child struggled with last year and spend time working on them. As your child advances from one grade-level to the next, the standards are like a "staircase," building upon the skills learned the previous year.

**Provide** your child with access to media and technology as he/she will have to utilize digital resources at school and in completing his/her homework.

**Log on** to the Parent Portal @ [www.dadeschools.net](http://www.dadeschools.net) and access your child's grades, test scores, and report card, as well as links to online curriculum.



Miami-Dade County Public Schools  
Office of Parental Involvement  
[parents.dadeschools.net](http://parents.dadeschools.net)

## Helpful Websites for Parents

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

<http://www.commoncore.dadeschools.net>

National PTA Parent Guides to Student Success

<http://www.pta.org/parents>

Council of Great City Schools

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

Common Core Standards Initiative

<http://www.corestandards.org>

The Parent Academy

<http://theparentacademy.dadeschools.net>

## Helping Your Children Succeed in School

# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW



Standards adoptions occur frequently in education. In 2010, Florida's State Board of Education adopted a new set of academic standards called the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These standards will be fully implemented across K-12 classrooms in the 2014-15 school year.

## How are academic standards adopted in Florida?

- Florida Statute states that the State Board of Education shall adopt and periodically review and revise the Sunshine State Standards.
  - Florida followed this process to adopt the Common Core State Standards as it was the same process used to adopt all previous Florida academic standards.
  - Florida's Legislature does not adopt academic standards.
- The federal government is not involved in the development or adoption of state academic standards. Florida's adoption of the CCSS has been entirely voluntary, as it is for each state.

## Timeline for adopting the CCSS in Florida

- November 2007 – Discussions around college and career ready standards began among state leaders at the Annual Policy Forum for the Council for Chief State School Officers.
- September 2009 – Public comment opened on first draft of the standards. FDOE, in partnership with Florida PTA, convened a team of district educators, curriculum and assessment specialists, and other education representatives to review the standards and provide feedback.
- January 2010 – Florida's State Board of Education (SBOE) discussed the CCSS. The SBOE received monthly updates on the CCSS prior to adoption.
- March 2010 – The second public draft of the CCSS was released.
- June 2010 – The final version of the CCSS was publicly released. FDOE convened a state committee to determine if additional content (up to 15 percent) was needed to satisfy mathematics and English/Language Arts (ELA) requirements in Florida.
- June 2010 – Florida's SBOE announced that action on adopting the CCSS would be taken in July 2010.
- July 2010 – The SBOE voted to adopt the CCSS as Florida's academic standards.
- Fall 2010 – FDOE's state committee recommended no additions be made to the newly adopted ELA or mathematics standards.

# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW



## What is the difference between Florida's current standards and the CCSS?

Florida's academic standards were already strong under the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. However, the Common Core State Standards enhance the focus and depth of our academic standards – without sacrificing our high expectations for students.

As has been the practice with Florida's previous standards, FDOE reviewed the CCSS for supplemental needs.

There is a difference in standards and curriculum. It is important to note that the CCSS only outline what content students need to learn; educators determine how to teach that content.

## How will the CCSS improve student achievement?

- The CCSS are designed to ensure every student leaves high school prepared for college and the workforce.
- The CCSS are clearer and deeper than previous academic standards.
  - The CCSS are actually more rigorous and focus on in-depth mastery of topics as opposed to previous standards that were characterized as "a mile wide but only an inch deep."
  - They are more robust and reflect relevant knowledge and skills necessary after high school.
- Students who show mastery of the knowledge and skills encompassed in the CCSS will have higher critical thinking skills, show better conceptual understanding and stronger applied learning experience.

## Implementation Timeline for Florida Students and Educators

- The implementation of the CCSS began during the 2011-2012 school year with kindergarten classrooms, expanding to K-1 in 2012-2013, and K-2 in 2013-2014. Additionally, new literacy standards in grades 6-12 are currently being implemented.
- The transition will be completed in all K-12 classrooms during the 2014-2015 school year and include an aligned assessment for grades 3-11.
- Currently, Florida's state assessment is the FCAT 2.0. Under the CCSS, a new state assessment will be developed for grades 3-11 which will be more rigorous and aligned to the CCSS standards.
- FDOE will determine in June 2013 what assessment will be administered under the CCSS. Currently, Florida serves as the fiscal agent and a governing member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) - one of two state assessment consortiums that are developing common state assessments for the CCSS. PARCC will be technology based and include a more rigorous format with less multiple choice questions.

Learn more about Florida's Common Core State Standards at <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/ccs.asp>.

# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ADDRESSING THE HOT TOPICS



## Development of the Standards:

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed as a state-led initiative.

- The Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and National Governor's Association (NGA) led the initiative to provide consistency among states for mobile students (especially military families) and for a more consistent definition on college and career readiness. It is not part of No Child Left Behind and adoption of standards by the states is in no way mandatory.
- The CCSS were developed and voluntarily adopted by forty-five states, including the District of Columbia, four territories and the Department of Defense.
- The Florida State Board of Education adopted the CCSS in July 2010.
- By focusing on the essential knowledge and skills for success in life, the CCSS address two major issues in the U.S.:
  - Growing number of college students in need of remedial courses
  - Growing skills gap in our workforce.

The CCSS were developed by educators and education experts from across the nation.

- Florida educators were involved in the writing of the CCSS.
- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) reviewed and provided feedback prior to the release of the final set of standards.
- FDOE developed a state committee to review and recommend supplemental standards to meet Florida's specific math and English/Language Arts requirements. The committee found no benefit to include additional standards and felt the newly adopted CCSS were already robust.
- The CCSS were built on international benchmarks and enable our students to compete with peers on both national and international levels.
- By adopting the CCSS, Florida's mobile students, such as those in our military families, receive more consistent learning as they move from town to town or state to state.

Academic standards and curriculum/instruction are not identical.

- Academic standards are the "what" – the knowledge and skills – students are required to learn at each grade level. Curriculum and instruction are the "how" – the materials and delivery methods – students are taught.
- The CCSS do not require that educators teach with specific materials or methods.
  - Some materials, including novels, have been recommended as potential instructional materials. However, required ELA materials almost exclusively pertain to America's founding documents, foundational American literature, Shakespeare and international literature.
  - Math requirements include mastery of foundational skills – such as fractions, decimals, multiplication – but also push for more application of math concepts and procedures for real-world practices.



# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ADDRESSING THE HOT TOPICS



## Student Data and Privacy:

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student information cannot be released without prior written consent from a parent or legal guardian.

- The only disclosure exceptions pertain to health and safety emergencies, school transfers, referral to state and local authorities for compliance, or release to research organizations.
- Schools are required to notify parents annually of their rights under FERPA, but notification methods are left up to local leaders.
- Nothing related to the implementation of the Common Core State Standards will result in any changes to sharing private student information and data.

As part of broader education reform efforts, states have adopted data systems that allow educators and parents to measure the progress of student achievement and growth from year to year.

- These data systems are not a result of CCSS, but rather a more than decade long effort to ensure students are learning a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time and that taxpayers are seeing a return on their investment in education.
- The federal government has contributed funding for state data systems going back to 2006, as part of bringing accountability to schools, and states have been funding their own data systems for much longer.
- The CCSS will not erode students' privacy rights or allow the federal government to inappropriately "track" students, as some pundits have declared.

## Student Assessments under the CCSS:

Under the CCSS, portions of the FCAT will be replaced by a new assessment that aligns with the CCSS.

- There are two state consortiums developing assessments aligned with the CCSS – Smarter Balance (SBAC) and the Partnership for Assessment for Readiness of College and Career (PARCC).
- Florida belongs to the PARCC consortia. Florida serves as the fiscal agent for and is a governing state of PARCC, which gives Florida an enormous responsibility and role in developing the assessments of CCSS.
- There is consensus that PARCC better aligns with the accountability standards and direction of Florida's education system. These assessments will be technology driven and require a greater level of thinking to be successful.
- As the assessments continue to develop, FDOE and districts are working to ensure schools have the technology to assess and instruct students under the CCSS as well as understand the changes in assessment time and structure.
- FDOE is committed to PARCC, but will determine in June 2013 which assessment will best meet Florida's needs. District and post-secondary leadership have been involved in the discussions pertaining to the CCSS assessment and End-Of-Course assessments (EOCs.)